

## Materials List ~ Timing

For the first-time marbler, approximately 80% of your time is going to be spent *preparing* to marble and 20% of your time will be spent actually marbling. That's because the gathering of supplies can take up to two weeks since a few supplies are mail order. Please don't be discouraged by this! Once you've gathered your initial supplies and have your tools made (which takes no more than a day to make), then the ratio flips and you'll spend most of your time marbling!

The easiest and quickest way to get started marbling is to purchase one of the Marbling Kits which includes nearly everything you need to begin marbling right away (either the **Starter Marbling Kit** which comes with a tank and rinse board or the **Just-the-Basics Marbling Kit** which doesn't). The kits not only ease the trouble of ordering from multiple suppliers, but you'll also feel confident knowing you'll be working with my preferred tools and favorite materials which have been vetted by me. *Note: Kits are only shipped within the US.*

If you prefer to gather your materials on your own, I suggest setting aside three days ~ one day to place your mail orders (there will be multiple vendors) and two days for going through your existing art supplies or making trips to stores (art and hardware). As I said earlier, it can take up to two weeks for some of the mail-order items to arrive so please plan accordingly.

In either case, once you have your initial materials gathered and tools made, then you just have to worry about re-ordering supplies and making additional tools as your skill level progresses. This materials list has all the source and vendor information you need to do that! *Please note: my resources are US-based companies that may or may not ship internationally. If you live outside of the US and have a hard time finding supplies, please let me know and I will reach out to my international colleagues for information on suppliers in your country.*

And finally, in the classroom I have additional content and videos about materials and tools (as well as setting up your marbling space). While some of your mail-order supplies are in transit, you can be making tools and watching the introduction videos. It will even be helpful to watch the first few pattern demonstrations before diving into marbling. So even if you don't have all your supplies immediately, you'll have plenty to do in the first few weeks!

Looking forward to taking the marbling journey with you!

Cheers,  
Barb

## Materials List ~ Checklist

Items in **RED** are included in the **Starter Marbling Kit**.

### Materials:

- Carrageenan** (minimum 1/4 pound)
- Alum** (minimum 1/4 pound)
- Acrylic paint, fluid or soft body (minimum 10 colors to start with)
- Distilled water (5 gallons)
- Tap water
- Dispersant** such as Photo-Flo (optional but recommended)
- Paper to marble on

### Equipment:

- Marbling tank**
- Marbling rinse board**
- High-speed blender (regular house blender is fine but not an immersion blender)
- Pressing/flattening boards (i.e. heavy books)
- Measuring spoon ~ Tablespoon and teaspoon
- Spray bottle or small bowl
- Sponge
- Protective gloves (i.e. rubber household gloves)
- Containers to hold mixed paint in (small jar or plastic container)
- Newspaper

### Tools:

- Stylus**
- Broomcorn to make marbling whisks**
- Rubberbands (one for each marbling whisk you intend to make)
- Droppers**
- Marbling rakes/combs (**1" rake included in kit**)

## Materials List ~ Detailed

Items in **ORANGE** are only available through mail order.

### TANK

You can either buy or make your tank ~ and either option is perfectly suitable for a beginner marbler. In fact, I use homemade tanks when I travel and don't want to haul my regular one with me!

What tank size you work in is totally up to you. Some people like to start with a smaller tank and work their way up. I primarily work in a large tank and use my smaller ones for specific effects. Two good sizes to start in are 11"x14" for a smaller tank and 18"x24" or 20"x25" for a larger tank. You may also want to consider *how* you are going to use your papers. If you're going to be cutting them up for collage or notecards, the smaller tank will be just fine. If you want to create larger pieces of art or background papers or just have a larger sheet of a consistent pattern, then the larger tank is your best choice.

Recommended affordable tank:

- Clear acrylic photo frame [like this one sold by Dick Blick](#). Also available at a store like Michael's. I use both the 11"x14" and 18"x24" sizes in my studio classes.

