

Crayon Holder From a Pill Box

by Phil Russell

Two things led me to make this crayon holder out of an old pill container. I have six great grandchildren and I am at an age so that I have to take more prescriptions that I did a dozen years ago.

My medication comes from Merck, and is in plastic pill containers about four inches high and two inches wide. Mine are rounded rectangular, Fig. 1. Make a cut just below the curvature at the top of the container, Fig. 2.

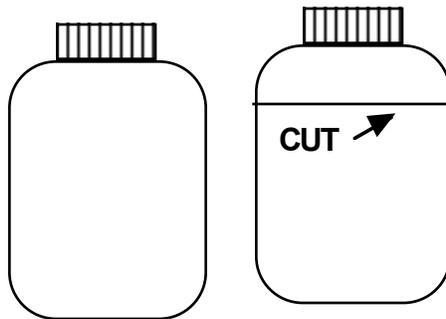


Fig. 1 Pill Box **Fig. 2. The cut**

Place a piece of paper around the container to measure the circumference. Mine was 8 inches, or 48 picas. If your container is not that large in circumference, you will have to adjust the number of pictures or text blocks you can effectively use. I will stay with my 4x2 inch pill container for this example. I measured from the cutline to the point where the bottom starts to curve inward. It was 16 picas, or 2 2/3 inches. This 16 pica space is flat and not curved.

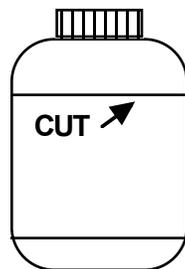


Fig. 3. Measure cutline to the bottom curve

Now open a new image in Photoshop, Photo Elements or whatever program you wish to use. Using my 4x2 container, I make the document 50 picas (8 1/3 inches -- see why I am using picas?) by 16 picas. We need two extra picas to fold over where the ends meet. You are going to be using horizontal format since the document is more than 8 inches wide.

Here is the template, Fig. 4. Now I will tell you how it is made.

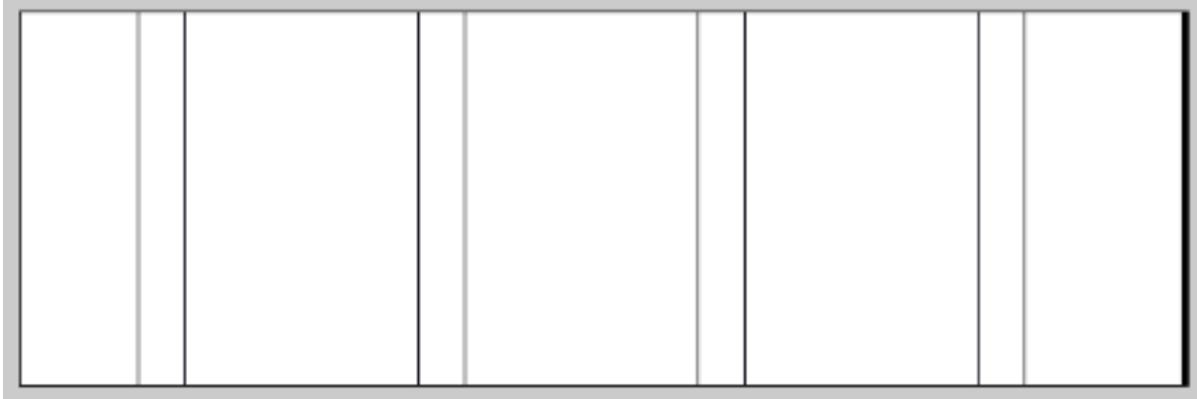


Fig. 4. Pill Box template

For this size container, we can have three pictures. The fourth side is where the ends meet, so you have to dream up another use for this side. Start from the left and move in 5 picas, draw a vertical, then draw more verticals at 7, 17, 19, 29, 31, 41, 43, and you are done. In Fig. 4, above, I have indicated the last two picas at the right in black. Don't do them in black though. I have done it to indicate that there are two picas left over ($48+2=50$) at the right side.

Now find three horizontal pictures you wish to use. Make copies of them to play with. Open one, with the template still also on screen. Guess at the size that will be needed. Select All, Copy. Now draw a marquee just barely filling one of the 10x16 pixel boxes in the template, including the line, but no more. Paste.

This is where the time consuming part comes in. Unless you are extremely adept, it will not fit. Without doing anything else, see about how much too large or small the picture is. Then use Command + Z to remove the picture. Resize it again, Select All, Copy, Paste. You may have to do this several times. It should fit exactly ON, not over the lines on either side, and without the line showing.

It is best to use images with a little area all around the main subject. This way you can crop until the image fits 10x16 pixels.

When you have one image fitted into a 10x16, you now have the measurements which will work for your second and third images. Resize them and drop them into the other 10x16 slots. Fill the middle two 2 pica wide columns with the color of your choice. I like to remove the outside two lines (5 picas and 43 picas in from the left) and use 2 picas more space for my two ends. Think carefully about the repercussions if you do. The final 2 pica columns at either end occur on the rounded edge, so think twice. You do not want picture or text hanging over the separating columns.

Use text or two narrow images for the end pieces.

Print your finished pattern, Fig. 5.



Notice in Fig. 5 how I kept the text at the right quite far toward the picture, so my folder of the ends does not cover any of the text. This also takes some experimentation, so print on plain paper in black and white until all the mistakes are corrected. My first crayon holder pillbox took seven prints before I was happy.

Cut close to all four edges of your pattern. Hold it up against the container and wrap it around and check. When you are satisfied, print a glossy final and cut around it. Now apply double sided Scotch tape all over the back, close to all edges.

Hold the middle picture against a side, pulling it off and reattaching until it is centered on the side and is flush to your cutline at top. Wrap and make the two ends overlap, with the left side above beneath the right side.

You are done. Fill it with crayons and give it to your young relative or friend. If your pill container is a different shape, adapt from this idea to make a template that will work for you.