

Transformed Footstool

by Diane Ericson, courtesy of Mail Tribune

One day, while rummaging through the furniture stash of a local secondhand store, a small, sad-looking footstool caught my eye. Drawn to this sturdy, little piece, I could

imagine it transformed using my favorite stencils, fabric and some acrylic paints. A small piece of furniture like this can be the perfect canvas for your favorite decorative craft techniques. From ribbons, fringe and fabric flowers to decorative tacks, it can be a jewel in your sitting room. I wanted this to be an easy project, so I took some measurements and planned to cover over the existing fabric instead of replacing it. Once I had the cushion ready, I sanded then antiqued the wooden base with some acrylic craft paints.

Materials:

- A piece of fabric slightly larger than you need.
- A piece of fabric for the bottom side, if needed.
- Sandpaper
- Screwdriver
- Acrylic—based craft paints
(I used Jacquard **Textile Colors** and Jacquard **Lumiere** Metallics)

To add stenciling to the project will need:

- Stencils (to see my designs, go to www.dianeericson.com)
- 1 to 2 pieces of dense foam sponges, for printing
(3-by-3-inch will work)
- Ceramic plate, for paints
- Paper towels
- Drop cloth or old sheet, to set your project on

To Start

Remove the cushion from the wood base with a screwdriver.

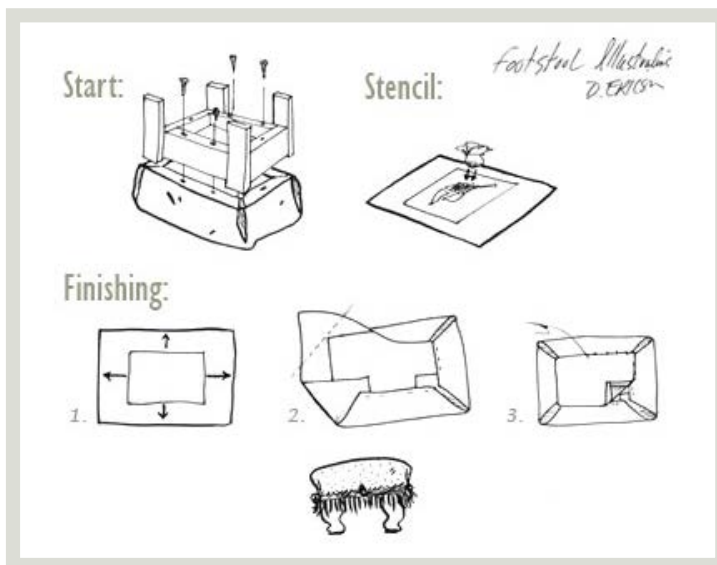
Then, consider what techniques for applying the paint will look best on your piece. You may want to play on a piece bigger than you need to get a feel for how the design will look. I added my designs to a striped piece of home-decorator fabric. In the spaces between the stripes, I stenciled large leaves and small, red, curved shapes.

It is quick and easy to stencil designs on fabric. If you have a firm, fairly smooth upholstery fabric, you can print directly onto the surface. The key is using a very small amount of paint.



Printing with a stencil

- 1) Make a dabber with your foam sponge by bringing all the corners up and wrapping them with a rubber band to hold. This makes a bulb shape out of the sponge.
- 2) Place a small amount of paint on a plate. Touch the paint with your dabber and continue dabbing it on another part of the plate until the paint is in the sponge and even.



3) Holding the stencil on the fabric, dab up and down through the design and work around until it looks the way you want. You can add several colors at a time, working in a smooth or textured fashion. When the design is filled in and you are happy with it, remove the stencil carefully.

4) When the printed areas are dry, press (from the back side first) with a hot iron to set the paints.

The Base

Before I antiqued the base with some darker paint, I roughed up the surface with some light sanding. Next I rubbed some paint into the corners and along the edges of the wood, rubbing off and working in the paint with a rag while it was wet. Using more than one color can add depth to the ragged finish.

For even more decoration, stencils can be printed on the wood base. When the paint is dry, a light coat of Varathane or other clear sealer product will protect your new paint job.

Finishing the footstool

- 1) Lay your cover fabric on a flat surface face down. Place the cushion, centered on top.
- 2) Bring the corners up, then bring each of the sides up, folding them over the corners. This will be a soft pleated corner. Since my base is wood and will screw into the back of the cushion, I will use some dots of white glue to hold the printed fabric in place while I cover the bottom.
- 3) Measure the frame of the base to the outside edges and cut another piece of fabric 1 inch larger for the bottom. Fold in the edges 1 inch all around, press then center it on top of the cushion back. It can be stitched around or tacked with glue because the base will be screwed on top of it.
- 4) Once the cushion and the base are finished, reattach the two pieces with screws. To help protect the surface, use a light coat of Scotchgard.
Acrylic paint is washable when dry.



Diane Ericson designs and prints fabrics in her studio at Ashland Art Center.

Her website is www.dianeericson.com.

