

Everyone has his or her own way to start a new project. If you're like me, you have to get everything you need right at the beginning to make sure you have the supplies you'll need as the project progresses. My sister calls this "Pulling a Susie."

Sometimes she'll call me and moan, "I did it again. I was at (insert your favorite store here) and decided I was going to make leather bracelets, but I wasn't sure exactly the pattern or the clasp or the color of leather or if I'm going to stain the leather or punch a design in it, so I just bought everything they had. I just pulled a Susie!"

Now you don't have to "pull a Susie," and I may not be the best person to give tips on how to start something new. However, the people I work with are great at it and they've got a few tips on how to plan and prepare before you start your next DIY or craft project.

First, do some window shopping. Vicki, one of my co-workers at The Craft Barn in Marysville, Ohio, suggests you check out Pinterest to get some preliminary ideas. Let's say you want to learn to decoupage. Visit www.pinterest.com and type "decoupage ideas" in the search bar at the top of the page. You'll be amazed at what pops up. Sift through the results until you see something you'd like to try.

You don't have to start with Pinterest, Vicki says. Check out YouTube or use an internet search engine like Bing or Yahoo. Or do what I do. Pull your phone out of your pocket, say "OK, Google," ask what you'd like to know and page through the responses.

Now that you have some ideas, Vicki says, visit your local craft store and talk to the employees. You're bound to find one or more of the sales associates who have done the type of project you'd like to learn and who can give you some tips and tricks. And they'll know right where you'll find the supplies you'll need.

Before you buy anything, Vicki suggests playing around with your idea a bit. Use some scraps to try a technique before starting the actual project. Or, if you're lucky enough to know someone who already knows the craft you want to learn, ask for a demo. "I just ask my mom," Vicki says.

Once you have a plan and feel prepared, buy your supplies and get busy. I like to designate an area in my house where I'm going to work on the project and get everything set up and ready so my supplies are right at hand. And then I jump in with both feet.

So, a little planning and preparation should make your next craft or DIY project a walk in the park. As always, we at The Craft Barn are here to help in any way we can. Just call (937-956-7022) or stop in at 750 Colemans Crossing Blvd. in Marysville, Ohio. We're here to help you Dream it. Create it. Love it.