
DIY Year Planner with Faith Hale

Chapter 1 - DIY Year Planner

Overview

(upbeat music) - Hi there, I'm Faith Hale. I'm a staff artist here at Creativebug and in my previous life I worked as a book binder. I've been an apprentice to fine binder, an assistant to a book artist and I just recently got my MFA in Book Art and Creative Writing at Mills College. I love starting off the year with a fresh planner but sometimes it can be hard to find the perfect one. Some people like bullet style journals, some people need lines, some people like to see the month laid out ahead of them. So I've designed this planner to be perfectly customizable to your needs. You'll learn how to make a text block out of sheets that lay flat and a hardcover case. I'll walk you through it using book binding tools and materials, like a bone folder, PVA glue, book cloth and book board. If you've never made a book before this is a great first project for you. You've made it easy as possible. (upbeat music)

Materials

- For this project you'll need some basic bookbinding tools and materials. You'll need book cloth for the outside and you'll also need some chipboard, this is thicker than say, like a cereal box cardboard, but it's thinner than a book board which can be harder to cut at home. You'll also need some decorative paper for your end sheets. You'll need a metal ruler. I like to have a quilting ruler, it's helpful for lining things up but it's not essential. For the text block, you'll need 8.5 by 11 sheets of copy paper. We've included some downloadable templates so you can customize your pages; we have a month spread, a bullet journal style page, some graph paper, or you can use plain paper if you'd like. You'll also need a ruler with some really small markings, I like ones that go down to 1/16 of an inch. Also, you'll need a pair of fine tipped scissors; a mechanical pencil with a really tiny point; you'll need this utility knife to cut your board; and then an additional X-ACTO knife, one of either of these varieties. You'll also use a bone folder, a glue brush, and PVA. PVA is a pH neutral glue and it's archival. Don't try to substitute this with Elmer's glue or Mod Podge. Also, a glue stick. You'll also need scratch paper; a binder clip; a cutting mat; and something to weigh down your books, I like to use boards with bricks wrapped in paper on top of them but you can use a couple of heavy books if you need. Also, wax paper makes cleanup a lot easier. And finally, if you have access to a paper cutter, it makes the process a lot faster.

Create Book Elements

Bookbinding basics

- Let's walk through the anatomy of our book. This is a prototype of the finished version, and here is the spine edge. This is the fore edge. This is called the head and the tail. And we have end sheets on either side. And then the paper inside is called the text block. Now the way it's constructed is with a case, and the text block. The text block is made of up pages stacked together, and the case is made out of a front and back board, plus a spine, plus an unglued area that allows for movement. We're using 8.5 by 11 copy paper because it's readily accessible to everybody. But when you're choosing your paper, you need to pay specific attention to grain. Now grain is how the fibers lay in the paper.

It effects how the paper folds. It effects how moisture interacts with the pages. So we need to make sure we're working with grain long paper, that means the grain is running up and down. The way we find the grain, most simply, is using a bounce test. Begin by folding your paper loosely in half in any direction. And you're gauging the pressure it has against your hand. So this is short ways. Then we try it again long ways, and it folds so much more easily. So this is how we know that we have a grain long piece of paper. So we're not creasing it, we're just pressing down on it and seeing the resistance. There's a lot less resistance this way. Once you find your grain that's going to determine how you fold your paper. So because we're grain long, we're folding it in half this way, and this is going to determine the size of the page. Now this seemed a little tall and skinny for me, so I'm cutting off the bottom two and a half inches of every page. We've also included PDFs of three different pages, so that you can customize it to your preference. There's a quarter inch graft paper. There's a bullet journal style paper, and there is a calendar paper. For our project, I'm going to be using a dozen calendar sheets, one for each month. And then adding a bullet journal style paper in between each month, and one at the front and one at the end for essential information. If you'd like to do a different version, make sure to not have to many more pages then that or else it gets kind of bulky and difficult to manage. Also make sure you cut off the bottom two and a half inches of each. If you use a paper cutter it'll go a lot faster.

