

[Editor's Letter](#) | [Letters to the Editor](#) |  
[Questions and Answers](#) | [Book](#)  
[Reviews](#) | [Le Pâte Polymère](#) |  
[Clayers With Disabilities](#) | [Geometric](#)  
[Canes](#) | [Face Canes: Eye Canes](#) |  
[Email Us!](#) | [Home](#)

[Advertisers' Page](#) |

Geometric canes consist of triangles, squares and other geometric shapes which are cut and reassembled to produce dynamic repeating patterns of shape and color.

The basic cane components are built using contrasting colors, Skinner blends, bits of old canes, and scrap clay. The components are then cut and reassembled in a variety of ways to produce an infinite number of patterns.

This technique incorporates principles used in Donna Kato's Miracle Canes and the canes of Sara Shriver and Sandra McCaw, and borrows from other techniques used to make kaleidoscope canes and Natasha beads. All these methods are related to one another and you can use them to come up with your own unique designs.

## Geometric Cane Basics

Cane components are assembled in groups of 3, 4, 6 and 8. Shapes can be triangles, trapezoids or squares.

The geometric cane principle can be seen in

- mirror images
- butterflies
- snowflakes
- spider webs
- kaleidoscope
- Rorschach shapes
- Natasha beads

Points to remember:

1. Use contrasting colors. If you want to know how colors will look next to one another in a cane, lay them next to one another on a table and look at them from a distance of about 12 feet. If the colors remain distinct, they will look good in your cane. If they do not, then try something else.
2. When assembling your components, keep in mind that the appearance of your cane will change depending on which side of the design is on the inside of the cane and which side is on the outside.
3. When assembling the components, they will all pretty much match up with each other. Your cane will look better, however, if you try to find the best, or "true", matches.
4. You can wrap your components in a contrasting clay or leave them unwrapped.
5. Skinner blends offer many possibilities for building your basic components.
6. Bits of old cane can be used by themselves or combined with solid colors or Skinner blends to make new canes. This is just taking the Natasha bead to another level.

## **Directions for Making the Cane**

The following are directions for making a geometric cane based on a four-part design.

Supplies:

- Clay: five colors plus black and white (this project uses lime green, white, black, blue, orange, purple, and yellow)
- pasta machine
- slicing blade

For this project, we start with the bull's eye cane, then combine it with other bull's eye canes to create a pattern. You will then reduce the cane and cut it into four pieces and reassemble them to make a new pattern.



### Step One:

Make a Skinner blend cane. Start with a Skinner blend made of lime green and white. Roll up with the white on the inside and the green on the outside.



### Step Two:

Slice the cane lengthwise into four pieces and sandwich layers of black clay (rolled on a medium pasta machine setting) in between.



### Step Three:

Reassemble the pieces. Make a bull's eye cane out of black and white clay. Add another layer of black and another layer of white as shown.



### Step Four:

Pinch the Skinner cane into an oval shape and place the bulls eye cane at one end.



### **Step Five:**

Add blue and white striped canes. The layers should be rolled on the thickest pasta machine setting.



### **Step Six:**

Add orange logs.



### **Step Seven:**

Make a Skinner blend with purple and white. Roll into a log with the white on the inside and the purple on the outside. Reduce; pinch into oval and triangle shapes, and place into cane assembly as indicated in picture.



### **Step Eight:**

Add Skinner blend cane made out of white and green. Note that this cane does not have black layers in it like the green Skinner cane in steps 1-3.



### Step Nine:

Roll a thin layer of black and add to the outside of the cane.



### Step Ten:

Add pale yellow as seen in photo.



### Step Eleven:

Pinch the cane into a square shape.



### Step Twelve:

Reduce the cane. When the cane is reduced to the size you want, cut it into four even lengths.

## Constructing the Complex Geometric Cane

You can get two different canes from the same base depending on how you reassemble them.



Here, you can see a cane made with the big green Skinner blend log pointed toward the center of the cane and the end with the bull's eye pointed outward.



This cane has the bull's eyes pointed toward the center of the cane and the big green Skinner blend log pointed outward. See how different it looks?

These pictures show that the more you reduce your cane, the less distinct the pattern becomes. Areas of high contrast show up more than areas of lower contrast. The only way to predict what will happen with the clay is to become more familiar with it by making a few canes yourself and seeing what works.

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## **Video**

McCaw, Sandra, The McCaw Cane, Abba Dabba Productions

## **Internet Resources**

[Glass Attic](#) contains the most comprehensive list of links and information on geometric canes that you will find in the Internet.

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