

Jacquard

Tie-Dye with Procion MX Spiral Shirt

by Noelle Faulkner



A tie dye classic! It looks challenging but it's really quite simple.

Materials:

- 100% cotton T-shirt (pre-washed)
- Procion MX dyes—Golden Yellow, Magenta, Bright Blue
- Soda Ash
- kite string
- 3 squirt bottles
- measuring cups and spoons (use for dyeing only)
- rubber gloves
- paper towels
- plastic bags (I like gallon sized zip-locks)
- dust mask

Prepare your work area by spreading plastic sheeting over your work table and secure it with some tape.

Directions:

1. Soda Ash Soak

Dissolve 1 cup of soda ash in 1 gallon of water. The soda ash dissolves easiest in hot water, allow the water to cool before soaking the shirt(s). Soak the shirt(s) for at least 20 minutes. (You can leave them in for longer—overnight won't hurt anything). Remove shirt(s) and wring out. Save the soda ash solution, it can be used again, even after a month or more (actually it will keep indefinitely. You would probably get tired of storing it—the stuff just doesn't go bad).

2. Tying

Place a damp shirt flat on the table, front side up. Smooth out wrinkles, align seams at sides and shoulders. Decide where you want the spiral to begin. Here's an opportunity to be creative. You could center the spiral on the front of the shirt, but what about starting at the shoulder, or off to one side? When your mind is made up there are two methods for making a spiral. I'll go through them one at a time. First the hand method: pinch a bit of fabric between your fingers and give your wrist a twist. Lift your hand and pinch that bit again, giving it another turn. Continue in this fashion, straightening



the folds as you go. The folds should be about 1/2" high, so if you have bigger ones, press a finger in the center of each fold to split into two.



When your spiral gets larger it will tend to pile up in the middle. To prevent this, lay your hand flat on the shirt and continue turning, straightening and splitting folds.

The second method begins the spiral by using a dowel (1/2" x 12" long). Place one end of the dowel where you want the center of the spiral. Press down firmly and turn the dowel. You will see the pleats begin to form. Continue turning, straightening, and splitting folds until you have a nice cinnamon bun shape at the end of the dowel.

This design looks best when the folds are even and plentiful.



Slide the kite string under the shirt and tie across the center, leaving an extra 'tail' for tying off at the end. (If you have used a dowel for this fold, remove it before tying). Rotate and tie across the center again at a 90 degree angle to the first (like tying a package). The spiral is now divided into four parts by the string.



Continue tying the bundle by pulling the string across the top, placing it about 1” from the previous tie, sliding underneath the bundle and coming up the other side, pulling snug as you go. Tie off with the ‘tail’ left at the beginning. The finished bundle should be divided fairly evenly by the string.



Dye Mixing

Safety

Any powdered dye can cause a reaction if inhaled. Take the following precautions:

- Wear a mask
- Work in a well-ventilated but draft free area without fans or AC running.
- Wear rubber gloves and old clothes
- Measuring and mixing containers should be used for dyeing only. Do not use for food afterwards.

Basic recipe

1 cup water

2 teaspoons dye (double this amount for darker colors-especially black)

I like to mix the dyes in a measuring cup. Place the powdered dye in the bottom and add a bit of water to make a paste. Add a drop or two of Synthrapol, if desired, to help disperse the dye (don't be concerned if you haven't any Synthrapol—it's completely optional). Gradually add more water until the entire cup has been used. Pour into a squirt bottle. I like to label the bottle, many colors look similar in solution.

Note: Hard water will affect the quality of color you can achieve. For brightest results, use distilled water.

Applying the dye

Just a couple of pointers for dye application; much of the beauty of tie dye comes from the blending of the different colors of dye. Consider this when applying the dyes. I only used three colors here and they will all blend well together; Bright Blue with Magenta will create purple, Bright Blue with Golden Yellow will make green, Golden Yellow with Magenta will make orange. Whatever order I apply these in I will get great colors. If you choose another combination of colors you may have some that won't look great blended, Magenta with a green for example. If you are uncertain, test a bit on a scrap of fabric or an old t-shirt you don't care about. Be bold in these experiments. Sometimes I've been pleasantly surprised by color combinations.

For this shirt, imagine slices of pie, each slice will be a different color. Applying the dyes in these pie shapes make the colors spiral around the center. I used three colors so I imagined six slices, starting with Golden Yellow, then Bright Blue, then Magenta, and repeating that same order to complete the circle. Do not bring all of the colors to the very center or they will all blend together and you'll have a brownish blob at the center of your spiral. As you apply the dye, work the tip of your squirt bottle well into the folds. Use paper towels to blot up extra dye as you go, otherwise it will be absorbed by the shirt and spoil your design. When you have finished applying dye to this side, turn the shirt over and repeat the same process on the other side. Place the dyed shirt in a zip-lock bag and let sit for 24-48 hours in a warm place (but not in direct sunlight).

Rinse and launder

After 24-48 hours, remove shirt from the zip-lock bag and rinse in cool water. Carefully cut the strings and continue rinsing, gradually increasing the temperature of the water until it is hot. When the water is almost clear you can stop rinsing. Wash the shirt with liquid detergent in a washing machine set for hot wash/cold rinse. Hang or machine dry.

Enjoy wearing your wonderful spiral tie dye classic!