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Download Article Download Article Just because your bedsheets are looking a little faded or dingy doesn't mean you have to throw them out. Dyeing your own sheets at home is easy and fun, and you can even create your very own custom color by mixing different dyes! Use 1-2 boxes of dye if you want to dye one of your sheets a solid color, or use multiple colors if you're looking for how to tie-dye bedsheets! 1Wash the sheet in hot water without detergent. If your sheet is new, washing it first is essential because otherwise, the new fabric might not accept the dye. However, even if your sheet is older, wash it to remove dirt and oils that might keep the dye from absorbing easily.[1]If there are any large or dark stains on the sheet, soak the material in stain remover to lighten the stain, then wash it in hot water.Do not dry the sheet. It will accept the dye more evenly if it's already wet.2Fill 1/3 of your bathtub with 120140F (4960C) water. Turn your tap onto the hottest setting and let it run for a few minutes. Then, put in the stopper and fill the bathtub about a third of the way. There should be enough water so you can completely submerge your sheet, but if you fill the bathtub with too much water, it will be hard to get the color dye you need.[2]Most household water heaters are set between 120140F (4960C), so the hottest water from your tap should be enough.You'll get better results with hotter water, so if your water heater is set to 120F (49C), you may want to boil a pot of water on your stove and add it to the bath to bring the temperature up.You can also pour the water into a very large bucket or container. Variation: If you prefer, you can dye your sheet in the washing machine. Just fill the basin with hot water, add the dye and the sheet, and turn off the washing machine cycle. Allow the sheet to soak for 30 minutes, then run your machine as usual to rinse the sheet. When you're finished, wash the sheet again in cold water to set the color. Advertisement 3Mix your fabric dye according to the package instructions. The exact way you mix your dye will depend on the brand and the type of dye you're using, but in general, you'll pour the dye into 12 cups (240470mL) of very hot or boiling water. Doing this will ensure that the dye mixes more evenly when you add it to the bath.[3]A single box of dye should be enough for 1 sheet. However, if you're trying to achieve a very dark or bright color, you can use 2 boxes, if you prefer.Some popular, easy-to-use brands of fabric dye include Tulip, Dylon, and Rit Dye. Don't want to use chemical dye? Try using natural dyes made from plants. For instance, you might use beets for pinkish-red sheets or coffee for a deep tan. While the colors won't be as intense as commercial products, you'll still get beautiful results. 4Stir in the dye and 1 cup (300 g) of salt. Once you've mixed your dye, pour it into the hot water in your bathtub or container. Then, add 1 cup (300 g) of table salt to the mixture and stir everything with a long-handled spoon or long stick.[4]The salt will help the dye absorb more evenly.If you're using 2 boxes of dye, add 2 cups (600 g) of salt.Tip: To test the color once it's mixed, dip a paper towel in the dye bath. If the color is too dark, add more water. If it's too light, add more dye. 5Submerge your sheet in the dye bath and stir continuously. Try not to bunch up the sheet when you place it in the water. Place the sheet into your bathtub, then use your spoon or stick to swish the sheet around in the water. Keep stirring for at least 10 minutes, then stir the sheet again every 3-5 minutes as long as it's in the dye bath.[5]Stirring the sheet ensures there aren't any folds or wrinkles where the dye can't penetrate.It's a good idea to wear long gloves for this so the dye doesn't stain your hands if you accidentally touch it.6Leave the sheet in the dye for about 30 minutes. To get a rich, vibrant color, you'll probably need to soak your sheet for about half an hour, stirring regularly. However, if you lift the sheet out of the water and you're satisfied with the color before then, it's fine to take it out early.[6]You can also leave the sheet in the water a little longer if you haven't achieved the color you want.7Remove the sheet, wring it out, and drain your bathtub. When you're happy with the color, lift the sheet out of the bathtub and squeeze it to remove as much of the excess dye as possible. Then, remove the stopper from your bathtub so you can rinse the sheet.[7]It might help to have a large plastic container available to put the sheet into after you wring it out.If you're using a washing machine, allow it to continue to the spin cycle.8Rinse the sheet thoroughly in cold water. Hold the sheet under the tap and continue rinsing it until the water runs clear. This may take several minutes, so be patient!It's important to rinse the dye thoroughly.[8]Rinse your bathtub or bucket, as well.9Wash the sheet again with mild detergent and cold water. After you finish rinsing out the excess dye, place your sheet in the washing machine or wash it by hand with cold water and a mild detergent. This will help set the dye and remove any remaining residue.