Recommended high-end tank (the tank I primarily work in):

- **ABS plastic tanks** ~ only available at [Colophon Book Arts Supply](#) or [Talas](#).

Suggestions for homemade tank:

- Simply take a cardboard box, cut the sides down to about 3" high, and line with an unscented garbage bag!
- Plastic food container, like the kind pre-washed lettuce comes in, works great too!

### RINSE BOARD

If your tank doesn't come with a rinse board (and it won't unless you order the high-end tank or the Starter Marbling Kit), you can make one from cardboard or other sturdy material such as coroplast (available at most print shops or big-box hardware stores) or an acrylic/plexiglass sheet (available at hardware stores). The rinse board should be at least 1/2" larger on all sides than the size of your tank. If your tank is 11"x14", then your rinse board should be no smaller than 12"x15".

## STYLUS

This is a marbling tool used to create patterns. You'll only need one. It should be thicker than a straight pin but not thicker than your pinky.

Recommended:

- Bamboo skewer (available at grocery stores)

Other suggestions:

- Chopstick
- Thin knitting needle

## WHISK

A marbling tool made with plastic broomstraw (my preference) or natural broomcorn. It is used to get paint onto your bath. I recommend having one whisk for each paint color. Instructions for making whisks will be provided in the classroom.

*NOTE: you will need rubberbands or string to tie together the broomcorn to make the whisk.*

Preferred supplier for plastic broomstraw:

- [MarbleArt.us \(Galen Berry\)](http://MarbleArt.us)

Recommended supplier for natural broomcorn:

- [Colophon Book Arts Supply](http://ColophonBookArtsSupply.com)

Another option:

- Buy a new broom and cut off the broomstraw! (I have done this many times for classes!)

## DROPPERS

Another marbling tool used to get paint onto your bath. I recommend glass lab droppers that are at least 3-inches long with a straight tip. It is best to have one dropper for each color. You can also use medicine droppers (like the kind that comes in children's liquid medicine bottles) or pipettes.

You can order [glass droppers](#) or [plastic pipettes](#) from me through [my online store](#).

Suppliers for both glass droppers and pipettes:

- [Colophon Book Arts Supply](http://ColophonBookArtsSupply.com)
- [Edmund Scientifics](http://EdmundScientifics.com)
- Amazon ~ several sellers

## CARRAGEENAN (CARRAGHEENAN)

Carrageenan is a seaweed extract in powdered form used to make the bath. Usually sold in 1/2-pound increments, which makes about 10 gallons of bath. Beginning marblers won't need more than 1/2 pound of carrageenan to start with. Small tanks (11"x14") hold 1/2 gallon of bath. Large tanks (20"x25") hold 1-1/2 gallons of bath. **It is imperative you buy carrageenan from a marbling supplier as there are many different kinds and not all can be used for marbling.**

*NOTE: To make the bath you will need a high-speed blender (a home one is fine) and distilled water (1 gallon for 1 gallon of bath).*

You can order [carrageenan](#) from me through [my online store](#) (available in 1/4-lb., 1/2-lb., and 1-lb. increments).

Other suppliers:

- [MarbleArt.us \(Galen Berry\)](#)
- [Iris Nevins](#)
- [Colophon Book Arts Supply](#)
- [Talas](#)

## ALUM (ALUMINUM SULPHATE)

Alum (comes in powdered form) is a mordant used to make paint bind with paper/fabric/wood. Usually sold by the pound but some suppliers sell 1/2-pound bags. Beginning marblers won't need more than 1/2 pound. You need to buy the alum from a marbling supplier and not the stuff in the grocery store (which has too much filler in it and won't be effective).

*NOTE: To make the alum, you will need a bottle with a lid (like a glass or plastic container juice comes in). To apply the alum you will need a sponge and either a bowl or a spray bottle. You will also need protective gloves (rubber household gloves are fine) when handling alum to avoid drying out your hands.*

You can order [alum](#) from me through [my online store](#) (available in 1/4-lb. and 1/2-lb. increments).

