

# Make Your Own Stepping Stones

With this kit you can create your own decorative word-bearing concrete stepping stones. Your finished stones look beautiful in the garden and make great gifts for parents, grandparents, or other special people. The possibilities are endless and the process is easy, but **be sure to read through these instructions thoroughly before beginning.**

## Contents:

- One 8-inch diameter round form
- One 10-inch diameter round form
- Forty-two press-in letters, numbers and punctuation marks
- Two lbs. lightweight concrete mix
- Sixty mosaic tiles
- Buff colored concrete tint
- Plastic trowel

**Special Note:** Children should not use this kit without adult supervision. Do not use this kit in temperatures below 40 degrees fahrenheit.

## Directions For Making Your First Stepping Stone

**Note:** The concrete included in this kit is intended as a starter bag that will help you get a feel for how the kit works on a larger scale. To make more stones, you will need to go to a hardware store or home improvement store to purchase additional concrete mix. See the directions for making additional stones on the other side of this instruction sheet.

Gather these things before you start:

- All items from this kit
- Plastic sheet to protect your work area (a large garbage bag works well)
- Mixing bucket
- Water for mixing and clean up
- Measuring cup
- Vinyl or latex gloves (optional)

1. Pick a good place to work where you can let your stone dry undisturbed for a couple days. Place the plastic sheet over your work area.



2. The 2 pounds of lightweight concrete mix included in this kit will make one 8" stepping stone. It's a good idea to lay out the design elements you want to use in your step-

ping stone ahead of time. Play around with the tiles and letters and get some ideas about what you want to make—maybe even make a drawing of your plan.

3. Carefully empty the bag of lightweight concrete mix into your bucket and add approximately 1.5 cups of water. Use the trowel to mix the concrete and water, adding tint as you mix until you achieve your desired color. To get the concrete to the right consistency you may need to add more water, but only add a teaspoon at a time. Mix the concrete and tint until it easily slides or "slumps" off the trowel. Try for a consistency that is thick enough that it does not stick to the sides of the bucket, yet is soft enough to push the letters into (somewhere between the consistency of soft-serve and scoop ice cream). Remember to err on the dryer side of thickness, you can always thin the concrete with a little more water.



4. Fill your form with the concrete, squishing it down and leveling it out with the trowel. Jiggle the form a little to help the concrete settle. Clean and wet the trowel with fresh water and drag it across the top of the form to create a smooth surface.



5. Handprint impressions in stones are a wonderful archival snapshot of a person and are especially fun for kids. If you intend on making a handprint in your stone, you should do it before using the press-in letters and tiles. Simply place your hand firmly but gently into the concrete making sure to leave a good impression, then remove your hand and wash off any concrete with soap and water.

6. To use the press-in letters, align all of the letters for a word gently on top of the concrete. Once they are arranged the way you want, push them in one at a time then carefully remove them. If a letter is used more than once in your word, place it in its first position and then move it to where it occurs again in the word. This will help you get the spacing right. Be sure to give each letter a quick rinse when you're done to remove any concrete.



7. To use the mosaic tiles, align them gently on top of the

concrete. Once you have a design you like, push them slowly but firmly into the concrete until the top of the tile is level with the surface of the concrete. They will dry in place and become a permanent part of your stepping stone. Don't worry if your placement of the letters or tiles isn't perfect. If you don't like how the stone looks you can simply re-level the concrete in the form with your trowel and try it again. You don't have to hurry; it will be awhile before your stone begins to harden.

8. Once you have your stone decorated, carefully remove the form by lifting it slowly, straight up.



9. To finish your stone you may want to use your fingertips to smooth the rough edges around the top.

10. Your stone is now ready to dry, which is called "curing." Let your stone cure for at least 48 hours before handling it. If you are making your stones in the hot sun, lay another sheet of plastic over it to keep it moist as long as possible. Concrete needs moisture to cure.

11. Be sure to clean all your letters, the forms and the trowel thoroughly. Don't forget to wash your hands with soap and water. Concrete left too long on skin can irritate it.

## Making more stones

The forms and press-in letters in your kit are reusable. You can make as many stepping stones as you want. If you are feeling really ambitious, or have a group of friends or family helping, you can buy a couple of 40 lb. bags of concrete, some extra tint, and turn out dozens of stones in an afternoon!

Here's what you'll need to make more Stepping Stones:

- The forms, press-in letters and trowel from this kit
- Plastic sheeting to protect your work area (a large garbage bag works well)
- Concrete mix
- Concrete tint
- Decorative items
- 5 gallon bucket or wheelbarrow
- Small shovel
- Water for mixing and clean up
- Vinyl or latex gloves (optional)

**A note on buying the right concrete mix and tint:** Most hardware stores and home improvement centers sell several types of concrete mix for varying uses. For this kit we recommend a fine aggregate concrete mix, or a concrete that is labeled "vinyl patch mix." This type of concrete is easy to mix and very durable, but most importantly it

should contain a fine sand aggregate with no gravel. Concrete containing gravel is too coarse to effectively print words into. For more information about concrete, visit our website at [www.poetrystones.com](http://www.poetrystones.com). A 40 lb. bag of concrete mix will make 5 to 7 Stepping Stones depending on the size form you use. Most hardware stores also carry concrete tint. It is available in many colors, in powdered or liquid form. Most people use about 4 tablespoons of tint per 3 lbs. of concrete, but again it's up to you to determine the intensity of color you like. You can also order more of the lightweight concrete included in this kit directly from us as well as more tint, additional letter sets, and decorative elements. See the information below.

After setting up your workspace and gathering your supplies, prepare the concrete and tint according to the package instructions. You can use your trowel or a small shovel for mixing.

Mix the concrete until it easily slides or "slumps" off the shovel or trowel. Fill the form with your trowel and follow the instructions starting from step #4 on the other side.

Feel free to experiment with decorative items—marbles, beach glass, rocks, shells and many other things will work great in your stones.

Have fun and be creative!

### Additional Stone Accessories you can order directly from Magnetic Poetry:

Lightweight concrete mix - 4 lbs.

Buff concrete tint - 3 oz.

Terra cotta concrete tint - 3 oz.

Set of uppercase Traditional Press-In Letters

Set of lowercase Traditional Press-In Letters

Set of uppercase Classic Press-In Letters

Adjustable form - makes square stones from 4-15"

100 glass jewels - red, turquoise, blue, dark green

120 mosaic tiles - red, yellow, blue, green, white

Visit our website at  
[www.poetrystones.com](http://www.poetrystones.com) for price  
and ordering information  
or call us at  
800-370-7697 or 612-638-1040.