
Fold a Paper Lotus Flower with Mia Semingson of Two Hands Paperie

Chapter 1 - Fold a Paper Lotus Flower

Overview

- The lotus flower represents the cycle of life, peace, rebirth, and love. We're going to make a paper version of this legendary flower. It looks quite intricate, but actually, the folds are very simple. I'm Mia Semingson, I'm a paper artist, bookbinder, and lover of all paper. I own a store located in Boulder, Colorado, called Two Hands Paperie, where we have paper from all over the world. I'm always looking for new ways to use paper in my projects. If you're like me, and you're origami-challenged, this is a great introduction into basic paper folding. You can use the lotus blossom as a gift-wrapped embellishment, ornament, or even include it as part of your own rituals and celebrations. I like to write messages inside, or well wishes for friends, or set intentions for the new year.

Materials

- The materials for this project are fairly simple. You need some decorative paper cut to the ratio of two to one. I'm using two different sizes. One size is three and three quarters by seven and a half. The second size is two by four inches. You can vary your size, it doesn't have to be these exact sizes. It just needs to be a two to one ratio. A bone folder is a nice tool to form your creases on your paper. You could also use a metal spoon. Four clothes pins or paper clips to clamp everything together. A pair of wire cutters, some thin floral wire. I'm using 24 gauge and some string.

Fold a large and small lotus flower

- To begin folding the layers for your lotus blossom, you need to have several sheets of paper cut to a very particular size. The size that I'm gonna use today is 7-1/2 by 3-3/4. It's basically a one-to-two ratio. So if you were to start with a square sheet of paper, all you would have to do is just cut that sheet right in half. For the larger lotus blossom, we need a total of 16 sheets of paper. I've laid it out so that you can see all the layers distinctly, but you need four sheets folded for each layer. So my base layer is going to be black paper. The next layer is this turquoise paper, then white and then purple. You can see this in my demonstration or my sample that my base layer is the black paper, then turquoise, white, and purple. Typically, I use a decorative paper to fold the lotus blossoms, but for my sample as a good visual for you, I've laid it out in solid colors to see the different layers. If I'm using a pattern paper, I'm gonna have the pattern on the outside of the fold. So I'll start with the solid color on the inside. All you do is fold the paper in half lengthwise. I like to use a bone folder to get a nice crisp edge. Then open that fold up and you're gonna fold the corners to this center line. Flip it around, then turn it horizontally, and you're gonna fold the edge into that center line. Thankfully, the folds are very, very simple. Sometimes I open up one edge just so I can see that center mark, and that is the fold. So what you're gonna do is fold all 16 of your sheets the exact same way. The first layer of paper is going to be used for the base of your lotus blossom. You're gonna take one layer of paper and fold it in half with the crease pointing up. Notice that my folds are tucked away on the inside of this layer. The second layer is the same, except I'm folding on the opposite direction. So you'll notice that I'm seeing the folds on the backside. I'm gonna lay that on top of my black layer or my base layer. I'm gonna do the same thing for the next two layers, fold it in half so that I can see the backside and then lay it on top. It's really important that you don't nest