Other suppliers:

- [MarbleArt.us \(Galen Berry\)](#)
- [Iris Nevins](#)
- [Colophon Book Arts Supply](#)

## ACRYLIC PAINTS

Soft body and fluid acrylics only. Do not use hard body. I recommend having at least 10 colors to work with, including one white and one black, as well as a mix of transparent and opaque. Because professional paints have less filler in them, I find they are easier to work with, however, some professional marblers have told me they have no problems with craft paints. If that's all you have and you don't want to invest in new paints, that's fine. Try those first and if you're having problems getting them to float, you can switch.

***NOTE:** You will need small containers to mix and store our paints in. I use everything from single-serve yogurt containers (with lids) to Ziploc's small, round food storage containers to small glass jars.*

Preferred brands:

- Golden Fluid Acrylic
- Liquitex Soft Body

Important Notice: Many, many of my students have had a lot of problems with the paints from MarbleArt.us (Galen Berry). I do not recommend purchasing his paints.

## DISPERSANT (OPTIONAL)

Kodak Photo-Flo 200 is a dispersant used to make paints spread across the surface of the bath or to prevent them from sinking. A very small amount is used and only when paints are misbehaving. I highly recommend Photo-Flo if you are using craft paints. I rarely use Photo-Flo when I'm working with professional paints like Golden and Liquitex.

If you are participating in the *Advanced Marbling Techniques* eCourse, Photo-Flo is used in a few lessons.

You can order [Photo-Flo](#) from me through [my online store](#) (available in a 2-oz. container ~ enough for a beginning marbler and for the *Advanced Marbling Techniques* lessons).

Other suppliers:

- You can get a 16-oz. bottle of Photo-Flo online at Amazon, eBay, and [photography stores](#).

## PAPER

Papers with neutral to low pH (which means they are more acidic than alkaline) and those that are unbuffered (calcium carbonate was not added) are best to marble on. However, it's not always easy to get that type of information unless you go directly to the manufacturer, so don't get lost in those details. What you want to avoid are glossy papers (which won't absorb the alum) and very thin papers (like a rice paper) which will fall apart in the bath. Generally speaking, papers used for watercolor, pastels, or charcoal are good places to start.

The size of your paper will depend on the size of your tank. Your paper should be about 1" smaller than the length and width of your tank. For example, if your tank is 11"x14", your paper should not be larger than 10"x13" (a standard 8.5"x11" is perfectly fine too!).

How much paper you need will depend on how quickly you work and for how long. A 4-hour marbling session in a smaller tank can yield anywhere from 15 to 30 papers (usually less in a larger tank).

Recommended papers for beginners:

- Masa paper ([this one from Dick Blick](#)) is what I use in all my classes. It comes oversized and will need to be cut down to fit your tank. You can also purchase [Masa paper cut to size](#) from me in [my online store](#).
- **Texoprint** (only available through [Galen Berry at MarbleArt.us](#))
- Hahnemühle Ingres Paper (a little more expensive for a “learning” paper but wonderful to marble on)

Other papers that marble well (many of these have fun colors to marble on!):

- Canson Mi Teintes
- Canson Ingres
- Fabriano Tiziano
- Classic Laid
- Strathmore
- Stardream
- Canson Artist Series Drawing
- Arches Text Wove

Experimental papers:

- Pages from old books
- Sheet music

## **PRESSING/FLATTENING BOARDS**

Once your papers have dried, you will want to put them under something to press them flat again. This can be easily done with a set of large, heavy books or bricks on top of a wood panel.

Alternatively, I use a set of extra-thick, very heavy Davey boards (also called bookbinder board or binder board). Any kind of binder boards will work but try to get the thickest kind available (bookmaking suppliers will have a variety of weights for you more than craft stores will) and make sure they are slightly larger than your marbled paper.

