

Wreath Making — Workbook

This workbook turns the course into deliberate practice. Each section matches a course module and asks you to choose bases on purpose, wire and bind test bundles, tie and audit a real florist bow, and plan balanced seasonal designs. Work through it alongside actual building and you will finish able to match any materials to the right base, bind a fresh wreath that does not shed, tie a bow that sits straight, and design a coherent wreath for every season, with cost and recipe logs so your good results repeat.

Bases, Tools, and Mechanics

Match bases to materials, assemble your wire kit, and build the conditioning habit that decides how long a wreath lives.

Exercise: Base-to-material matching drill

List the materials you plan to use for your next three wreaths. For each pile, decide which of the five bases fits and write down why, then check yourself against the course: fresh evergreen wants a wire frame, fresh flowers want wet foam, dried and faux want grapevine, heavy traditional wants straw.

- For each planned wreath, which base did you choose and what single property (lifespan, weight, wiring vs inserting) drove the choice?

- Did any pile mix fresh flowers with a non-water base? If so, what is the fix?

- What finished diameter do you want on the door, and what base size (roughly 55 to 65 percent of finished) gets you there?

Worksheet: Wire and tool kit audit

Lay out everything you own for wreath making and fill in what you have versus what the starter kit calls for, so you buy only the gaps before you build.

Paddle wire gauges I own (need 26 for binding, 22 for heavy)

Pre-cut stub wires I own (gauge and length)

Dedicated wire cutters? (yes / no — never use stem snips on wire)

Sharp secateurs or floral snips condition (good / blunt)

Stem tape and low-temp glue gun on hand? (yes / no)

Hanging method ready (wreath hanger / 22-gauge loop)

Gaps to buy before next build

Checklist: Material conditioning readiness

- Fresh greens re-cut and soaked several hours before building
- Anti-desiccant (e.g. Wilt-Pruf) applied to dry greens before assembly
- Air-dried flowers hung upside down in a dark, dry, airy spot until papery
- Hydrangeas dried slowly in shallow evaporating water to stop shattering
- Preserved or glycerine foliage reserved for parts that must bend
- Cones and pods fully dried (and baked low if needed) before wiring
- Honest lifespan of the wreath checked against where it will hang

Wiring and Building a Fresh Wreath

Pre-make even bundles, bind them on under continuous tension, then balance, accent, and finish the back.

Exercise: Bundle consistency drill

Cut conditioned greens to 10 to 15 cm and pre-make a tray of eight to twelve bundles before binding anything. Lay them in a row and compare them: every bundle should be roughly the same size and shape, tips one way, cut ends together.

- Are your bundles even, or did they grow larger as your hands warmed up? How will you keep them to one size?

- Did you mix one or two textures per bundle (for example fir plus cedar) for fullness?

- Are all cut ends oriented to be hidden inward by the next bundle, like shingles?

Worksheet: Fresh wreath build record

Build one fresh evergreen wreath and record the numbers as you go, so the result is repeatable rather than a one-off.

Base type and diameter (cm)

Greens used (species / mix)

Number of bundles to fill the ring

Paddle wire gauge used for binding

Direction of travel (clockwise / anticlockwise)

Overlap achieved (about half / two-thirds of previous bundle)

Focal group placement (clock position) and accents used

Does it hang flat against a vertical surface? (yes / fix)

Checklist: Secure-and-finished check

- Paddle wire anchored once and never cut until the very end
- Each bundle wrapped two or three times under tension, springs back when pressed
- Bundles shingled so no frame shows on the front, inner, or outer edge
- Final bundles tucked under the first to close the loop cleanly
- Accents grouped in odd numbers and placed off-centre
- Silhouette trimmed to a clean, full circle
- Back flattened, stub wires pressed down, one strong hanging loop fitted

Exercise: Judge-it-hung review

Hang the finished wreath where it will actually be seen and step back a metre. Make your final balance and trim decisions from this vertical position, not flat on the bench.

- From a metre away, is the depth even all the way round, or are there thin patches and bulges?

- Does the focal group sit comfortably off-centre and lead the eye, or are accents scattered evenly?

- Does the wreath hang flush and straight, or does it tilt forward because the back is bulky?

Dried, Faux, and the Florist Bow

Pick and place fragrant dried stems, build a deliberate grapevine design, and tie a balanced multi-loop bow.

Exercise: Lay-out-before-you-commit drill

Before securing anything, arrange your dried and faux materials loosely on the grapevine base, photograph the layout, then build it for real. Dried materials shed when pulled out and reinserted, so the plan saves the petals.

