

Cyberscribes- Tricks and Tips

To revive markers that have dried up, remove the cap and add a few drops of water to the barrel, wait a few minutes then try the pen. You may have to add a few more drops. This will give your markers a new life. Bobbi Robertson

Refill dry felt-tip pens by soaking them overnight in a bottle of ink. Colorado Calligraphers Guild

Here's a fun way jazz up a marker stroke. Begin with a wide Zig marker, and color just the middle of the broad edge with the tip of another marker. When you write, you will have a contrasting stripe down the middle of each stroke. Karen Charatan

Empty film canisters make good storage containers for your nibs – just remember to label them. Memphis Calligraphy Guild.

On this same note – since most people now use digital cameras and film canisters are short in supply -- empty prescription bottles can also store nibs. Wash them out, remove the original label, and then add a new label with the size and type of nib inside. Michiana Calligraphy Guild

Save those little silica-gel packets that come in shoe boxes, in vitamin bottles, etc. Put one of them in your nib containers after you clean them. The packets will absorb the excess moisture and prevent rust. American Academy of Calligraphy & Letter Art

Clean dried ink from nibs with the lead of a Number Two pencil. The graphite polishes the metal and prevents rusting. Calligraffits

Use dental floss to clean the slits on a split-nib pen.
Cream City Calligraphers

Use fabric calligraphy markers when you want waterproof envelope addresses. Charlotte Cappelli
When Pentel Brushes run out of ink, they can be dipped in ink or gouache with good results.
The Pen Crafters Guild

Try putting dried up glue sticks in water to reconstitute them. The Western Reserve Calligraphers

A HEALTH ALERT: Embossing powder is synthetic resin (nylon) and releases fumes when heated. Work in a well ventilated area. Do not leave food exposed to fumes. Clean spilled powder with a

damp cloth, do not vacuum as this may further disperse the particles. Remember that chemical effects are cumulative. The Western Reserve Calligraphers

A Mitchell reservoir on a copperplate nib will produce great flourishes. The Legible Scribble

If you have a heavy hand use Brause nibs, for a lighter hand use Mitchell nibs Inklings

The suffixes “-gami” and “-shi” in Japanese paper names simply mean paper. The Legible Scribble

After washing out brushes, draw both sides over a sheet of packing tape -- the kind that you have to wet. This will keep your brushes slightly stiff until your next use. Fran Strom Sloan (Flat Brush Writing video)

To facilitate the tearing of paper, glue the metal serrated tear strips from a box of Saran Wrap or box of foil to the back of a ruler. Houston Calligraphy Guild

Add a drop of liquid detergent to paint or ink to help it adhere to shiny paper. Guild of Golden Quill

Don't toss almost empty ink bottles. Fill with distilled water, which will dilute the remaining ink and use this for practice. This lets you see the skeleton of your letter forms, similar to an X-ray. Lets you learn more about how you form letters. Elsa Posner

Make notes about everything you try. You will not remember what you did six months from now. Donald Jackson

Glue for handmade envelopes can be made with tacky white glue (Elmer's) and one part vinegar. Add a drop of peppermint oil. Brush a thin layer on the flap of the envelope and allow to dry. When ready to seal, moisten and stick the flap. Mix only a small amount and if you have any leftover, store in an air tight container for use later. Abecedarian

Toothpicks can be used to spread glue on small pieces of paper, or into tight corners. New Orleans Lettering Association

When making cards or envelopes a new product is now available for precision gluing, it is a rolling ball pen made by Sailor. It can also be used for writing then while still wet use embossing powder, The Calusa Scribes

GE's Ph5/Clear lamp bulb will work in your Gocco Polyon Corporation Bulletin

Use glitter hairspray for a sparkly effect on cards. Carol Paullenson Hicks

Alcohol speeds ink flow; and vinegar slows it. Michigan Association of Calligraphers

Light-weight Ingres Fabriano or Arches Text Wove paper can be cut to letter size and used for printing on laser printers. You may need to feed the paper manually. Wilma Hardenburg

Place rusty nibs in a film canister and cover with lemon juice, vinegar or oxalic acid. The acid in these will cut through the rest to the metal and the residue can be wiped off.