[9]When you're finished, hang the sheet to dry or place it in the dryer. Then, enjoy the new look for your bed, or take your dyed sheet to the beach or on a picnic to show it off![10]When you wash your sheet for the first time, consider washing it separately from your other clothing, and in cold water. That way, if any of the dye is left, it won't bleed onto your clothes. After that, wash the sheet the way you normally would, but keep in mind that washing in cold water will preserve the color longer. Advertisement 1Wash the sheet in hot water, but don't dry it. Your sheet will absorb the dye more evenly if it's clean and wet, so before you try to dye it, run it through the washing machine. Use hot water, but skip the detergent, as this may leave a residue that interferes with the dye.[11]Light-colored sheets made of cotton or rayon are best for this project.2Place a dropcloth or tarp on your workstation. Tie-dyeing can be messy, so to protect your floor, table, or other work surface, it's a good idea to spread out some sort of tarp or dropcloth. If you don't have one on hand, try cutting open 3-4 garbage bags, then spread them across your work area.[12]Tip: To minimize cleanup, wait for a day with nice weather, then spread out a dropcloth on the ground outside and use that as your workspace. 3Mix your dye in a bucket according to package directions. The easiest way to tie-dye your sheets is to buy a tie-dye kit, which will come with several different colors of dye, rubber bands, and containers or squeeze bottles. However, if you're mixing up your own dye, follow the package instructions to determine how much water to use for the product you're using.[13]If you're using multiple colors of dye, mix each color in its own container.If the dye package recommends adding salt, do that now.[14]You can also mix the dye and pour into squeeze bottles if you want more control over the process. This is especially helpful if you want to use more than 1-2 colors.4Twist or fold the sheet and secure it with rubber bands. For a traditional tie-dye pattern, grab the center of the sheet, then twist it into a long sphere. Then, wrap rubber bands tightly around the sphere, spacing them about 45in (1013cm) apart. [15]To make geometric patterns, fold the sheet into triangles or squares, or pleat it in an accordion shape. Then, criss-cross the rubber bands across that shape.[16]Make smaller circular gathers for a polka-dotted or floral tie-dye.5Put on gloves, then dip the sheet into dye. Protect your hands with plastic or rubber gloves, then dip 1 end of the sheet in the dye and hold it there about 10-15 seconds. If you're only using 1 color, you can submerge the whole sheet in the dye bin. However, if you're using multiple colors, try to dip a different area of the sheet into each color. Either way, try to saturate the sheet fully with the dye.[17]It's okay if the colors bleed into each other somewhat, but try not to overlap them completely or the final result may look muddy.If you're using squirt bottles, squeeze the color out onto the fabric. Try to apply each color to a different section.[18]Remove the sheet from the dye and place it in a separate container for 20 minutes. In order for the dye to soak deep into the twists and folds that you created, you'll need to let the sheet rest undisturbed. Place the dyed fabric in a plastic bin, container, or bag, and wait about 20 minutes or so.[19]Make sure you choose a container that's okay to dye, since it may become stained.7Remove the rubber bands and unfold the sheet. After the dye has soaked into the sheet, unwrap or cut away the rubber bands, then hold your sheet up and admire your work! Although the color may bleed a little when you rinse it, the final result won't change much from what you see now.[20]8Rinse your sheet in cold water until the water runs clear. Hold the sheet under cold running water and rinse out any excess dye. Keep rinsing the sheet until the water runs completely clear. Otherwise, the sheet may bleed the next time you wash it.[21]The cold water will help set the dye.When you're finished, hang the sheet up to air dry or place it in the dryer.The first time you wash the sheet, it may be a good idea to wash it in cold water, separate from your other clothes, in case any of the dye still remains. After that, however, it should be fine to wash with like colors. You can use whatever water temperature you typically prefer for your bedding, although washing the sheet in cold water will keep the colors vibrant longer. Advertisement Ask a Question Advertisement Thanks Thanks Advertisement SheetBathtub, large container, or washing machineHot waterCold water1-2 boxes fabric dye1-2 cups (300-600 g) saltLong-handled spoon or long stickGlovesPlastic containerLarge pot (optional)SheetDropcloth or tarpTie-dye in about 1-4 colors1 container or bottle for each color dyeRubber bandsGlovesPlastic container or bagCold water Thanks for reading our article! If you'd like to learn more about costume design, check out our interview with Natalie Hamann. This article was co-authored by Natalie Hamann and by wikiHow staff writer, Amy Bobak. BA, Natalie Hamann is a