



## Tips & Demos

**Watercolor and Watermedia  
painting tips & demonstrations  
by Ellen A. Fountain, N.W.S.**

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# Making & Using Stamps with Watercolor

Because I use lots of patterns in my painting, I have experimented with various ways of creating patterned effects without having to paint each pattern element over and over again. One of the ways I do this is by making stencils, and another way is by making (or buying) stamps.

## Making a Stamp from an Eraser



Cut your eraser  
in half - you need  
a flat surface



Draw your design  
on the flat surface  
with a pencil



Use an X-acto knife  
to cut away around your  
design -- make the vertical  
cuts first, right along the  
lines of your drawing. Take  
material away to a depth of  
about 1/8 inch.

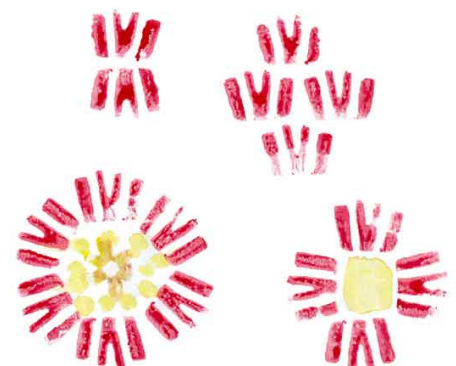
One of my favorite materials to use for making a stamp is a pink (or green) pearl eraser, the biggest one you can find. The first step is to cut the eraser in half (or even quarters if your design is small). You need this surface to be very flat, as it is your stamping surface. If it is uneven, it will not stamp well. Follow the directions at the left to create your stamp. Be very careful when carving! You want to cut the eraser, not your fingers!

Below you see an assortment of my eraser stamps.



Once you have a stamp made, depending on the design, you can stamp a variety of different motifs by turning the stamp in different directions. I have used this particular stamp (shown at left) for making southwest motifs, for a kind of abstract “grass”, and just as a geometric design.

When you mix a wash to use with your stamps, make it mostly paint and not much water (what I call a “dry” wash). If you make your paint mixture too thin and runny, it will not adhere well to the stamp, and your stamped impression may be incomplete or too pale. Experiment with your paint mixtures and stamp on scrap paper until you get the feel for how wet the paint mixture needs to be.





Shown at left are more of my stamps, some of which are combined with painted strokes.

The lady bug and leaf design in the upper right corner are purchased stamps, and there are literally thousands of stamps available if you want to go this route. Look at your local craft store.

Below is another simple stamp made up of three fat lines. It can be used to make a wonderful basketweave pattern or overall texture using a half drop stamping technique (right). You can put washes over these stamped areas to soften them, or underneath as an underpainting (which will give you harder edges on the stamped area, assuming the underlying wash is dry before you start stamping).

You can also have a stamp made from any drawing at most office supply stores, so if you have a special symbol or mark you make repeatedly, you might consider having it made into a stamp.

