

Sculpt & Squish: Your Own Foam Art Adventure!

Materials You'll Need:

- Foam (e.g., upholstery foam, memory foam, or similar squishy foam – block or thick sheets)
- Fabric dye (optional, if you want to pre-color the foam)
- Fabric glue (strong and flexible, suitable for foam)
- Sharp scissors (adult supervision is crucial for this step)
- Artist palette (or a disposable plate for mixing paints)
- Fabric paint (various colors – primary colors like red, yellow, blue, plus white and black are recommended)
- Fabric puffy paint (assorted colors for details and texture)
- Paint brushes (various sizes – fine tip for details, broader for base coats)
- Mod Podge (gloss or matte, to use as a finishing coat/sealant)
- Water cup (for rinsing brushes)
- Paper towels or an old cloth (for cleanup)
- Pencil or light-colored marker (for sketching design on foam)
- Old newspaper or plastic tablecloth (to protect work surface)
- Apron or old shirt (to protect clothing)

Let's Get Creative! (Introduction & Brainstorming - 10-15 minutes)

Welcome, amazing artist! Today, we're going to turn simple foam into your very own, super cool, squishy creation! Think buttons, rainbows, food items, cute animals, or even a friendly monster – your imagination is the only limit! What kind of squishy would you love to make? Let's quickly sketch a few ideas on paper. Don't worry about perfection; just let your ideas flow!

Step 1: Design & Sculpt Your Squishy (20-30 minutes - Adult Supervision Required for Scissors)

Once you have an idea you love, lightly draw the basic shape onto your piece of foam with a pencil or light marker. Now, it's time to sculpt! **This is where your grown-up assistant is very important! Scissors are sharp, so please have an adult help you with cutting the foam.**

1. Carefully cut out your basic shape. It's often easier to snip away small bits of foam at a time rather than trying to cut through a thick piece all at once.
2. If you want to make a more complex shape or add layers (like ears for an animal or a roof for a house), you can cut out smaller foam pieces.
3. To attach extra pieces: Apply a thin layer of fabric glue to the parts you want to stick together. Press them firmly and hold for a moment. You might need to let the glue dry a bit before moving on, or even let it dry completely if it's a big piece.

Tip: Simple shapes are great for your first squishy! You can always make more detailed ones later.

Step 2: Color Magic - Mixing Your Paints! (10-15 minutes)

Get your artist palette ready! Squeeze out small amounts of your primary fabric paints (red, yellow, blue). Now for some mixing fun:

- What happens if you mix red and yellow? (You get orange!)
- What about yellow and blue? (You get green!)
- And blue and red? (You get purple!)
- Try adding a little white to any color to make it lighter (a tint), or a tiny speck of black to make it darker (a shade).

Mix up the colors you'll want for your squishy. Remember to rinse your brush when switching to a new color group to keep your colors clean.

Step 3: Painting Your Masterpiece (30-45 minutes)

It's time to bring your squishy to life with color!

1. **Base Coat:** Using a larger brush, paint the main colors of your squishy. Apply a thin, even coat. You might need two coats for good coverage; let the first coat dry a little before adding the second. Make sure to paint all the sides!
2. **Details:** Once your base coat is dry to the touch, use smaller brushes to add details. This could be eyes, a mouth, stripes, polka dots – anything you like!
3. **Puffy Paint Fun:** Fabric puffy paint is awesome for adding raised textures or outlines. Gently squeeze the bottle and draw with the tip. This paint takes a bit longer to dry, so be careful not to smudge it.

Patience is key! Let paint layers dry properly to avoid smudging. You might need to paint one side, let it dry, then paint another.

Step 4: Seal the Deal with Mod Podge (5-10 minutes + Drying Time)

When your squishy is completely dry from all the paint (this might be a few hours or even overnight, especially for puffy paint), it's time for the final touch. Mod Podge will protect your paint job and give it a nice finish.

1. Using a clean brush, apply a thin, even coat of Mod Podge all over your painted squishy.
2. Mod Podge looks milky white when you apply it, but it dries clear!
3. Let your squishy dry completely in a safe place. This can take several hours.

Step 5: Show Off Your Squishy!

Once the Mod Podge is totally dry, your amazing, one-of-a-kind foam squishy is ready! Give it a good squish! What do you love most about it? What was your favorite part of making it? Think about what other squishy creations you could make next time!

Clean-Up Time!

Great job, artist! Now let's clean up. Wash your brushes well with water (and a little soap if needed).

Wipe your palette. Put lids back on all paints and glues securely. Tidy up your workspace.