Costume Designer based in Fredericksburg, Virginia. She is the owner of Archaic Costumes and Designs, LLC. Natalie characterizes her approach to costume design as fantasy and whimsical meets historical. She loves making historically-inspired costumes and approaches her work with an appreciation for classical training and historical accuracy while valuing the freedom to create what comes to mind. Natalie grew up sewing and crafting, which gave her invaluable insight into materials and adhesives. In addition to modeling her own creations, she has created an online marketplace for her costumes on Etsy and has also built a community of costume enthusiasts on social media where she enjoys sharing videos about her methods and processes. She also takes commissions to create custom pieces. This article has been viewed 38,425 times. Co-authors: 3 Updated: March 29, 2025 Views:38,425 Categories: Dyeing Clothes and Fabric PrintSend fan mail to authors Thanks to all authors for creating a page that has been read 38,425 times. Tie-dye has its origins in ancient fabric-dyeing principles across the world, seen in various Japanese, Indonesian, and Peruvian traditions, to name a few. But this funky, organic dying method became popular in the 1960s and '70s in the U.S., almost becoming synonymous with the hippie movement, and it continues to have a consistent resurgence in American fashion and home decor. And right now, it's having a moment not just on a t-shirt but as a part of bedding. While you can buy pre-dyed sheets, it lacks the ability to really customize them according to your palette, and tie-dyeing is a fun method to experiment with. Luckily, it isn't too hard to create your own tie-dyed bed sheets at home.You can try a few different methods using nearly any type of sheet.If you're using white sheets, you'll want to use pigmented dyes; this is the most popular, common form of tie-dyeing. But if you have a dark-colored sheet you still want to add some dimension and pattern to, you can try a similar method with bleach. In terms of customizing your pattern, you can choose from the usual method of tying up your sheets with rubberbands or string or use other resistance dying methods in a tradition known as "shibori," which comes from 8th century China and continues to produce stunning results. It's all about what you want the final result to look like. If you take a look at the world of tie-dye, you'll see that there's a lot of variation in patterns. That has to do with the method you use to tie the fabric up. The usual method requires bundling the fabric up and securing it in sections with rubberbands or strings. When you're working with bedding, one easy method is to just lay the sheet on a table and, if the direct center, then pinch the fabric. Slowly twist the sheet, creating a spiral. In the end, you will be left with a rosette; just use rubber bands or yarn (check that whatever you use won't bleed color during the dying process) to create tie-dye sections.Now it's time to start tying up sections; do this in equal sections for a more even tie-dye spiral. For a more randomized pattern, create sections of varying size, and for a more controlled one. If you want a more dominant main color and accents, vary the size of the sections while applying the main color to the larger ones and the accents to the smaller ones. Repeat on the pillowcases. Note that while this method is great for beginners, there are plenty of folding methods you can use on your bed linen, and all will produce drastically different results. Still, this method won't give you the super-defined, more intricate patterns seen in shibori. Shibori differs from tie-dye in that instead of just being tied with yarn, the fabric can be wrapped, pulled, or clamped between other objects. One method known as Itajime requires folding the sheet into a square before clamping it between two wooden blocks, then securing it with rubber bands before dunking it in a dye bath. This will result in a geometric block pattern. Another popular shibori method is called Arashi, in which you wrap the sheet around a pole or pipe before binding it with string, then applying dye. Patterns can even be created by creating stitches with yarn or thread to create bunches in some sections; this is a great option if you want to customize the pattern.All of these methods will produce drastically different results, so be sure to spend time familiarizing yourself with them before making your choice. Also, keep in mind that sheets are quite large, so you'll need fairly large wood blocks and pipes to accomplish your bedding tie-dye. If you're keen to play with multiple shibori methods, consider doing the pillowcases in a different style than the sheets, providing a much-welcome contrast. If you're going for the traditional dying method on white or light-colored sheets, you need to pick out your colors before you do anything else with the sheet. Decide on your color palette and what aesthetic you're going for. Tie-dye is inherently pretty groovy and organic, but you can choose between muted pastels and vibrant, poppy colors. Note that while shibori typically uses indigo dye on white cloth, you can use any color you