

# Cutting Edge Furniture Upcycling

## Creating Tape Designs printable

- If you need inspiration try planning out your design by sketching it out or you can print out a photo of it and draw over with colour to play around with ideas. It helps to work with the actual piece so you know what you are planning will fit.
- Use the dimensions and symmetry of the piece itself to guide you as this will look more balanced.
- Try to mirror angles if you are using shapes such as chevrons and diamonds unless you are deliberately going for a busier, asymmetrical look. This tends to look more harmonious to the eye.
- Measure to find mid-points on your piece to help get angles and shapes lined up e.g. the middle of a drawer length, the middle of the drawer end once joined will give you an even diamond.
- Mark points with chalk if you can as this is removable whereas pencil is not (tailors chalk is a good option)
- Angles are created by laying two tapes down from two points equally spaced. Where they overlap should form a symmetrical diamond then the excess can be cut away
- Make sure when cutting across overlapped tapes that your cuts line up absolutely perfectly as any errors will be picked up by the paint later (I like a clear ruler and very good light for this reason)
- Make sure your craft knife is sharp (and preferably has a flat pointed blade)
- Hold your ruler very firmly when cutting so your line doesn't slip – you shouldn't need to press hard when cutting.
- If you are doing a design where a long cut is required and your ruler is too short use chalk to set it up first. If you are cutting into tape you can use a pencil to draw that line in before cutting.

- If you have to stop and start to reposition your ruler make sure to put the knife in the end of that cut again to ensure a perfect line.
- Space tapes out by using small sections of tape to act as spacers – these can be moved around as you work, reducing the waste but also helping to make finer line designs consistent.
- Narrower tapes can help create finer stripes. Regular width tape can be cut using a cutting mat and long ruler but accuracy is needed to make sure the width stays the same!
- To replicate shapes consistently don't try to do it free hand, instead try taping around a template.
- On larger pieces use a large guide stick, laser level or plumb line to help you make sure elements line up.
- Trust your eye more than the symmetry of the piece though – this is why I don't measure madly and scientifically. Instead look for things lining up and starting at the same point on the piece. Maybe the odd measurement to check but often if I'm this far away from a handle, I'll eyeball it on the next handle. Old furniture isn't often straight and we need to use our judgement really sometimes.
- When working with tape designs less is sometimes more. The more tape you add the less painted design you will get. It can look very pretty in tape but try to visualise the spaces you'll be painting as a pattern once the tape is gone – a lovely lattice of tape, for example, would just be a lot of squares once painted and revealed!
- If you want to add more detail in or lay colours next to one another then you can achieve this in a separate round of taping. Designs that are that complex to work out are often built up in sections bit by bit.
- Make sure to rub masking tape down really well before painting (tape visibly gets darker where it is stuck down well). Pay attention to the overlapped parts and over edges.



- If you have a heavy grained or uneven surface it is worth sealing the tape first. Use a thinned clear water-based top coat over wood such as Oak. Over paint it is better to use the same base colour to avoid colour peeping (this is why priming and masking tape don't mix terribly well!) or sometimes you see a difference in absorption/finishes.
- Apply paint smoothly along the tape lines first, fill in the space and then smooth over lightly in one direction – the same as the background if it is painted.
- Use this technique to 'clean out' the excess paint from along the tape edge while painting. Try to avoid painting towards the tape edge.
- Use a hairdryer to speed up the drying process to allow you to apply the next coat
- Wait until the paint is touch dry to remove the tape gently and steadily back over itself.

