

# Design\*Sponge

## Bookbinding 101: Accordion Book

by Grace Bonney



Over the past few weeks, we've dipped our toes into the world of bookbinding. After mastering a five-hole pamphlet stitch and Japanese four-hole binding, it's time to tackle the final introductory process. This week,

we'll put aside the needle and thread and explore a book constructed *without a single stitch*. The **accordion book** is a folded structure; the book block is made by simply folding a sheet of paper back and forth in page-width increments. This project is, perhaps, a bit more involved than those of weeks past, but it allows me to introduce a few additional basic materials found in every book artist's studio and a handy technique or two. I hope you'll enjoy the project! — *Pooja*

*Photos and styling by Claire Dalgliesh*



The full how-to continues after the jump . . .

(See my “Tools” and “Materials” notes from my Five-Hole Pamphlet Stitch tutorial.)



## Tools

- 1 bonefolder — a flat, polished tool made of bone or plastic used to score a fold in the paper into a permanent position
- 1 pair of scissors
- 1 steel ruler
- 1 brush

## Materials

- 2 pieces 8 1/2" x 5 3/4" book board, a layered stock specifically used for book covers

- paper-backed book cloth (The book cloth I used for this project was purchased at Mee Tak Company Limited in Hong Kong. Mee Tak is a wholesale supplier of upholstery fabric, but sells book cloth and papers from Italy and Japan in small quantities.)
- 2 sheets 8 1/4" x 22" paper
- polyvinyl acetate (PVA) glue

## Instructions

### *Covers*



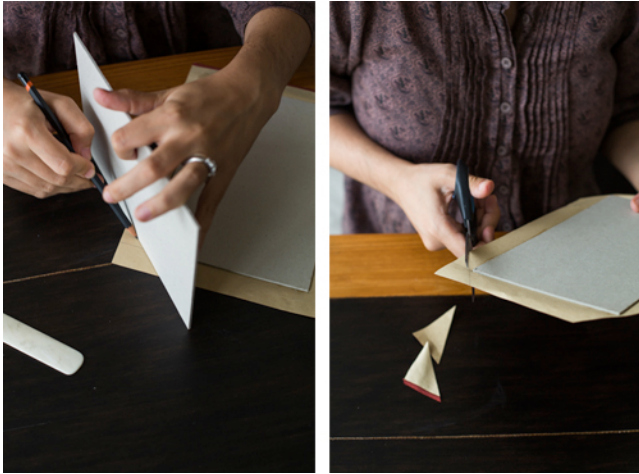


1. Using your book board as a guide, cut the book cloth so that it measures 1" larger all around.



2. Dilute a small amount of PVA glue with water. (Too much glue can saturate and warp the book board and the book cloth.) Carefully place the book board in the center of the

book cloth and press down. Use your bonefolder to smooth out any imperfections (air bubbles, ripples, etc.).



3. Trim all four corners of the book cloth along the diagonal, using your book board as a guide.









4. Lift one edge of the book cloth and press it onto the back of the board. Again, use your bonefolder to smooth and secure. Repeat for all four sides. Tap each corner with the flat of your bonefolder so they aren't too pointy.



5. Repeat steps 1–4. You will now have two hardcovers.

### *Book Block*





6. Fold one of the strips of paper in half. Fold one edge back towards the initial fold. The top half of the paper now has two pages; each is  $\frac{1}{4}$  the width of the total sheet.



7. Flip the sheet over and repeat the procedure.

8. Repeat steps 6–7. You will now have two four-page accordions.





9. To connect the accordion units, use a 2-inch “hinge.” Glue the units to the hinge. You will now have one eight-page accordion.





10. Again, dilute a small amount of PVA glue with water. Carefully place the book block in the center of the hardcovers and press down. Use your bonefolder to smooth out any imperfections.

### **Additional Resources**

*Japanese Bookbinding: Instructions from a Master Craftsman* by Kojiro Ikegami, a book I recommended last week, has a section with photos on how to prepare fabric for book covers.

*Structure of the Visual Book and Text in the Book Format* by Keith Smith include strategies for organizing pictures and text in a book or book-like object. These are brilliant books about book arts' concepts and have heavily influenced my thinking about bookmaking.

*The Thread That Binds: Interviews with Private Practice Bookbinders* by Pamela Train Leutz discovers the challenges, successes and “common threads” among 21 independent bookbinders.

*Bookbinding Now* is a New York-based community podcast posted every other Wednesday.

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