

Making Custom Book Supports

- To make a custom book support, you will need corrugated polypropylene, archival hot glue and a glue gun, a ruler, a cutting knife, and a cutting surface. Once you have made a few of these mounts you can choose from among the components to support a book of almost any size. Corrugated polypropylene is chosen because it is relatively inexpensive, inert, and easy to measure and cut due to the corrugations.
- Measure the width of book from spine to the outer edge, e.g. twelve inches. Then measure the height of the book from top to bottom, e.g. five inches. You will need two side supports that measure five by twelve inches in surface area.
- The inner edges of the side supports must be angled down in order for the book to sit open. To achieve this, an inner ledge of approximately two inches and an outer ledge of approximately three inches are ideal. Smaller and thinner books need less of a difference in height to sit open.
- To calculate how large a piece of corrugated polypropylene to cut for each side support, add five inches to the width of the book from spine to the outer edge. If the book is twelve inches wide, each side support needs to be seventeen inches wide. For a book measuring twelve inches wide by five inches high, therefore, you will need two pieces of polypropylene measuring seventeen by five inches.
- Before you cut the polypropylene, orient it so that the corrugated lines are vertical. This will enable you to easily fold the corrugated polypropylene.
- Once you have cut the polypropylene, determine where you are going to fold the sides to create the inner lips. For side supports that are two inches tall in the center and three inches tall on the outer edges, fold the polypropylene two inches from one edge and three inches from the other.
- Glue each crease at a ninety-degree angle with archival hot glue. Hold each fold for at least three minutes while the glue cools.
- The final component is the center brace. This is made of two pieces of corrugated polypropylene that are the same height as the side supports and approximately four inches wide. For this example, the brace is made of two pieces of polypropylene measuring five by four inches. Again, orient them so that the corrugated lines are vertical.
- Measure the width of the spine of the book. If the spine is two inches wide, you will need to cut open two channels in one piece of the center brace that are two inches apart. Do not cut all way through the corrugated polypropylene, but just remove the top layer leaving open channels. Once you have cut open the channels, hot glue the second piece of the brace behind first for extra support.
- To assemble, slide the inner ledge of each side support into the center brace. For a thicker or thinner book, you can make a new center brace and reuse side supports that are the correct size.

