

Sea shell crafts

Lovely ideas to turn sea shells into decorative craft items for your home or to give as gifts.

Have you ever held a large conch shell to your ear and listened for the sounds of the ocean? Couldn't you just imagine the seagulls flashing their silvery feathers as they skimmed the surface of the waves? If you love the tang of salt spray in your face and the feel of sand under your bare feet, then you'll be sure to enjoy these seashell crafts. By creating a few beautiful accent pieces with shells, you can bring a hint of the ocean into your home.

Seashells are available in many craft or souvenir stores, or in the craft section of your favorite department store. Or you can take a trip to the beach and gather the shells yourself! A stroll alongside the ocean will yield many pretty, colorful specimens. Be sure to take a basket or net bag to use as you collect the shells. You're sure to find many different sizes, shapes and colors. Even the tiniest shells make beautiful decorations! Make sure you rinse your collected shells thoroughly to remove all traces of sand or debris. You'll also want to make sure the shells you take home don't have any living creatures in them, so check them carefully and toss back into the ocean any shell containing an inhabitant.

Seashells add a lovely touch of nature to any decor and the simplest way to decorate with them is to line an array of large shells along a window sill. You might even like to arrange a few on a small shelf or atop a mantle. Visitors will be tempted to pick one up and press it to an ear to see if they can hear the ocean's roar.

Another simple, beautiful idea is to fill a pretty basket with shells and place on a table or shelf. Trim the basket with jute twine or ribbon in your choice of colors. The simplicity of this arrangement makes it perfect for almost any room.

Candles and shells are a lovely combination! Add a cake candle or several votives to a basket of shells, or arrange several shells around the base of your favorite scented candle. Or make a candle holder from a shell--simply place the shell so that the 'bowl' side is up and put a votive candle inside. Place smaller shells around the upturned shell so that it doesn't tip over. A variation on this idea is to take a shallow container, fill it with white beach sand, and place a group of shells, bowl side up, in the sand. Add votive candles. Pretty and oh-so-simple!

Old jars filled with shells make lovely displays. Fill your favorite antique jar to the top with shells of different sizes. With pinking shears, cut a circle from a pretty piece of cloth and place it over the mouth of the jar. Be sure to cut it large enough so that you can pull it into a ruffle, then tie with jute twine or matching ribbon.

If you're feeling especially creative, try this: Fill a shallow clay pot with white beach sand, add a few pretty shells, a small piece of driftwood and some dried flowers. You might even like to add a decorative craft butterfly or a seagull feather. Beautiful!

Seashells make wonderful wind chimes, too. Drill a hole in the edge of several shells, string on fishing line or thin twine, and tie to a hanger. Be sure to space the strings of shells so that they don't tangle, and then hang in a sunny spot.

Smaller, more delicate shells make fun refrigerator magnets. Using a hot glue gun or white craft glue, attach a small, sturdy magnet to the shell. You can even add some tiny dried flowers to the magnets. Let dry, then use them to decorate the 'fridge or filing cabinet.

Transform a plain clay pot into a work of art by gluing rows of shells around the rim or in a fanciful pattern. You may even wish to cover the entire surface of the pot! A small flower pot adorned with seashells is a charming

addition to a desk or counter top. Any one of the varieties of 'air ferns' available would look great in these pots.

And don't forget the awesome beauty of a single, large conch shell. The delicate pinks, corals and whites of this shell make it a stunning display. You'll want to pick it up, press it to your ear and close your eyes as you imagine the sounds of the surf crashing onto the beach. Try adding some seashells to your decor soon, or make up a few of these crafts to give as gifts. You'll be glad you did.