Assembling text block

- Once you've cut all your pages, you'll need to fold them in half. Because we've cut it into a square, it might be tricky to remember which way the grain goes, so you repeat the bounce test. Okay, so that tells us we're folding with the grain. Folding something in half seems like it should be really easy, but there's actually a couple of tips you can use to make a really precise and crisp fold. I like to line up the corners. Then I hold down with my left hand and bone from the center out, and the center out. Do that again. Corner, corner... This step is going to seem kind of tedious and unnecessary, but I assure you, it'll make it that much easier when you finally get to gluing. We're going to alternate the folds on the page and put it under weight. So we have a fold on our left hand side, and then flip it so the fold's on the right hand side. Right now our paper is at a slope because this has so much more energy than this side. So we're gonna flatten it out so your planner lays as flat as possible. So we have our folded edge here, and then flip so the folded edge is alternating. We're gonna do this for all of our pages, and then we're going to put it under weight. This doesn't determine the order your pages go in in your final planner, we'll still have time to do that later. The next step is to weight them, and I've already had a stack under weights for a few hours. This is the setup I use with these boards, and these are bricks wrapped with paper. I wouldn't recommend just plain bricks because they might crumble and get on your bookwork. You can see what a difference just a few hours under weights make. Once the paper's been sitting under weight for a few hours, preferably overnight, we're going to reverse that process we did of arranging the folds, so that all the folds are on the same side and all the openings are on the same side. And then we'll organize our paper how we'd like to see it in our final journal. I'd like my planner to have a bullet sheet at the front and the back, and then the calendar sheets in between. So I'll have a bullet sheet. A calendar sheet. And here's another opportunity to make sure all your folds are going in the same way. For the bullet pages, it doesn't matter where the top or the bottom is, because it's all the same. But make sure for your calendar pages that the month label is at the top for each one. Now I'm going to go back through every fold just to check. Remember we'll be using this the rest of the year. So all these additional nitpicky details will totally be worth it. Now that we've determined that all the pages are

in the right places, we're going to knock them up. Tapping firmly on the table. And you're going to repeat this on all sides. Now, the goal is to have sharp right angles at the spine edge, the fore-edge, at all the edges. And once we've determined... And once we've determined that everything is smooth and straight as possible, we're going to put our bulldog clip on the fore-edge. So not the edge with the spine and the folds, but the edge with the openings. So we wanna make sure the edges are still straight, this is still flat, and we'll begin by gluing up the spine. We'll need our scratch paper. I'm using this writing template I found at a thrift shop, but you can use a phone book, is a really handy source of scrap paper, or any scrap paper you have lying around. You will need your glue stick and your bone folder. And if you have a fatter glue stick, just remember that you're only going to be gluing in about a half an inch, so there'll be a lot of glue stick off the edge. That's why I prefer the small ones for this project. We're going to glue up the spine edge between a quarter and a half of an inch, but no more than that. Use your glue stick to go along the edge of your first folds. You'll flip down the next sheet and bone it over. Pull it out of the glue, and you're going to glue on top of here. Make sure you have an even coating. And it's helpful if you have raking light, so you can see that the glue is going down. Also, if you think you've gotten glue on your bone folder, hesitate and wipe it off, 'cause you don't wanna be scraping it where it doesn't need to go. Repeat until you've glued up all of your spine edge pages, and then we'll move on to gluing up the fore-edge. You'll remove your clip. Also if you have any blank pages, you might wanna take this opportunity to go through and gently mark the backs of the pages so you don't accidentally glue any spreads shut. Because I have printed pages, this isn't going to be a problem for me, but it's very easy to do if you have blank pages. So you're just going to make a tiny lightweight X, but if you already have gotten this far with blank pages, the way to find out the middle is you try to open it and it's stuck together, this is the back, you've already glued up this edge. And then of course, this is not the back, this is the center. Because this is printed, I don't need to do it anymore. Now we can glue up the fore-edges exactly as we did the spine edge. Bookmaking is amazing. I remember the instant I learned to read, to ride a bike, and the moment I made my first book, because they all felt exactly the same. It felt like the world was opened to me. And that's why I wanted to do it forever. We've glued up the spine, we've glued up the fore-edge, now there's one more step before we put it under weights and leave it overnight. We're going to attach decorative end sheets. So I've already cut these sheets down to 8 1/2 by 8 1/2, just like our text block, and we're going to fold them in half, just like we did our text pages. And you can use any decorative paper or cardstock, just make sure the grain is long, and make sure the decorative part is on the inside of the fold. We're gonna repeat our bounce test. Oh, it goes this way. And then when we glue this to our text block, we're only going to be gluing the outer quarter of an inch, and not the fore-edge. So we have our block, it's looking a little worse for wear 'cause of the clamping, but this will fade down after we've had it under weights, and also this does a handy job of covering this up. So I like to have my gluing on the right-hand side like I did with all the others. Make sure I have the folds of the paper on the right. And the waste sheet isn't necessary because it's gotten so high up that we don't really have a chance of it getting on the table. Glue up this quarter of an inch. And repeat on the other side. The folds here. The instant you're done, you're gonna wanna put it under weight, whether it's heavy books or your boards and bricks, make sure you keep it there overnight. No peeking, don't cheat. It's really essential to make sure that your planner lays flat and that the pages are crisp and they don't warp.