like. However, you really do only want to use white or very light-colored fabric because shibori's impact comes from contrast and bold, monochromatic patterns. For more of an ombre, consider choosing a few different tones of the same color. If your style is more natural and earthy, pull in shades from the outdoors greens, rusty oranges, beige, and browns. But to make a statement, think about using complementary colors for maximum contrast; just be sure to let them have time to set before adding the complementary color because if mixed together, you'll end up with a murky brown shade. Adding black dye can also make for a bold accent.Only got dark-colored sheets on hand and want to give them a makeover? Try to use some bleach instead; you'll be left with white markings that stand out against the fabric. This is also a great choice if you want a more minimalist, pared-down nod to tie-dye. We're going to show you how to tie-dye a sheet in 10 minutes and your friends won't believe it! Call this sheet whatever you want: a beach sheet, a picnic blanket, or use it as a bed sheet, but everyone will be in awe that it only took a few minutes to make!With the summer picking up speed and the pool losing the allure it had the first couple of weeks, we decided it would be a great time to do something different! A picnic perhaps? When we went in the basement to try and turn up something to sit on; however, all we could find was an old stained bedsheet. How could we eat on a sheet that had a big stain on it, without feeling a little sick to our stomachs? Then the idea hit, tie-dye the sheet! What could be cuter than a perfectly tie-dyed picnic blanket? This was easy and to tie-dye it took no more than ten minutes (not including the drying time) and the results were well worth it!SUPPLIES NEEDED: -Old bed sheet -Rubber Bands -Tie-dye kit (we used Tulip One-Step Tie-dye Kit) A kit comes with everything you need to create the perfect tie-dye: filled bottles, refills, rubber bands, and design ideas!INSTRUCTIONS: 1. Spread the bed sheet out across something that you don't mind getting a little color on, preferably grass. 2. Pinch the center of the sheet and start to spin it in a circular motion, continue spinning until the entire sheet is curled up. 3. Take the rubber bands and put them on the curled sheet that you just created so it won't come undone. 4. Use a hose to soak the sheet all the way through. When the cloth is wet, the dye spreads out easier and the result will be much better. 5. Now the fun part: tie-dye the sheet! Squirt the colors on the sheet. That's it!6. Once all the colors are on, leave it out in the sun for about an hour, or until dry. 7. Unfold and admire. 100-percent cotton twin sheet set (white or light colors work best)Tie-dye kit, or 3 fabric reactive dye colors. 1 bottle eachSqueeze bottles (optional)Disposable vinyl glovesRubber bandsPlastic tableclothPaper towelsCooling rackTrash bagsLarge tub (optional) Tie-dye your sheets for colorful look. Image Credit: Debbie Williams Tie-dye sheets can be pricey, but you can dye your own and achieve the same eye-catching results for a fraction of the cost. There are many ways to tie-dye fabric, but for beginners, a kit is a good place to start. Most craft stores sell tie-dye kits by various manufacturers, or individual dyes from which you can choose your own color combinations. The fabric reactive dyes included in kits, and the individual colors sold alongside them, are formulated to achieve colorful, permanent results in one step, without additional ingredients. Have all the supplies ready to go. Image Credit: Debbie Williams Gather your supplies and set up your work area. Choose a mess-safe work area like a basement, garage, laundry room or backyard, weather permitting. Cover your work surface with a plastic tablecloth or a sheet of painters plastic. Place a layer of newspaper or paper towels over the plastic to soak up drips and prevent the dye from running off the table. Remember, the dye is permanent so wear appropriate clothing and protect the entire work area. Put the washing machine to work. Image Credit: Debbie Williams Wash the sheets in a washing machine to remove the sizing. Use regular laundry detergent and no fabric softener, as it interferes with the dyeing process. The flat sheet is the simplest to fold. Image Credit: Debbie Williams Fold the damp flat sheet in half vertically, bottom to top and then half again, providing a much-welcome contrast. If you're going for the traditional dying method on white or light-colored sheets, you need to pick out your colors before you do anything else with the sheet. Decide on your color palette and what aesthetic you're going for. Tie-dye is inherently pretty groovy and organic, but you can choose between muted pastels and vibrant, poppy colors. Note that while shibori typically uses indigo dye on white cloth, you can use any color you like. However, you really do only want to use white or very light-colored fabric because shibori's impact comes from contrast and bold, monochromatic patterns. For more of an ombre, consider choosing a few different tones of the same color. 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