

# how to make zines to cope

a  
r  
d  
e  
n  
t  
  
e  
l  
i  
o  
t

from someone  
who copes a lot

second  
edition

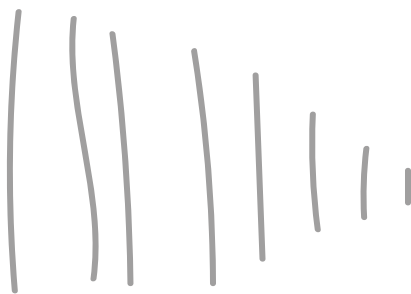
: -) reinhard

you've probably got a few problems

hey, that's life, right? what are you gonna do about it?

you could:

1. cry
2. complain
3. solve them
4. cope



we all want option three, but it just doesn't work out like that. crying helps, yes, and complaining can feel like it helps, but what i find the most useful is coping.

coping is acknowledging that a solution either is impossible or out of reach. coping is what you do to not give up hope. it's necessary for going on and living with a problem. coping is the coexistence of the sun and the void. coping won't build the bridge across the chasm, but it might help you find some supplies.

i cope every day of my life.

# how to make a zine

if you're making a zine to cope, you don't want to be coping with your zine, so pick whatever method you're most comfortable with. your zine will be no help to you if you're struggling with the actual creation of it.

for digital zines, my number one program recommendation is nathalie lawhead's electric zine maker. it's perfect for the style of zine making i outline here. it also does a lot of the construction stuff for you, which simplifies the process. you can make many different styles of zines using EZM.

if real paper is more your style, a great way to start is to fold piece of paper into a one-page zine and write on it with pen. you could also fold a few pages in half and bind them with a stapler if that is more your style.

## step zero: why make a zine to cope?

zines are low-pressure and easy to make, so you can get to the heart of a matter without wading through too much medium. it's not a window to the soul, it's a canal, facilitating movement to and from.

writing a zine is more fluid than writing regular prose, so you don't have to worry too much about language, either. look at the casual tone i take in this zine, and my lack of capital letters. capital letters make everything stiffer! write in lower case like god intended!

there are three big reasons i make zines to cope:

1. it organizes my thoughts on a matter
2. i like to chronicle zines in a portfolio
3. maybe someone else will relate to my zine



step one: what are you coping with?

i am g\*y and tr\*ns and b\*p\*l\*r and i have a tw\*tt\*r account, so i basically always have something i need to cope with.

i have thoughts bubbling and bouncing through my mind constantly, thinking about myself, my friends, my community, my world. what troubling thoughts regularly rear their ugly heads at your psyche?

maybe it's obvious to you, but maybe you need to think about it more. if you're uncertain, then you should write to find out!

maybe it's your parents' divorce.

maybe it's your gender.

maybe it's the way the barista at starbucks can't spell your name right.

maybe it's huge, unspeakable and unknowable, but you need desperately to speak it and to know it.

## step two: pages and spreads

zines are made of pages and spreads. a zine is always organized somehow, even if your order is disorder.

often times before i write a zine, i imagine writing a specific line on a specific page of my zine. the first part of this zine that came to me was the line where i censored “gay,” “trans,” “bipolar,” and “twitter.” i started thinking about the pages that joke fits on and the other pages around it.

a really fun part (for me) of the electric zine maker is how the page count is set.

honestly, a lot of my zines would only be 2 or 3 pages if i wasn't made to fill out the entirety of what i was given. sometimes it feels like i don't have quite enough time to finish my thought, but that also makes me move on.

of course you can always adjust the page count at any time (especially on step 5) to fit your needs, but you won't know what your needs are until you start writing :-)

