

List of Supplies Needed for Tie Dyeing

- **Synthrapol** (optional, I don't use it)
- **Soda ash fixer**
- **Urea**
- At least three dyes (the best are **Jacquard Procion MX dyes**)
- **Latex gloves**
- **Squeeze bottles**
- **Bucket**
- **Wooden spoon**
- **Funnel**
- **Rubber bands**
- **Plastic bags** (though a good alternative is to just use old grocery bags)
- Warm water
- **White shirt/socks/whatever**

How to Tie Dye

1. Prewash your clothing in Synthrapol.

I've actually never done this and all my tie dye came out fine, but if you want to try it, please do! It removes any oils or dirt that might be on the shirt, which is especially important if you have never worn it before.

2. Soak your items in a soda ash mixture.

Soda ash helps to set the correct pH level and is what causes the dye to react with the fibers in the fabric. Mix **1 cup of soda ash with one gallon of warm water**. You may want to amp it up to two gallons + two cups if you have a lot of stuff to dye. Pour it all in the bucket, and mix it up with the wooden spoon. **DON'T USE YOUR HANDS**, as soda ash is slightly caustic and might burn you 😬 After everything is dissolved, throw in your t-shirts or whatever. Some people like to tie their shirts first before soaking them; if that is your preference, skip to step 4 and then come back here. Let them soak for 10 to 20 minutes.

3. Mix up the dyes.

While your shirts are brewing, now's a good time to prepare the dyes. Add one **tablespoon of urea to one cup of warm water**, preferably mixing in a glass jar. Wait until it has dissolved a bit, then add **two teaspoons of the desired dye**. Mix this, then use the funnel to pour it into one of the bottles. **WITH THE LID ON**, shake well to make sure it's all good and ready. If you want traditional looking tie dye, you are supposed to use turquoise, fuschia, and lemon yellow. While these might seem like a girly and effeminate combination, they actually mix together to create the standard rainbow shirts you see everywhere. In my case, I didn't want a rainbow, so I went with turquoise, bright green, and jet black. Really you can use any colors you want – it all depends on how many dyes you want to buy! One more tip is to label the dye bottles. You may think you know which color is which, but they can often look the same inside the bottle.

4. Tie up your shirts.

This isn't as masochistic as it sounds. Carefully take your shirts out of the soda ash mixture, wringing out as much water as you can (wear a pair of gloves to prevent any ouchies). Then, spread out the shirt on a flat surface (ideally one you don't mind getting wet!). You can fold up your shirt any way you want, as the bunched up/folded fabric creates pockets where dye can't reach, creating spectacular designs. However, if you want to do a common design such as the spiral, follow these steps. Grasp the shirt near the middle, pinching with your fingers. Begin twisting your hand so the shirt bunches up into a spiral. Keep on

twisting, keeping everything tight and together, until you get a circle. Then, wrap that sucker in rubber bands to keep it from falling apart. It's ok if you mess up a bit because tie dye comes out pretty cool looking regardless of the pattern you choose.

5. Dye time!

Finally, the exciting part! It's time to apply the dye. Go to an area you DEFINITELY don't mind getting messy. For me, that was my backyard with a bit of newspaper on the ground. Luckily, my dog Kota was my trusty assistant during this process. A good technique for dyeing is to always start with the lighter colors, as the dark ones tend to take over everything once they are applied. For the spiral look, it's good to apply the color in segments. Since you've conveniently created a segmented circle with the rubber bands, just fill in each section with a different color! This is more important when trying to make a rainbow, as it helps all the colors blend in the correct way. But for my purposes, it kept the colors separated. Make sure you get it really soaked, turning it over to get the other side and squirting into the cracks and crevices for more color and less white.

6. Wrap it up.

When you are finished making a mess masterpiece, it's time to seal it up. In this particular example, I wrapped the dyed shirts in saran wrap, and then placed them in a plastic grocery bag. You can also put yours in a plastic freezer bag if it fits. I'd always recommend dropping it in a grocery bag when you are done, as it makes it easier to carry and adds one more layer of protection against spills. The idea is to keep it damp and warm, so store it in a place with a temperature of at least 70 degrees F. Let it sit quietly for 24 hours. I know it is hard to resist the urge to peek, but don't do it!

7. Wash it out.

Finally, the last step! Begin by taking the shirt out of the bag and removing all the rubber bands. Then, rinse out under room temperature water (in a sink you don't mind getting dirty, such as a laundry tub or metal sink). Keep rinsing until the water runs clear. Now it's time to wash them in the washing machine on a normal cycle. You can also use Synthrapol instead of laundry detergent, but typically I just use laundry detergent. Up to you!

8. Wear it with pride.

Once washed and dried, your shirt is done! Yay!



Step 1: Grasp the shirt in the middle and begin twisting.



Step 2: Continue twisting with the center tightly wrapped.



Step 3: Place rubber bands around the shirt to compact it.

