



Watercolour paper of less than 356 gsm should be stretched before use to prevent warping

Here's How:

1. Cut four strips of gummed brown tape, one for each side (edge) of the piece of watercolour paper. Cut these slightly longer than the sides. Put them aside for the moment.
2. Soak a sheet of watercolour paper in cold water for a couple of minutes. This is to allow the fibres in the paper to expand.
3. Lift the sheet of watercolour paper and gently shake off the excess water. Place it on a drawing board, which must be lying flat.
4. Smooth the watercolour paper out with a clean sponge (preferably) or your fingers (but wash them first to get any grease off them). If the sheet of watercolour paper not perfectly smooth at this stage, it won't dry smooth.
5. Moisten a strip of gummed tape and stick it down firmly along one side so that one third of the tape is on the paper and two-thirds on the board. This will stop the watercolour paper pulling off the board when it dries.
6. Tape down the other sides of the sheet of watercolour paper in the same way.
7. Leave to dry for several hours, away from direct heat. As the water evaporates, the fibres in the paper contract, leaving the sheet of watercolour paper flat.
8. Keep the board flat while the watercolour paper dries, otherwise the water will drain to one edge and the paper will drive unevenly.
9. When you paint on the watercolour paper, it'll stay flat because you won't ever soak the whole piece as much as you did in step one.

Tips:

- Don't use hot water to soak your watercolour paper as this could remove the sizing from the paper, and don't soak it for too long for the same reason. Sizing is added to watercolour paper to reduce its absorbency.
- Use different colour sponges for smoothing a piece of paper and moistening gummed tape so you never run the risk of getting gum on your sheet of watercolour paper.
- If you don't get on with gummed brown tape, an alternative method is to staple the paper down onto the board instead.