

Mandala Creation

What is a mandala?

In the ancient Sanskrit language of Hinduism and Buddhism, *mandala* means “circle.” Traditionally, a mandala is a geometric design or pattern that represents the cosmos or deities in various heavenly worlds. People in different cultures all over the world have created mandalas, suggesting that the form speaks to something deep within every human being. Psychoanalyst Carl Jung believed that the mandala represents the Self and that drawing a mandala gives a person a sacred space to meet that Self. He considered making mandalas an effective form of art therapy, helping to calm and comfort people when they are struggling.

Mandalas are most common in Buddhist and Hindu art of the Indian subcontinent and hold spiritual and religious significance.



Hindu



Buddhist

Mandalas Across Cultures



Yin Yang



Aztec Sunstone



Celtic Knot



Indigenous (Ojibwe) Dream Catcher

How to draw your own mandala

1. The best way to begin is with a rough idea of what you want to create. Some options are circular or rectangular, black and white or color. For example, for a floral mandala, you might want to draw petals and leaves. But don't worry if you're not sure what you want because your mandala will likely change as it grows out. If you need inspiration, study patterns in your surroundings for possibilities, or look at some of the mandala examples at the end of the lesson.
2. Make a grid with lines that cross the circle at every 30 or 45 degrees (suggestion). We want it to be symmetrical and for all of the patterns to be equal.
3. You can start around the center point with a circle, whether your overall shape is square or circular.
4. Decide what basic shapes you want to radiate from that circle, like an

inverted U or V. Then, the next layer should be slightly different. For example, you can change the shapes a little, fill it in with different strokes or colors.

5. Practice the patterns you want to use by themselves before putting them on a circle. If you're not sure what patterns to apply, study the ones you like in other mandalas. Choose the patterns that resonate with you, and combine them how you like.

Examples below.





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