Making the case

- By now you have your text block ready and dried and the next step we're going to do is make the

case. I showed you earlier how the text block fits into the case. The next thing we're going to do is cut your case. One important thing we need to note is that we won't be gluing the interior $\frac{3}{8}$ of an inch of the text block to the case. So this will be left open in our case. I'm going to show you an example of why this is important. Here's my prototype. And when I open it, in the spine, this open area helps the book lay flat. So if we glued it up all the way it would be really tight and the spine wouldn't be able to shift at all. In addition to considering that $\frac{3}{8}$ of an inch of wiggle room on the inside of the board, you'll also be adding $\frac{1}{8}$ of an inch at the head, tail and fore-edge. This is called the square, and it should be even all the way around. $\frac{1}{8}$ of an inch is a fairly traditional measurement. If it's much larger it'll be kind of bulky and it has risk of bending, and if it's much smaller then it doesn't do an effective job of protecting your text block and it risks getting the edges of your pages dirty. Chipboard also has a grain. You have to take this into consideration before marking and cutting. We find the grain in exactly the same way, our bounce test. So I try to fold it this way, and it's kind of stiff, not particularly amenable to movement. And I fold it this way and it's much easier. Because we're cutting small pieces out of a larger sheet, I'm going to mark the direction of the grain. And now we're going to find the height of our text block. Because we've used $8\frac{1}{2}$ by 11 sheets, we know already that the height of the book is $8\frac{1}{2}$, but we're going to measure it out on our board just to be sure. Sometimes there's shifting that occurs, and if the board is too small, it can be really hard to case it in effectively. So I'm lying out my board on my cutting mat, and I'm going to find right angle lines to be sure that this is in fact square. Sometimes when it comes from the factory it's not exactly square, but this one looks to be pretty exact. So I'm laying my book out. The grain of the book is running this way, top and the bottom of the book. And the grain of the board is running this way as well. And I'm going to give it $\frac{1}{8}$ of an inch on the top and the bottom using my teeny-tiny ruler. So there's $\frac{1}{8}$ on the top. $\frac{1}{8}$ on the bottom, and I'm going to mark it. And because the height of the cover and the back cover and the spine are all the same, I'm going to make one long cut across the entire board. So I'm going to repeat this process on the other side of the board, making sure there's $\frac{1}{8}$ at the top, making sure there's $\frac{1}{8}$ at the bottom. This is where you'll need your utility knife, and make sure you're using a metal ruler. You might be tempted to use a quilting ruler because it's easy to see the numbers through the ruler itself, but you're going to cut right into that acrylic. It's not a great idea. So once again I'm lining up my board with the lines on my cutting mat. So I know we did the measurement on the board. If you're a numbers person, what you need to know is that it is $8\frac{1}{2}$ inches plus $\frac{1}{8}$ of an inch, plus $\frac{1}{8}$ of an inch, which gives us $8\frac{3}{4}$ of an inch. When you're cutting, don't try to get all of it all at once. You might put too much pressure on it and press against the ruler and knock it off where it's supposed to be. So give it a couple of consistent slices. This might take five or six cuts. If you want to test if it's cut through, pull on this side, don't test this side. And then we have it. Now we mark up the unglued portion of the spine. And also make sure you're doing it on the spine, not the open edge, but the one that's glued shut. So you do $\frac{3}{8}$ of an inch at the top, and at the bottom, and then connect them. I'm doing this on both the front and the back, the spine side each time. To figure out the width of our front and back covers, we're going to use that line we make and line it up with the edge of the board. Give yourself that $\frac{1}{8}$ of an inch on the top and the bottom. It should be even on both sides. We're going to replicate that $\frac{1}{8}$ of an inch on the front. Now don't be afraid to be fussy with this part. It's really important that everything is at right angles. We're going to be using this to cut both boards. So see, this line right here should measure up exactly with the edge of the board. Now we're going to add $\frac{1}{8}$ of an inch at the fore-edge, so we're going to be measuring $\frac{1}{8}$ of an inch from here and $\frac{1}{8}$ of an inch from here and connecting those lines. Instead of drawing a line we're just going to cut. And