- Did you concentrate material in a crescent or corner and leave the opposite arc as bare vine?

- Which stems did you make into small wired picks (held by the stem) rather than wiring the bloom directly?

- Did you reserve glycerine-preserved foliage for the bends and brittle blooms for static accent spots?

Worksheet: Florist bow audit

Tie one multi-loop bow with wired-edge ribbon, mount it on a frame or grapevine, then audit it against the technique so the next one sits straight.

Ribbon type (wired-edge? width in cm)

Number of loops and whether they are even or graduated

Did every twist return to one pinch point? (yes / no)

Centre loop formed to hide the pinch? (yes / no)

Mounted with 22-gauge wire legs? (yes / no)

Streamer length and tail cut (inverted-V / diagonal)

Bow width vs wreath diameter (aim quarter to a third)

Checklist: Dried-and-faux build check

- Fragile dried heads handled only by the stem, never pressed
- Small clusters made into wired, taped picks before insertion
- Stems layered large to small: structural greenery, then blooms, then filler
- Depth varied so some stems sit close and some stand proud
- Part of the grapevine left deliberately bare for natural asymmetry
- Accents kept on removable picks where possible for re-use
- Finished dried wreath sealed with a light matte fixative if shedding

Seasonal Design and Finishing

Apply the design framework, build a chosen season end to end, and plan care, storage, and pricing.

Exercise: Framework-driven design brief

Pick one season and design a wreath on paper before building: choose base and structural greenery, one to three focal materials, a palette of two or three colours plus a neutral, and a single direction of travel with an off-centre focal group.

- Does your palette stay to two or three colours plus a neutral, or has it crept past three?

- Have you set the 60-30-10 ratio (structural greenery / secondary / focal accent) and placed the focal area off-centre?

- Which one or two signature materials make the season instantly readable (e.g. dried orange and cones for autumn, lavender for summer)?

Worksheet: Seasonal recipe card

Record the exact recipe for a wreath you build so a popular design can be reproduced and refreshed rather than reinvented.

Season and theme

Base type and size

Structural greenery and quantity

Focal materials and quantity (repeated at least three times)

Palette (two or three colours plus neutral)

Bow / no bow and ribbon used

Build time (minutes)

Notes for next time / what to swap on picks

Checklist: Care, storage, and selling check

- Fresh wreath hung in cold shade, misted on mild days, anti-desiccant reapplied
- Dried and faux wreaths stored flat or hung loosely, never crushed under weight
- Door protected with a felt-backed or clear over-the-door hanger

- [] Seasonal refresh done by swapping picks on the same base, not rebuilding
- [] Material cost and build time logged for every wreath
- [] Selling price set as materials plus fair hourly labour, then a markup
- [] Each wreath photographed hung in natural light with its recipe saved

Exercise: Cost-and-price walkthrough

Take one finished wreath and work out its real economics using the pricing log template, so you know whether a design is worth selling and at what price.

- What did the materials genuinely cost, including the stems you wasted or broke?

- How long did it take, and what is that worth at a fair hourly rate?

- At materials plus labour times your markup (commonly about 2.5 to 3 times material cost), is the price one a buyer would pay and you would profit from?

Your Action Plan

1. Choose your first project and match the base to the materials and the lifespan you want (fresh to a wire frame, dried and faux to grapevine).
2. Buy only the kit gaps from your tool audit: 26- and 22-gauge paddle wire, stub wires, dedicated wire cutters, stem tape, and a low-temp glue gun.
3. Condition everything first: soak and anti-desiccant fresh greens; fully dry or use preserved material for the dried build.
4. Pre-make a tray of eight to twelve even bundles to one size before you bind anything.
5. Build the fresh wreath by anchoring paddle wire once and binding shingled bundles under continuous tension all the way round.
6. Add an off-centre focal group in odd numbers, trim the silhouette, and finish a flat back with one strong hanging loop.
7. Build a dried-and-faux grapevine wreath: lay it out and photograph it first, concentrate material in a crescent, leave the opposite arc bare.
8. Tie a multi-loop wired-edge bow, returning every twist to one pinch, mount it on a 22-gauge wire, and size it to a third of the wreath at most.
9. Design and build one full seasonal wreath from the framework, recording its recipe on a card so you can reproduce it.
10. Set up care, storage, and (if selling) cost-plus-time pricing, and photograph each wreath hung in natural light for your recipe library.

