

Coptic Stitch Bookbinding

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Chapter 1

Textbook content under construction

Hello, world!!!

Chapter 2

Why Use Coptic Stitch?

When there are so many ways to create books, you might wonder why you'd choose this notoriously difficult method. Here are a few reasons:

- This is a glue-free method.
- The binding looks beautiful and you can leave it exposed.
- Coptic bindings tend to be looser, which allows your pages to lie totally flat when you open the book. This is great for sketchbooks!
- Sometimes it's fun to do things the hard way.

There are many visual tutorials on coptic stitch available online. This is a very simple instructional manual, but feel free to reference the wealth of other resources available for further guidance. If you enjoy this method and would like *more* techniques for bookbinding, please check out the Resources chapter. In particular, if you enjoy sewing bindings, check out Keith Smith's series [Non-Adhesive Binding] (<https://keithsmithbooks.com/Vol-I-NAB>).

Chapter 3

Assemble and Punch Your Pages

For this step, you can use pre-cut pages or cut your own to a size of your choosing.

3.1 Folios and Signatures

A *folio* is one sheet of paper folded precisely in half.

A *signature* is a stack of several signatures nestled together.

For this book, we will use five signatures of three pages each, so you need 15 folios (or 15 sheets of paper). 1. Stack 3 pages together and carefully fold the whole thing in half, creasing the fold with a bone folder or other flat object. Congratulations, you have a signature! 2. Take a paper awl and punch 5 holes in the crease through all 3 sheets. You should probably measure before you do this so that they are equidistant and replicable ;) 3. Repeat with four more stacks of three sheets each.

When you stack all five signatures together, the holes should more or less align at the folded edges.

Chapter 4

Stitching the Pages

Supplies you will need: Curved needle, waxed thread, scissors

Be gentle. You can always un-thread the binding and start over, but you can't un-tear pages!

1. Open the first signature and bring the needle through the first hole, going from the **outside** of the fold to the inside. Leave 6+ inches loose outside the signature.
2. Bring the needle and thread through the second hole, from the inside to the outside.
3. Now bring the needle through the second hole on the second signature.
4. Are you confused yet? Me too!
5. Throw it on the ground and go do something else.

Chapter 5

Further Resources

- Japanese bookbinding : instructions from a master craftsman / Ikegami, Kōsanjin
- Innovative bookbinding : secret compartments & hidden messages / La-Plantz, Shereen
- Bookbinding : a comprehensive guide to folding, sewing & binding / Morlok, Franziska
- How to make books / Smith, Esther K.
- Non-adhesive binding, vols 1-5 / Smith, Keith A.
- Hand bookbinding : a manual of instruction / Watson, Aldren Auld