

The Eight Steps of the Zentangle Method

Step 01 – Gratitude and Appreciation

Get comfortable, take a few deep breaths and feel gratitude and appreciation – for this beautiful paper, for these wonderful tools, for this opportunity to create something beautiful.

Step 02 – Corner Dots

Start with a square. To answer a familiar question of what to put on your paper, place a light pencil dot in each corner, about a pen's width from the edges. Now it's no longer a blank piece of paper.

Step 03 – Border

Connect those dots with a light pencil line, straight or curvy, to create a square. This is your border.

Step 04 – String

Inside the border, draw a light pencil line or lines to make what we call a "string." The string separates your tile into sections, in which you draw your tangles. A string can be any shape. It may be a curvy line that touches the edge of the border now and then, or series of straight lines that go from one side of the border to the next.

Step 05 – Tangle

A tangle is a predefined sequence of simple strokes that make up a pattern. Draw your tangles in pen inside (usually) the pencil strings and borders. Tangle is both noun and verb. Just as you dance a dance, you tangle your tangles. Draw your tangles with deliberate strokes. Don't worry about what it's going to look like. Just focus on each stroke of the pen as you make it. Trust that you'll know what to do next when the time to do it comes. There is no up or down to Zentangle art so feel free to rotate your tile in any direction that is most comfortable for your hand as you draw.

Step 06 – Shade

Add shades of gray with a graphite pencil to bring contrast and dimension to your tile. The black and white two-dimensional tangles transform through shading and appear three-dimensional. You can also use a tortillon (a paper blending stump) to soften and blend the graphite.

Step 07 – Initial and Sign

This is art you created. You should sign it. Put your initials on the front (many people create a unique monogram or chop for this step). On the back, place your name, date, comments and observations.

Step 08 – Appreciate

Hold your tile at arm's length. Turn it this way and that. Appreciate what you just created.

