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How To Stretch Watercolor Paper In A Few Hours

The first thing to consider when beginning a watercolor painting is does my paper need stretching before use? If paper weight is under 260 lb then you will definitely need to stretch it before you use it. Then you must learn how to stretch watercolor paper before you can do it.

Step one is to cut four strips of gummed brown tape a bit longer than the sides of paper to be soaked. You then place them to the side until later. The next step in this process is to soak the entire sheet of paper in cold water of several minutes.

Then you want to remove excess water and lay the paper flat on a drawing board. Most importantly, you will then need to use a sponge and smooth out the paper. This must be perfect because if it is not smooth at this point you will never have flat paper to work with.

The next stage is to let paper dry for several hours, but remember to keep it away from direct heat. The next move is to moisten the tape and place it down one side of paper. Making certain you put only 1/3 of the tape in the edge and the rest on along the board.

The water will evaporate contracting the fibers and keeping the paper lying flat. Always leave the watercolor paper flat as it dries to prevent water pooling up on any edges. This soaking process prevents it from warping when you paint on it because you will never soak it as much as that again.

Then let it all dry for a few hours. You must also be certain to keep it away from direct heat. The paper will lie flat because the fibers will have contracted during the evaporation process. Following these simple steps will have you painting in no time.

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