

How to make unique homemade lamps

Some basic ideas on how to make homemade lamps and lampshades. Ways to decorate the shades by using stencils, buttons, ribbons, beads or rubber-stamps.

Many ordinary or unusual objects can be made into homemade lamps. Hobby and craft stores sell the basic kits, which include the cord, stem, and socket. Visit flea markets, garages sales and thrift stores to find objects you can use to create these unique lamps. Glass and brass vases work very well, but you could also use ceramic figurines, toys, or teapots.

First, choose your object, in this case use a doll or toy. Take a flat, thin block of stained wood with smooth, rounded edges and drill a hole through the middle (or the side) that is large enough to run the electric cord through, and thread the stem with the cord so that it will be on the top. Then glue felt on the bottom of the wood. (which will keep the lamp from scratching your furniture.) Place your object on the top part of the wood and secure with appropriate type of glue. Then place a copper tube over the lamp stem and affix it to the bottom of the base with a nut or metal washer ring. Use manufacturer's instructions to thread the wire of the cord into the socket. Place a bulb in the socket, place the lamp shade to the bulb, plug in and voila! you have a unique homemade lamp.

Another alternative would be to create your own ceramic lamps using molds. Begin by taking a ceramics class and make a pretty hurricane lamp, then wire according to the instructions. Paint or place decals on the lamp for decorations.

If you choose to use vases you do not need to make a wooden base. Just drill a hole in through the bottom of the vase so that you can thread the cord through. Glass vases need extra care to avoid breaking the ceramic or glass.

LAMP SHADES

There are kits for lamp shades you can find in the hobby stores that have a sticky adhesive on the surface so that you can place whatever kind of material on it that you choose. Another great idea is saving the frames from old, torn or worn shades and covering them with what ever kind of fabric you would like.

To make a ribbon shade, wrap and wind strands of ribbon (directly from the roll) from the top to the bottom of the shade, overlapping until you have covered the whole frame, then tuck the end in the inside of the shade and hot glue it into place.

Another interesting idea is to take a light metal type of material such as screening and cut, the top more narrow and the bottom more wide then place the sides together with staples or glue and paper fasteners. Place a pretty satin ribbon or bric brac over the top and bottom to hide the

jagged edges. Then sew unusual buttons or beads to the screen. in clusters. You can dress up any shade with beads or buttons.

Using plain white shades, paint swirls, polka-dots, squares, or other geometric shapes onto the surface. Or use stencils to create interesting patterns onto the shade. Do you know how to cross-stitch or embroider?

Consider texturizing your shade with a rag or a sponge and paint. Use two complementary colors for added interest. Then choose one or two rubber-stamps and stamp the pattern you want onto the shade.

So keep your eyes open for objects that you think might make an interesting lamp. Give them as gifts or sell them on e-bay or in craft fairs, or flea markets. But most of all, enjoy yourself.