How to Make Stepping Stones

**WHAT YOU’LL NEED:**

* **5 gallon bucket** **or a wheelbarrow**
* **Small Shovel and/or Trowel** (something to stir concrete)
* **Quikrete Concrete mix**
* **Protective Gloves** (rubber gloves) **and Safety Glasses**
* **8-10”metal cake pan, tin foil pans, a plastic liner for potted plants, or *anything* that has a slightly tapered sided** (just so the stepping stone can be removed from the mold after it’s set up) Repurposed pans work great for this type of project.
* **Embellishments or Found Objects** (rocks, shells, gems, marble, bottle caps, dice, small plastic toys, coins, broken china, tiles, etc.)
* **Nonstick Cooking Spray**
* **Water**
* **Old Cloth or a few paper towels**
* **Old Brush** (optional)
* **Tarp** (optional)

**PREP THE AREA:**

This is an outside project, and is best to be close to a water hose. It can be fairly messy, especially during clean up. You can lay out a tarp over the area where you’ll be mixing and creating your stepping stones. Doing so makes for easier cleanup. You should also have your designs picked out, and know what embellishment items you will be using. It’s best to trace the shape of your mold onto paper with a pencil or pen, and lay out the design within the traced lines.

**SPRAY THE PANS:**

Use the nonstick cooking spray to coat the pans being used for the mold before you pour the concrete. This makes getting the DIY stepping stone out much easier. Place the prepared molds on a flat surface where they can sit for a few days undisturbed.

**MIX THE CONCRETE:**

Before opening up the Quikrete put on protective gloves and safety glasses! Use the 5 gallon bucket if making one or two stepping stones. Use a wheelbarrow if making more than a couple stepping stones at one time. The more surface area you have to mix in, the easier it is to mix the dry powder and water. Add some of the Quikrete to the bucket or wheelbarrow. If making a couple of stepping stones, add several cups of the dry Quikrete in you bucket. Then add *cold* water (a little at a time), mixing as you go. The trowel works best for mixing in a bucket. The small shovel works best for mixing a larger batch in a wheelbarrow. You just need to be sure to incorporate all of the dry mix into the water. The goal is to have the concrete be thick, but workable. It should resemble really thick cake batter, or be able to be picked up with the trowel and hold its shape a bit before starting to slump off of the trowel. You should get about four (8-10”) stepping stones out of a bag of 10 lb. Quikrete.

**POURING THE CONCRETE:**

Using the trowel, scoop one large scoop of concrete into the prepared mold. Tap the pan a bit to even out the concrete. Add another scoop or more to fill the mold about a ½” from the top of the mold, tapping one more time to make level. This also helps remove any trapped air pockets. Be sure not to over fill, or you’ll have a hard time removing the stepping stone from the mold after it sets up.

**EMBELLISH THE STEPPING STONE:**

The fun part! Start placing your items in the concrete. Be sure the items are pressed in firmly with the edges slightly submerged otherwise the items might fall out once the concrete is set up. You can also write in the wet concrete with a pencil, or use letter stamps; write in names, dates, etc. Handprints or footprints can be fun. You can even create your own fossils by adding leaves, or other items that will decompose over time. Once the design is completed use a damp cloth or paper towel to gently wipe away any concrete smudges off the tops of the items you used to create your design.

**CURE:**

Let the stepping stones cure in the molds for 48 hours. Turn them out onto a surface that will not be damaged or scratched by the concrete stepping stone. They should come out of the molds fairly easy, if they don’t, flex the mold a bit until they pop out. Turn up right, and let sit for a week or so to cure a little longer before stepping on them.

**CLEAN UP:**

Clean up is easy as long as the concrete is still wet! Rinse off all tools first, and then the bucket or wheelbarrow with the water hose. Use an old brush to help remove stubborn areas. If you let the concrete dry on your tools, it will be much harder to remove the concrete.

Enjoy!