do so as you did for the broader cut, a couple straight ones down, and that should separate it. Your second board will be exactly as wide as the first and you might be tempted to use it as a cutting template. This is risky, not a great idea. You might cut into the first board. So what I like to do is line it up exactly, draw a line, and then use that line to cut over.

Assembling Your Book

Preparing spine and case

- Now we'll find the width of the spine piece. The height will be exactly the same as the boards we already cut, and we find this width by adding the board thicknesses plus the width of our text block. Now I like to do this manually. I'm going to stack these three pieces together and mark it that way. So I stack them up. Make sure this side is totally lined up. And here's the height of our boards. And I mark it at the bottom. And I mark it at the top. And then I cut, the same way I cut the other pieces. Grab your book cloth, and once again we are going to be determining grain. We're going to use the same bounce test. Now this cloth comes in a roll, so it's naturally inclined to move in a certain direction, so to do the bounce test most effectively, I'm going to flip it around opposite of the roll. You fold it this way. And it folds over pretty easily. When I turn it, it does not fold over pretty easily, so we know that our grain is running this way, and I'm going to mark it, because I'm also going to be cutting a smaller piece from this parent sheet. Make sure you use light marks, and use only pencil. Before we glue anything down, I'm going to show you what the case looks like so you'll understand the markings we'll make next. We have an overhang of one inch on every side, and here is out part of the spine that's not glued. So I'm going to start by drawing out an inch around these two edges and we're going to work with that right triangle that's made to lay everything else out. Here's where I like to use my quilting ruler, 'cause I can see through it. I'm going to make a long inch mark along this left hand side. And I'm going to make an inch mark along the bottom. And our first cover piece will be placed right here. Now I'm going to use the pieces we cut as measurements to draw it out. Here's our first cover. Line it up. This $\frac{3}{8}$ inch space replicates the $\frac{3}{8}$ inch on the text block, where we won't be gluing. It's also a fairly standard measurement, and it works well for this book. Now we use our spine piece. Up against here. And you can draw off the tops if you want. I don't really think it's necessary. We're just following this bottom line to make sure everything's following a right angle. Now we add our final $\frac{3}{8}$ inch measurement before we add the last cover. One, two, $\frac{3}{8}$. One, two, $\frac{3}{8}$. And if you want, you can even keep this ruler in place so you have something to butt it up against, if you're concerned that this bottom line is not enough. Our first set of markings gave us an inch margin on the left and the bottom. Now we're going to add an inch on the right hand side and the top. Notice I'm using my lightweight blade, it's a little bit more delicate and has less of a chance of tearing the book cloth. This is the part where you really need to make sure everything is set, 'cause there's no going back. PVA dries fairly quickly, so we want to make sure we have all of our materials in place before we start. I like to use my quilting ruler as the base to make sure all the things line up after they've been glued down. You want your PVA in a dish. I have my glue brush. Also waste paper so you can glue out your board. And tear off an additional three sheets of waste paper, because after we glue it down to the book cloth, we're going to be flipping it over and boning it down, and if you bone it directly on the book cloth you can burnish the paper. So we start by gluing on the board, not the book cloth, you always glue the smaller thing. Apply your glue from the center out, making sure there's no big glops and no spaces uncovered. You will also almost

