



Resources for creating your snow or ice work of art

Click here for the overview of the entire competition: [Northern Spirit](#); [Living Skies](#); [Prairie to Pine](#).

Below you'll find tips for building, shaping, and sticking it all together safely. Keep scrolling down for a library of links to others' inspirations.

Waste not: Making bricks and shapes

An especially fun aspect of this competition is that you can use whatever you have around the home to make your creations, including all sorts of things we'd consider garbage or recycling. Have an apple or orange that's too gone to eat? Thin slices set in ice still look lovely. Re-use aluminum baking/ serving pans to create ice bricks. Use styrofoam takeout containers to help with directional freezing (see below). Overrun with takeout containers or milk cartons of all shapes and sizes, or a cake pan that rusted, or an old bucket? Perfect for making all kinds of fun ice shapes. Take old plastic giveaway toys and create a scene by freezing them into ice. Use silicon candle or baking moulds. The sky is the limit!

And it's all risk-free experimenting. All you need is containers and water, and maybe some food colouring and pretty vegetation. If something doesn't work out, place it under a tree that will need water come spring.

Snow can be more fussy to work with, depending on conditions. For blocks and shapes, five gallon pails are handy (ask at your local restaurant.) Here's a Canadian resource on snow sculpting for beginners that includes a how-to for dry, crumbly snow: <https://snowbankproductions.weebly.com/>

Making lots of bricks and art: You can spread the work out amongst your community by inviting everyone to make bricks and shapes. If the weather cooperates, choose a warmer day and have a one-day build party (following all local COVID health measures.) Or, snow in particular allows you a longer-term, flexible build, with lots of ice decorations or snow sculptures added in as you go.

Working with ice

Note that we're not addressing ice sculpture here, but if you're able to freeze large blocks and work with power tools, go for it!

Directional freezing

This technique creates areas of clear ice in your masterpiece, so that additions like messages or greenery, berries, etc can be seen.

Keep in mind that nature treats minerals, gasses like oxygen, and food colouring as an "impurity" during the freezing process. They will be pushed to the top or centre of your creation. That area will be cloudy (or very colourful if using food colouring). If temperatures are about -15C or below, your creation should freeze fast enough that the food colouring will be spread evenly through the whole piece, though the ice will be cloudy.

To push the cloudy area to the centre of your ice creation, set the container in a hole in the snow; or dig a cooler into the snow and prop the lid open slightly; or arrange used styrofoam around the container.

If you're not using food colouring, you can also check your art after a few hours, and if the outside layer seems to be about an inch thick, use a screwdriver or large nail to punch a hole in the bottom of the ice. Drain the water out, wipe the ice down, and put it outside. This should result in clear ice. However, this method would drain out any food colouring, and may make it harder to anchor vegetation you've put in for decoration. Just experiment!

Adding a message: Print a message or single word in large letters on regular paper. Cut it out. Allow the ice art to melt for 5-15 minutes. Carefully press the strip of paper over the art, and hold. Then put the art in the freezer or outside for a half hour.

Getting the ice out of its container: the easiest way is to set it in the sink or shower for 10-20 minutes. Set a timer and leave it. The colder the outside temperature, the longer it will take for the ice to just slide out. Once free, wipe it down and carry it outside. Don't run hot water over it, as in our Northern or Prairie temperatures, the ice will likely crack.

Storing: Our dry Northern and Prairie air also causes ice and snow to "sublimate"- pass directly from a solid to a gas. And even the weaker winter sun will nibble away at ice. If you're building a collection of ice art, set it into a box or cardboard in a shaded snow bank, and cover with an old cloth, preferably white.

Sticking it all together: Take care that ice art at a child's head height or anyone's seated height is securely anchored.

1) **Spray bottle full of warm water:** this works very well for smaller pieces, but isn't the best method for ice blocks or art that are higher up or large and heavy.

2) **Making "snice" or "snowcrete":** Good for larger and heavier pieces, but hard to work with in temperatures of -20 or lower. If working with a larger ice-only structure, take care to use lots of snice and water for the glueing-together process.

Shovel clean snow into a big plastic tote. Add water, mixing thoroughly as you go. The mixture should be stiff but easily spread. When ready, stick a shovel in the tote and slide it along; you will need to do short stretches at a time. Use gardening tools to put a thin layer of snice on a flat surface, then put the next layer on top, pressing the two pieces firmly together.

Remember to be careful! Your hands will get wet. Avoid touching anything metal, and wear ski gloves. Quit when your hands are numb. The United Church of Canada does not advocate frostbite.

3) **Cutting holes to insert ice art in snow:** You can also use a straight saw or a large bread knife to carefully cut holes in blocks of snow. Work the pieces of ice art into the hole; use snice (above) to anchor it if needed.

Ice and snow link library

Help your Regional Council competition entry along with these tips!

Snow forts/ castles/ cathedrals etc

<https://www.backyardboss.net/how-to-build-a-snow-fort/>

<https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/manitoba/snow-fort-tips-1.4473883>

<https://www.popularmechanics.com/adventure/outdoors/a10087/5-tips-for-building-the-ultimate-snow-fort-16479111/>

<https://churchpop.com/2016/02/11/college-snow-chapel-mass/>

<https://religionnews.com/2014/01/08/building-snowmen-youre-snowed-see-one-professor-built-snow-chapel/>

Ice igloos

<https://www.burlingtonfreepress.com/story/news/2021/02/02/burlington-vt-winter-vermont-mom-how-to-colorful-igloo/4351676001/>

<http://heylon.ca/how-to-build-a-rainbow-igloo/>

Ice sculptures (no power tools needed!)

<https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/manitoba/winnipeg-woman-creates-ice-garden-in-her-own-front-yard-in-crescentwood-1.3437695>

<https://www.buzzfeed.com/ishmaeldaro/ice-ice-baby>

Ice ornaments

<https://sproutingwildones.com/ice-ornaments/>

<https://www.kitchencounterchronicle.com/simple-ice-ornaments/>

Ice lanterns

<https://www.wintercraft.com/pages/sharing-the-glow>

<https://livewombat.wordpress.com/2015/01/16/ice-lantern-luminaries-for-lazy-people/amp/>

<https://www.practicallyfunctional.com/make-ice-lanterns-ice-candles/>