

Royal Icing Techniques:

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Australian Extension Work



Materials

- Royal icing
- #1 or #1.5 PME tip
- #0 or #00 PME tip
- Plastic piping bags
- Scissors
- Corsage pins
- Receipt paper
- Tape
- Palette knife
- Damp paintbrush
- Turntable



Prepping the cake

Measure the circumference of the cake by wrapping the receipt paper around the cake. Fold the paper in halves until it's in 1 to 2 inch sections. Unfold, and attach around the cake using tape where they meet together. Move the paper up or down the cake until it's at the height you want for the drop strings that will be the bridge. Place a greased corsage pin at each crease in the receipt paper. Mark a line, using a marker, on the corsage pin a 1/2 inch out from the cake. Bring the receipt paper 1 to 2 inches up and scribe a solid line around the whole cake. This will be used as a guideline on where to start each extension. Remove the receipt paper.

Prepping the piping bags

Cut the bag down so it's around 5 inches. I like small bags for intricate piping. Cut the point of the bag to where it rides about half way up the tip. Take about two tablespoons of royal icing and slap it on the counter. Use the palette knife to spread the icing out to get all air bubbles out. Once the icing is smooth put it in the bag that has a #1 or #1.5 tip. Repeat for the bag with a #0 or #00 tip. Fold the ends of the bags to keep icing from drying/coming out.

Bridgeless Extension Work

Use the prepared bag with the #1 or #1.5 tip. Place the tip on one of the greased corsage pins at the marked spot. The goal now is to go all the way around the cake with one solid line of icing using one hand for squeezing the bag and the other to rotate the turntable. Make sure the icing lies on the pins where it is marked. If you cannot make it all the way around stop at one of the pins on the marked spot, shake your hand off, then continue where you stopped. After you've completed the "bridgeless bridge" let it dry for at least 4 hours.

Extension work

Use the prepared bag with the #0 or #00 PME tip. Start on the scribe line above one of the pins. Pipe an extension from the top pulling out then coming back in to attach at the bottom. To make sure the extension is tight and straight, use a damp paintbrush to move or pull it as needed. You have about 15 to 20 seconds to do this before the royal icing dries too much. Repeat this at every pinpoint. This will give you a good guideline to do the rest of the extension work. Next pipe an extension to the right or left of the first one you piped. You want the extensions to be in between 1/8 - 1/16 inch apart from each other. Repeat this step to each section around the cake. Continue doing this over and over until you have completed the extensions around the whole cake.

Finishing up

Let everything dry for at least 4 hours. For each corsage pin, very carefully twist it to ensure that the pin is not stuck to the royal icing. Once this is done, pull the pin down and out making sure you don't hit the extension work. Once you've done this, you have completed the extension work! For a neater finish, add a drop string over the bridge to cover up the end of the extensions. For the top where the scribe line was, you could add a bead border or lace points to cover up the points where you started each extension.



Tips for Successful Royal Icing Work

- I suggest using a tilting turntable angled towards you, as it will help the extension work from looking droopy.
- A damp, fine paintbrush will be your best friend throughout the whole process. Use it to remove messed up extensions, or straighten them up.
- If your tip gets clogged, use a 30 gauge or higher gauge, unwrapped wire to unclog it. Be careful not to mess up the end of the tip. You will get curled icing if you do.
- Patience is key. Yes, strings will break. Yes, you will want to throw the cake out at some point. The final product is worth all the patience though.
- This is a good technique to use for competition cakes as it will give you lots of points once you get good at it.
- Evenly spaced extensions are better than getting them closer together and having them not look uniform.

Tyler Gary started decorating at the young age of 13. He has studied sugarcraft with Dawn Parrot, Jay Qualls, and Nicholas Lodge. Tyler has become known for his royal icing work. His work has graced the pages in Cake Central Magazine and American Cake Decorating Magazine several times. He has won many awards at the prestigious Oklahoma State Sugar Art Show & That Takes The Cake Show. 🍰