Washington Calligrapher Guild

Push your nib into a raw, unpeeled potato before dipping the nib into ink. The potato starch helps the ink to adhere and perform better. Calligraffiti

Very few dip pens should actually be dipped into an ink bottle. One way to get the ink from the bottle onto your pen: cut a small piece of sponge and glue onto the inside of the bottle cap. Fill the sponge with ink and press the nib into the sponge. Capillary action will fill the nib. The Dragon Rag

For a more opaque silver gouache, add a little pale gray. Jersey Shore Calligraphers Guild

After washing out brushes, draw both sides of the brush across a bar of Ivory soap a couple of times, then pull between thumb and forefinger to press the bristles to a sharp point. The bristles dry slightly stiff with a thin flat tip that is just right. American Artist Magazine

To improve the flow from a Speedball nib, take tweezers and slide it between the reservoir and the nib, pushing up with the bottom of the tweezers and down from the top, so that the reservoir becomes a little more curved. Memphis Calligraphy Guild tips from a Sheila Waters workshop

To make colored ink, mix ½ inch gouache squeezed from a tube, 2 drops alcohol, 10 drops gum Arabic, and distilled water. Chinook Calligraphy Guild

If you want a spatter effect as a background for your lettering (usually done by loading a toothbrush with paint and running a thumb across the bristles, messy with no control over the direction of the splatter), try this: Use a 3 inch square of window screening. Place paint on the top of the screen, hold close to the paper and blow paint through the screen (like blowing out a candle), moving screen to a new area and reloading with paint if you have a large area to spatter. Sue MacGregor

The smudge tendency of certain colors can be solved with the addition of egg yolk mixed with ample water – about twice as much water as yolk. Donald Jackson

Stand a roll of toilet tissue in your work area for blotting purposes, then you can also store your pens and brushes in its cardboard tube. Bill Gray

Use a slinky attached to a box lid to hold envelopes or cards while drying. Anna Marie Robbins

Thin inks with distilled water; thin waterproof inks with alcohol. Inklings You can make your own cleaning solution for nibs, brushes, etc., by mixing 1 cup of ammonia, 3 ¼ cups water, ¼ cup rubbing alcohol, and 1 teaspoon dishwashing detergent. Store in an air-tight jar. Scribes and Scribblers Ink

If you dip the end of your nib in gum Arabic and then wipe it off, the gouache will flow from the nib better. If you add a couple drops of gum Arabic to gouache, the gouache not only will adhere better to the paper and make erasing easier, but it will also allow you to pull flourishes more easily and to make better hairlines. Colorado Calligraphers Guild

If your fountain pen gets clogged, soak the dismantled pen in 409, Windex, or Top Job. Clean it by flushing with warm water before using. Nibs 'n' Inks

Two handy tools for cleaning ink from pens: a toothbrush and ammonia. Mysticalligraphers Newsletter

An ear syringe is ideal for flushing your fountain pen nib. Pollie Hinson

Kids Fresh by Scott Paper can be used to clean your rubber stamps. Just rub the rubber stamps over the surface of the towel for good results. They also work for removing the oils and inks from your hands. The Scribes of Central Florida

Red ink copies blacker than black for Xerox copies St. Louis Calligraphy Guild

Sprinkle salt on wet letters for a star-like effect, or sugar for a mossy effect. Be sure to brush off the salt or sugar when dry. Northern Lights Calligraphers

To remove rubber stamp ink from fingers, try hair spray. Edmonton Calligraphic Society

To preserve newspaper clippings; dissolve one Milk of Magnesia tablet in one quart of club soda. Let stand overnight. Next day, soak the clipping in this mixture for one hour. Remove, pat dry, and gently flatten during air drying. The estimated life of treated newsprint is 200 years. Calligraphy Guild of the Peninsula

For an inexpensive cutting mat, look in the sewing goods department for the Olfa Rotary Cutting Mat.

San Antonio Calligraphers Guild

To clean rubber stamps, pour peroxide on them and the color will foam out. Olympia Calligraphy Guild

Seal your bone folder with vegetable oil – soak it overnight and then thoroughly scrub it to remove any trace of oil. This keeps paint and ink from going into the bone folder and coming off on your paper at inappropriate times. Michigan Association of Calligraphers

Use day-old white bread to remove guidelines from your work. Compress the bread into a small ball and test it first on a sample of the same paper used for your finished piece. Charles Pearce
Invisible guidelines of envelopes, etc., can be “drawn” with the tines of a fork Escribiente

If you don't have a sharpening stone for your nibs handy, use the striker on a book of matches
San Francisco Calligraphers