definitely get your fingers a little gluey at this part. The most important thing is getting an even coverage. And a good brush for this is something that doesn't have too full bristles, because that holds too much glue, and if it's too tiny, it doesn't give you enough glue to work with. So blot out any big glops. And glue it down. Flip it over, and put on your waste sheet. Bone it out. Don't worry just yet about getting tight into the edges or corners, we just wanna make sure there's even coverage. This is to prevent glue bubbles. And give it a look. That looks great. Now we're going to glue up our spine piece. This time, after I glue it, we'll put the quilting ruler in place, to be sure that it lines up evenly. This of course requires much less glue. And you should try to keep it as close to the bottom line as possible, but if you're choosing between lining it up with the ruler and lining it up with the marks, definitely line it up with the ruler. We flip it over for one final time. This you can push kind of gently into those non-glued parts, but you don't need to prioritize pushing them down. That kind of works more in the service of getting the front and back cover. Now we're going to trim our corners at a 45 degree angle, exactly 1 1/2 widths of board away. So the way we do this is, have two pieces of extra board, and you line it up, approximately 45 degrees, make a mark, add a second board, make a mark, and you'll cut in between those two lines you made. This is important because if it's too short, you'll have naked book corners, and if it's too long, you'll have bulky book corners. Using your scissors, we're going to cut in between these two lines. Repeat this on all four corners. Next we'll be making cuts at the spine to make it easier to fold the fabric over the spine. We're going to use our small ruler, and make sure you're cutting no closer than 1/4 inch. Only with the edge of the book board, not the spine. And we're going to do that on all four sides. Starting with the bottom, we're going to glue out our book cloth. Now I like to make sure that all of my gluing is done from the right side, 'cause I'm a righty, if you're a lefty, you might wanna do it on the left hand side. And you'll notice that as I glue it out, I'm always going to be gluing from this direction, so I'm not leaning above the book block or to the side of the book block, it's always the same gluing action. This might seem awkward at first, but it's a great habit to get into. Also make sure you're pushing glue into the bottom of the book board. And once one side is glued out and you make sure you have no globs, you're going to use your waste paper to pull up a little bit push underneath, remove the waste paper, and grab your bone folder, to bone it over. And here's where we made those cuts. You're going to flatten it around the spine, making sure that this is as straight as possible. If it's a little tucked in, that's okay, we don't really want it to be bulging out, and we wanna make sure that these edges are as covered as possible. Also, these corners need to be flattened out. I'll use my bone folder to tuck it down over that corner, so this should end up going straight. We're gonna be working with opposite sides, so do the top, and then do both sides. For the sides, apply glue in the same way, also check to make sure that your corners are covered. Sometimes the corners can get a little pokey, so I'm just knocking around the corners to make them of a more organic shape. I'm checking. Now that your case is entirely glued up, put it under weight and let it dry overnight.

Attaching text block and finishing

- You're in the final part. This is where we glue our text block into our case. The materials you'll need on hand are scratch paper and wax paper cut just larger than the size of your book. We're going to position it exactly as we had cut it, with an eighth of an inch on the head and the tail, on the fore edge. This line you've drawn out should match up exactly to where the board ends on the inside on both the top and the bottom. Once this is perfectly positioned, make sure it stays in place and you'll make a sandwich that goes between the openings of the end sheets. We'll put wax paper on the bottom and waste paper on the top and we'll glue out from the line to the edge. We will remove the

waste paper and we will immediately shut our book. You won't be able to reposition this, so don't be afraid to double, triple, quadruple check the positioning. Now we're going to glue out this top page, making sure we don't go over the line we've drawn for ourselves. Remove the waste paper. Keeping the wax paper in place. Check really quickly to make sure everything is as it should be, and you'll fold up the spine and fold down the cover and press down. Don't take a peek to see if you've lined it up properly, it will just increase the chances of it wrinkling. We're going to flip it over and do exactly the same thing on the second side. You'll repeat that same process of lifting up the spine and folding it over, press down, press down, press down! Just like every other step, you should put this immediately under weight and don't take it out until morning, but because you've been so patient, I'm gonna show you a sneak peek. So because of all of our careful measuring, we should have a nice clean border all the way around. This time when we weight it we need to make sure our spine edge is poking out so it doesn't get crushed or warped when it is under weights. Line it up just shy of the spine and put your weights on top. We've done it! We've made a planner! I really can't think of a more inspiring way to start the new year. Even though this was an introductory course, we've covered a lot of things that are really important to the foundations of book binding. Hopefully you can apply these techniques to books you decide to make in the future.