

Strip Length by Paula Bauer

A Designing Question - "Stripped Down" & Examined

New quillers occasionally ask me, "How do you decide what length of strip or what width of strip to use when you create a design?" Of course, we all want easy answers, but I'm afraid there often isn't one. It is no different in this case. Quillers each have their own tension and way of rolling coils; it is a very individualized process. My 3" strip may yield a coil that is 1/4" in diameter. My quilling friend can take the same 3" strip and her coil will be closer to 3/8" in diameter. We can work the same pattern with the exact same papers and end up with different sized finished pieces that will reflect our unique rolling style and also our own preference in shaping coils. However, that is not to say there is no way to figure this question out. It will require a bit of time invested on your part. The easiest way to discover what YOUR rolling style will yield is to make a sample card.

Divide a full size piece of cardstock into 4 columns. Label the left column 1/16" Width, then 1/8" Width, 1/4" Width and the far right column 3/8" Width. Begin with 1/16" wide strips that are 2" in length. Roll up 5 coils, shape them into teardrops, then make a flower (you will need a center coil or a bead also), glue the completed flower in the first column at the top, and label it 2". Make similar teardrop flowers using the following sizes of strips: 3" 4" 5" 6" and 7", gluing and labeling as you go. You might also want to roll a coil each of 8, 9, 10, 11, and 12 inches - just to get an idea of the coil size. Glue them to the card in the same column and label their size. Repeat the same procedure for 1/8" wide strips, 1/4" wide strips and 3/8" wide strips, gluing the completed flowers across from the same size flower in the previous column.

Now, you have a good idea of what the various strip lengths will look like, and it will help you better visualize what you need in order to achieve that particular design beginning to take shape within your fertile imagination, longing to be released. Besides making a great reference tool for ready viewing, you've gotten some great practice to boot! Double benefits...surely worth the time invested if it saves frustration later on in your quilling career. Personally, I find the majority of my strips range from 2.5" to 5" ...with most being about 3" in length. I often prefer 1/16" wide papers because of the finer, more airy appearance. I sometimes split 1/16" paper in half and use 1/32" width if I really want a subtle tendril. However, I find it is more frustration than it is worth to roll coils in that narrow width, though I know of some very skillful quillers who have made amazing projects with such minute papers!

As with anything, your sense of personal style will develop the more you put it into practice. To me, there is nothing more rewarding than sitting down at my quilling table and letting my own creativity guide me and see a project take form beneath my fingers. Patterns are useful tools, but don't be a slave to them. Use them for inspiration and ideas, then take a walk on the 'wild side' and give your creative muse time to roam free. You'll be amazed at what you can accomplish ...just you and those colorful, addicting little strips of paper!

Flower Size Reference Chart

This can be a helpful tool when designing original paper filigree artwork. In addition to providing extra practice, it will show at a glance how a certain length and width will appear when rolled, as well as providing insight into one's individual coiling style.

Create teardrop flowers (5 or 6 petals plus a center coil or bead) from each length & width of paper listed; glue in place.

Petals	1/16 inch paper	1/8 inch paper	1/4 inch paper	3/8 inch paper
2" strips				
3" strips				
4" strips				
5" strips				
6" strips				
7" strips				
Tear Drops	8" 9" 10" 11" 12"	8" 9" 10" 11" 12"	8" 9" 10" 11" 12"	8" 9" 10" 11" 12"