

DIY Henna

Painting | Drawing | Cultural Events



ConnectABILITY.ca

WHAT MAKES IT MEANINGFUL

DIY henna allows for creative self-expression, cultural exploration, and sensory engagement. Participants can create beautiful, temporary designs on their skin or paper, boosting confidence, focus, and fine motor skills. It can also introduce and honor South Asian, Middle Eastern, and North African cultural traditions in an inclusive way.

TIME

- **45–60 minutes** including setup, designing, and drying time
- Optional: two sessions (practice → application)

MATERIALS

- Ready-made **henna cones** (natural, body-safe)
- **Practice sheets** (with designs or blank paper)
- **Wet wipes** or paper towel
- Optional:
 - Clear plastic sleeves over templates for tracing
 - Skin-safe marker or white eyeliner pencil to outline designs first
 - Essential oil like lavender (helps darken stain)



DIY Henna

- Lemon-sugar sealant (optional, for longer-lasting stain)

** Avoid black henna (contains harmful chemicals like PPD). Only use natural, pre-tested products.*

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Introduction

- a. Show examples of simple henna designs (flowers, spirals, dots, stars)
- b. Share a bit about henna's cultural origins and uses (e.g. celebrations, weddings)

2. Practice on Paper

- a. Let participants practice squeezing henna onto paper or plastic-covered templates
- b. Use tracing or guided dot-to-dot templates for easy starts

3. Plan Design on Skin (Optional)

- a. Mark a design outline using skin-safe white pencil
- b. Let participants choose placement: hand, arm, or back of palm

4. Apply Henna

- a. Squeeze cone gently to follow outline
- b. Encourage simple shapes or dot patterns if motor control is a challenge
- c. Let dry for 15–30 minutes (remind them to avoid touching it)

5. Seal & Finish

- a. Optional: dab with lemon-sugar mix to help stain set
- b. Peel off dried paste once fully dry (1–2 hours later, or at home)
- c. Avoid washing for a few hours to let stain darken

RESOURCES

- <https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&source=web&rct=j&opi=89978449&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.youtube.com%2Fwatch%3Fv%3D0938GIGBCPM>

DIY Henna

SUPPORTS NEEDED

- **Visual aids:** step-by-step images of design process
- **Hand-over-hand guidance** for squeezing henna or tracing designs
- **Pre-drawn templates** or stencils to trace simple shapes
- **Sensory alternatives:** use non-staining gel for practice
- **Time reminders:** visual timer or cues for drying time
- **One-on-one encouragement** to support patience and confidence
- **Social guidance:** compliment others' designs, respect personal space
- **Skin check:** test a small area first for allergies or discomfort

OTHER THINGS TO NOTE

- You may want to use an indoor table setup and a surface that can be easily cleaned
- There are many printable henna templates available online that can be used if desired