

How to make your own permanent gel printing plate

Supplies

10 packages of knox unflavored gelatin—a 32 pk box is around \$10 at Walmart

6 – 8 oz of glycerin – available at Walmart, CVS etc. usually near the hand lotion but ask the pharmacist if you can't find it. See notes on supplies

1 cup of isopropyl alcohol – rubbing alcohol from the drug store or Walmart

1 ½ cups boiling water

Instructions

Pour rubbing alcohol in a large bowl, add gelatin and mix. The mixture will be thick and clumpy. Mix in Glycerin. Mixture will still be thick and gunky. Add boiling water and stir until dissolved. If all of the gelatin doesn't dissolve, put the bowl in the microwave for 1 min at a time until all pieces are dissolved.

Pour mixture into a container that is about 1 inch deep. Dollar Tree sells a plastic serving tray that is approximately 8x12. Or, you could use a glass Pyrex dish. Glass is not absorbent and should not be a health risk. I would hesitate to use a metal cookie sheet unless it is designated just for this use. Run the edge of a piece of paper or paper towel across the surface to remove bubbles and place on a level surface.

I did not put the mixture in the refrigerator. I just let it set out on a level surface for a day. I turned the plate out onto an acrylic sheet then let it set for another day. Then the plate was covered with an acetate sheet on top and the acrylic sheet on the bottom and placed in a large zip lock bag. If the plate seems too wet, let it set out for another day. You want the plate to feel plastic like on the surface.

This recipe will make an 8x12 or similar size plate. If you want to make a larger size you would need to double the recipe, or use the recipe for a large plate on the next page.

For a large plate use:

20 pkgs of knox gelatin

2 cups rubbing alcohol

2 cups glycerin

3 cups boiling water

Notes on supplies:

Gelatin—32 packages is \$9.98 at Walmart

Glycerin a 1 quart bottle is \$9.00 plus or minus at Amazon. Vegetable glycerine works fine.

Containers to gel the plates can be found at Walmart or the Dollar store. I have used a clear plastic serving tray with a flat bottom from the dollar store, and my favorite so far is a square burner cover from Walmart. These are in the kitchen gadget area. There is one set of 4 that is deeper than the others. The set of 4 is under \$5. The sides of these covers are less angled than the trays or pyrex dishes. For an 11x14ish size I used a large pyrex dish and it worked great. If you use a metal cookie sheet or jelly roll pan, you might want to use it just for that purpose. For a large gel plate, the pyrex is much sturdier. You need to consider whether the metal pan will sit flat while curing.

Removing the plate is very easy. You can use your fingers to gently pull the edges away from the sides of the container. Once all the edges are separated from the container you can turn the plate out on a piece of acrylic or one of the flat cutting sheets that are available at Walmart or the Dollar store. Once you have removed it from your mold, turn it right side up so that the top is open to air. The gel plate will conform to whatever surface it is laying on, so try to keep your printing surface as flat and smooth as possible. If for some reason, your plate gets an irregular surface, cover it with the acetate sheet and place the plate upside down on a smooth flat surface. A piece of acrylic or smooth glass on a flat surface should be fine. Leave it set on this surface for 24 hours and your plate should be smooth again.

