

Paper Covered Switch Plates



Personalized switch plates can add colorful pizzazz and unexpected charm to any room.

There are several ways to approach covering switch plates, depending upon the look you want to achieve. Once you know the basics, you can have a tremendous amount of fun with this project. Plus, it's quick, easy, and inexpensive. And the possibilities are endless.

Materials Needed:

- Plastic Switch Plates
- Handmade and Decorative Papers
- Medium to Rough Sand Paper
- Decoupage Adhesive (Modge Podge Matte or Gloss)
- Paint Brush
- Craft Knife
- Bone Folder (optional)
- Metal Ruler with Cork Back
- UV Spray
- Water Base Polyurethane (optional)



Rough up the surface and the edges of the plastic switch plate with the sand paper. Taking some of the shine off will give the adhesive a better surface to stick to. Wipe off plastic dust.

For a traditional covering, lightly trace around the switch plate with a soft pencil on the backside of your paper. Add about $\frac{1}{4}$ " all the way around and cut out with the craft knife using the metal ruler. (The cork back keeps the ruler from slipping.) To get a nice hospital fold on the edge, make a 45-degree cut at the corners slightly beyond the corner edge. For the area where the switch will fit through the opening, cut an X. Coat the plastic switch plate with the Modge Podge, including the edges, screw holes, and switch opening. Place the switch plate face down on the backside of the paper. Doing one side at a time, fold the paper up and over the back of the switch plate. Push the flaps of the X for the switch through and glue into place. From the front, lightly poke the screw holes with the craft knife, and burnish in using the point of the bone folder. Make sure all of the edges are firmly glued into place and let dry. A couple light coats of water base polyurethane will make the switch plate cleanable.

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Another technique, for more of a collage-type look, involves tearing papers and adhering the layers with the Modge Podge or other decoupage glue. These types of switch plates can be the most fun and creative, plus it is a great way to use up some of those pieces in your paper stash that you haven't had the heart to throw away. The translucent Unryu papers, with their long fibers, work very well for this and look sensational, but you can also mix in favorite photographs, or use other textural elements such as the skeleton leaves. (Adhering heavier found objects and pieces of metal is another possibility, but will require a different, more appropriate type of glue.) Think of these switch plates as mini canvases to create landscapes, abstracts, and portraits to use as gifts or to truly personalize a living space.



One further note: Most decorative and handmade papers are colored with dyes, which are very sensitive to sunlight. To delay fading, it is always advisable to use a UV spray or liquid on any of your paper projects.