This is the **pressing board** I have:

- [Binder Board from Talas, 30"x41", 3.0 mm](#)

## A Note About Rakes and Combs

Making traditional patterns in marbling involves tools called rakes and combs. **There are two different ways to make rakes/combs.**

- If you are taking my *Introduction to Paper Marbling* eCourse, there is both a video and detailed instructions provided in the classroom.
- If you are taking a private or group lesson from me, detailed instructions are included in your handouts.

### Rakes and Combs

These are the marbling tools core to making traditional patterns. Just like with your tank, you can either buy or make them. You will need rakes/combs in various sizes: 1/4", 1/2", and 1" are good sizes to start with. Depending on how you make them and what kind of tank you have, you may have to also make both vertical and horizontal versions of each size.

Please know, however, you can marble beautiful images and designs without using rakes and combs by just using your stylus, droppers, and whisks so don't get too worried about making every combination of rake and comb. If you make only one, I suggest starting with the 1" size (which is included in the Starter Marbling Kit).

Below are the main materials you will need to make wood rakes/combs:

- Screen trim/molding ~ available at hardware stores
- Straight pins (1<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub>" )
- Wood glue (Elmer's is fine)

Below are the main materials you will need to make plastic rakes/combs:

- Corner bead ~ available at hardware stores
- Roller hair picks ~ available at beauty supply stores

You can also [order pre-made rakes/combs](#) from me through [my online store](#).

Other suppliers for pre-made rakes/combs:

- [MarbleArt.us \(Galen Berry\)](#) ~ heads up! Galen makes rakes/combs specifically to fit the tank he sells. This may not be the right size (length or width) for your tank. Please be careful when ordering from him and make sure the tool will fit in your tank.
- [Colophon Book Arts Supply](#)



## Starter Marbling Kit



The Starter Marbling Kit pulls together almost everything you need to get started marbling. This not only eases the trouble of ordering from multiple suppliers, but you'll also feel confident knowing you'll be working with my preferred tools and favorite materials which have been vetted by me.

*US shipping only.*

***YOU CAN [ORDER YOUR KIT HERE.](#)***

The Starter Marbling Kit is available in two sizes:

- 11"x14" tank
- 18"x24" tank

Included in the Kit:

- Clear, acrylic marbling tank
- Rinse/cover board
- Carrageenan ~ 1/4-pound or 1/2-pound
- Alum ~ 1/4-pound or 1/2-pound
- Dispersant (Photo-Flo) ~ 2-ounces (large kit only)
- Stylus
- Plastic Comb (1-inch spacing)
- 10 eye droppers
- Plastic broomstick ~ enough to make up to 10 whisks

Not included:

- Paint
- Paper
- Other size rakes and combs
- Miscellaneous items such as water, sponge, spray bottle, rubber gloves (for applying alum), paint containers, and high-speed blender (to make bath)!

## Just-the-Basics Marbling Kit



The **Just-the-Basics Marbling Kit** is geared toward those who want to source or make their own tank and rinse board but would like all the other goodies instead! This not only eases the trouble of ordering from multiple suppliers, but you'll also feel confident knowing you'll be working with my preferred tools and favorite materials which have been vetted by me.

*US shipping only.*

***YOU CAN [ORDER YOUR KIT HERE.](#)***

The Just-the-Basics Marbling Kit is available in two sizes:

- Small
- Large

Included in the Kit:

- Carrageenan ~ 1/4-pound or 1/2-pound
- Alum ~ 1/4-pound or 1/2 pound
- Dispersant (Photo-Flo) ~ 2-ounces
- Stylus
- Plastic Comb (1-inch spacing) ~ 13" or 23"
- 10 eye droppers
- Plastic broomstraw ~ enough to make up to 10 whisks

Not included:

- Tank and rinse/cover board
- Acrylic paint
- Paper (or other materials on which to marble)
- Other size rakes and combs
- Miscellaneous items such as water, sponge, spray bottle, rubber gloves (for applying alum), paint containers, and high-speed blender (to make bath)!