the papers like this. You want to completely cover that layer below and do that again, and to hold it all together, you can go ahead and clip it. You're gonna do this with all the layers the exact same way. Nothing changes. So you will wind up with a total of four. It's also really helpful if you organize your paper ahead of time before you start creating your layers, because if you mess up the direction of one of your layers, you'll have to take your work apart. I'm using a nice kind of stiff cotton paper. It's actually a handmade paper from India. You'll notice that there's some beautiful patterns on the inside that you actually won't see in this sample, but the paper's really nice to work with. But you can use a variety of papers, origami paper or other decorative handmade papers. All right, I'm at my last section, and I'm just gonna fold this in half, can be a little bulky, and if you want, you could go ahead and clip that to hold it in place. I'm gonna do the same thing for all the layers. The nice thing about this project is that you get a lot of practice. You just are pretty much doing the same thing over and over again. So I'm gonna grab two and kind of nest them together, pointing in one direction, and the other two are going to nest in the opposite direction like that. Then I'm gonna grab some of my wire and just make sure everything's kind of aligned. The large lotus blossoms can be a little tricky to hold onto all those layers, and I'm just gonna wrap the wire around the center. Just leave enough so that it's comfortable for you to twist off the end. I'll give it a good twist. You won't see the wire. It's gonna be hidden in all the layers that you're creating, and you can trim it and you can just push the wire down into the center. This is the fun part where the lotus comes to life. So you can start anywhere and you're gonna work with the top layer and just work your fingers towards the center of the blossom, and you're gonna reverse this fold. This is a mountain fold, and so I'm gonna reverse it. I'm going to skip one and go to the next one. Again, I'm gonna try and get my fingers right towards the center. This can be a little tricky and it can be easy to rip your paper. Just go slowly, have to be a little gentle. Again, I'm gonna skip and then move to the next, skip, move to the next. So this is the very center, and you can kind of shape your paper how you like it. And now I'm gonna open all these, it doesn't really matter what order, but just take note that it's gonna fill in this section so that it looks like your blossom has layers to it, and again, pulling from the very center up if you can. Go to the next, this one. All right, the center of the lotus is complete, so I wanna pay attention to where I pick up the next layer, and I don't want to pick up a layer that's going to cover up a blossom completely, so I wanna make sure that I'm looking for where two come together and that's where I'm gonna pick up. So again, just pulling close to the center, pulling up, skipping one, going to the next. This is another reason why I chose four different colors to show you, so you could really see the different layers creating the entire piece. So I'm skipping one, going to the next, skip one, and now I'm gonna fill in these gaps with the second round. All right, I'm gonna repeat the same steps only in a different color. So again, find where two blossoms meet, or two petals meet, and find that layer to kind of cover up that section. Pull up, it gets a little easier as you get to the outer layers. Skip a section, move to the next, skip. If you mess up, you can always undo your folds and work backwards. I do this often, especially if you're using say a paper that's a similar color or all one color for your lotus. It can be a little confusing visually to know where to pick up. Last layer. Okay, for the leaves, they unfold a little bit differently. All you're gonna do is kind of reverse the tips, and it doesn't matter what order you go in for this, to give it a little shape. And then I also like to reverse or open up some of the layers of the blossom. Again, it doesn't have to happen in any particular order, and you can decide how many layers that you want to open up. Just gives it a little more dimension And it's done. To make a smaller lotus blossom, you just can use smaller paper. So for this example, I'm using paper that's been cut to two by four inches. You'll need a total of 12 sheets of paper. I'm using three different colors, so it would be four sheets of each color. The

assembly is the exact same, including the folding. The only difference is that you have one less layer. I have gone ahead and assembled a blossom, and I'm gonna just attach a little bit of string. It's a fun way to create a small origami ornament using your lotus blossom flower. I have about eight inches long, any type of string, and you're going to attach it onto the wire after you've twisted it, and then just give it an extra twist. I've just folded the string in half, and then go ahead and clip that wire and you can fold it down. The opening is the same procedure as the larger lotus, but I'm just gonna show you that I am using three layers of paper. The only difference is, again, is that I'm missing the purple layer. Once you unfold it, you can have your little origami ornament. Once you make one lotus, you'll definitely wanna make some more. I recommend experimenting with lots of different types of papers, different patterns and different colors, and creating different ways of putting them together. I have a bunch of examples on the table to show you what I've done. In this example, I'm using all 16 sheets are the exact same paper. It's a hand marbled paper, so there's lots of different variations, but I love the look of how all of them come together. This is also a smaller version of using the same paper. Over here, the base layer or the leaves are one style of paper, but the upper portion is, again, one style of paper. So this would be a total of 12 sheets of the marbled paper and then just four sheets of this cream and white. This is another example of the exact same thing, using one type of paper for the leaves and eight sheets for the lotus. Here in this example, I'm using four sheets for the leaves and then the same paper for the outside, and then I changed the interior, so it's eight sheets for the outside and then four for the inner center. This example is all four different types of paper, but I'm using a similar color. In this one, I used two different types of paper for the leaves and the outside, and then the same paper for the last two layers. So that would be eight sheets for the center, and then four and four. So you can decide what your lotus looks like depending on how many styles of paper you want to use. Whether you're making the lotus blossoms for yourself or to gift to others, they will surely inspire peace and compassion.