

Lino

Using traditional lino and lino alternatives – How to get the best results.

It is important to realize that the nature of these materials limits the amount of detail which can be incorporated into a design and so is ideally suited to simple images. Westart Ezi-carve and Green carving vinyl are smooth surfaced lino alternatives which are very easy to carve, eliminating the need for warming up the surface beforehand. The processes for printing and carving remain the same as for traditional lino.

- Begin by sketching out the design you want either directly onto the surface of the lino or draw onto tracing paper which can be turned over so that the design is traced in reverse on the surface.
- With traditional lino it is advisable to warm the lino on a hot plate before you start which helps to soften a 'difficult' texture, easing the passage of the tools.
- The principal cutting tools are gouges and v-tools of different sizes. You can also use an ordinary craft knife to cut grooves in the lino or to outline areas to be cleared out with the gouges. Blunt tools can easily tear soft lino.
- When you are cutting the lino you need to be able to control the tools properly and this is made easier if your bench or tabletop is set at a comfortable height and preferably on a slight angle. A support for lino can also be made. Always cut directionally away from yourself and your fingers! Lino printing is a relief printing process whereby the ink coats the uncut areas; the surface of the lino.
- When the lino is ready to print, roll out the block printing ink thinly onto the inking slab using a lino roller, then roll it over the lino evenly. You can work in all directions when rolling up, and go over it as many times as necessary to coat the surface evenly.
- Position the inked block on a clean sheet of paper on the bed of the press. Align the printing paper to the base sheet, so that the printed image will be centrally placed, and lower paper onto block. You can take a print either by rubbing with a barren, spoon, or platten press.

