

getting CRAFTY

Try your hand at one – or all – of these easy projects that make great holiday gifts. By Judi Ketteler

From knitting and sewing to decoupage and dried-flower arranging, crafting has emerged as a fashionable form of self-expression. “The new domesticity is about taking a punk-rock approach to Martha Stewart,” says Jean Railla, the New York City-based author of *Get Crafty: Hip Home Ec* (Broadway Books, 2004). “It’s about bringing creativity and fun to all areas of your life.”

In an age when you spend most of the day glued to a computer, working with your hands can bring about a sense of satisfaction and calm – something often missing around the holidays. Why not de-stress and knock out a few presents while you’re at it? Here, three cool crafts to create.

1 place-mat purse

Supplies Fabric placemat with smooth edges, a piece of rayon cording or ribbon, measuring, tape scissors, pins, needle, thread, clear nail polish

Directions

1. Fold placemat in half lengthwise. Measure about 8 inches across from the left, then cut excess.
2. Refold fabric inside out. Use pins to close sides, leaving the top open.



3. Stitch sides by hand or machine, leaving a ¼-inch seam allowance. Remove pins when finished and turn fabric right side out.
4. Cut desired length of cording or ribbon for strap. Brush ends with clear nail polish to prevent fraying, then attach to purse with needle and thread.

2 mosaic picture frame

Supplies Picture frame with a smooth surface (4 inches by 6 inches or larger works best), small mosaic tiles, tile adhesive, pre-mixed grout, sponge, bucket

Directions

1. Apply a thin coat of adhesive to the back of each piece of tile and arrange on picture frame. Let dry overnight.

2. Spread grout over tiles, filling any gaps. Allow grout to partially dry (about 15 minutes).
3. With a damp sponge, wipe the grout off the tile thoroughly. Repeat as necessary, dipping and wringing out the sponge in a bucket of water. Allow several hours to dry.

3 16-inch necklace

Supplies 24 inches of jewelry wire, beads or semiprecious stones, two crimp beads, a clasp (such as a toggle), measuring tape, needle-nose pliers

Directions

1. String beads on wire, stopping at 16 inches (if you want a focal-point bead at the center, place it at 8 inches). When finished, slide beads to middle, leaving an even length of wire on either side.
2. On each end, add a crimp bead and slide the clasp part on next to it.
3. Feed excess wire back through crimp bead and about 2 inches of beads; snip end. Repeat on other side.
4. Flatten crimp beads firmly with needle-nose pliers to finish the necklace.

Judi Ketteler de-stresses by sewing, knitting and whacking mosaic tile with a hammer in Cincinnati.

Surprise a friend with a necklace you made.

