

Canadian Living

DIY & CRAFTS

KIDS' CRAFT: MAKE YOUR OWN RUSSIAN DOLLS

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Russian nesting dolls (or matryoshka dolls) are lots of fun to play with – even more so when you get to design and paint them yourself. Create a set that looks like your family (you could even make one of your pet!), or let your imagination run wild. This multistage craft takes some time, so it's a great project to tackle bit by bit.

You need:

- Set of Russian nesting doll blanks*
- Fine-gauge sandpaper
- Acrylic or latex primer
- Crafter's acrylic paint or tole paint (in desired colours)
- Varnish (optional)
- Paper towel and scrap paper
- Pencil, eraser and paintbrushes

* Available at art-supply stores or online

[Take a look at a full-size photo of the Russian nesting dolls.](#)

To make:

1. Lightly sand each doll with fine-gauge sandpaper. Wipe with damp paper towel to remove dust.
2. Using primer, paint bottoms of dolls and let dry completely. Apply primer to rest of dolls. Let dry.
3. Using pencil, sketch faces and clothing onto dolls. (Tip: Sketch designs on paper before drawing on the dolls.)
4. With paintbrush, paint dolls with crafter's acrylic in desired colours. Use larger brushes to fill in large areas, and small brushes for detail work and outlining. (Tip: Leave gap between top and bottom of doll to prevent pieces from sticking together as paint dries.) Let dry.
5. If desired, follow package directions to apply thin coat of varnish to dolls to seal and protect paint. Let dry.

Designer's tip:

Cover your work surface with newsprint to protect it from paint or varnish spills.

Once you've finished making these Russian nesting dolls, try making these [pretty crocheted cuffs!](#)

This story was originally titled "Stack up the Fun" in the March 2012 issue.