## step three: text and images

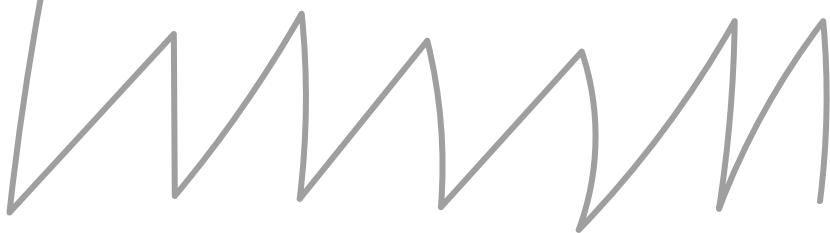
some ideas are better expressed through text. some ideas need the raw power of images. sometimes you simply want to use only text or images.

i decided to only use images for my zine “somnambulant,” because i made it in a moment when i was feeling really bad. i use almost no images here because i want more space for text.


my zine “oh sea dee” uses text and images because it is largely about the shapes of things.

my zine “exorcise” uses mostly images and song lyrics, because i couldn’t write my feelings down in any other way at the time.

try it out and if it feels wrong, try something else!



## step four: design, style, and motif



after you assemble the first couple pages of your zine, you will notice that you are employing a certain layout of text and images in a certain style.

think for a moment. how are you using style and motif right now? do you like it? is it effective?

in this zine, i use inconsistent margins, which fits the aesthetic i am getting at. the meaning of your style should naturally fit the content of your zine.

don't worry too hard about it. all these things are meaningful, but they're also fluid. you may find that your design and style change over time. maybe you want to change your previous pages. maybe you want your previous pages to look more like your later pages.

step five is magic for these problems.



## step five: start over

there are about a thousand reasons someone would want to start their zine over. odds are, at any given time in the making of your zine, one or more of these reasons will apply to you!

you might want to restart in the middle of making your zine. this could be a good idea if you don't like the current direction of your zine, but i would encourage you to see it through if you can.

maybe you just finished your zine and you can see a thousand different things you can do better. this is often where i find myself restarting. this is another step in coping. you achieve a greater clarity of thought the second time around. it really helps you figure your shit out!

be sure to make a copy before you restart so you can see what you already did :-)



## step six: distribution???

the purpose of your zine, right now, is to be created. its creation is what facilitates coping. the zine itself, if you want, can live beyond this purpose into a new stage of its life.

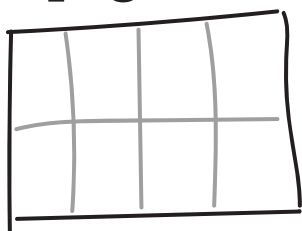
there are a few reasons you may want to distribute your zine. you may want to show it to a friend for support on what you wrote about. you may want to give it to strangers to help them cope with the same issue. you may want it in a portfolio. you may just want to sell it.

distribution is simple on the internet. on the other hand, it's easy to get your zine to select audience members if you just give it to them.

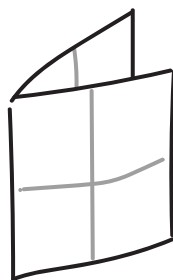
the most important person to distribute to is me! hmu on twitter or instagram @trophyhusban and show me what you make :-)



# one-page zine

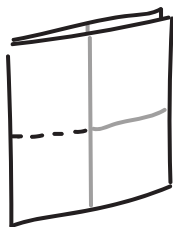


each section is  
one page of your  
zine



fold a paper into 8 parts

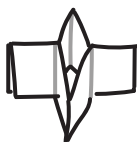
fold it in half horizontally



cut on the dashed line



fold the whole sheet in  
half like this

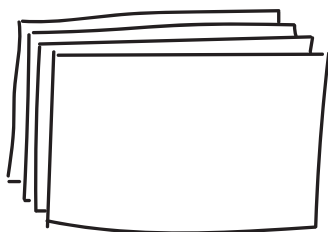


push the ends together



fold it all into a book :-)

# staple-bound zines

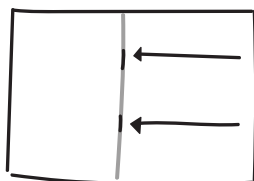


each sheet  
of paper is 4  
pages in  
your zine

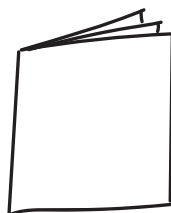


pick a page count

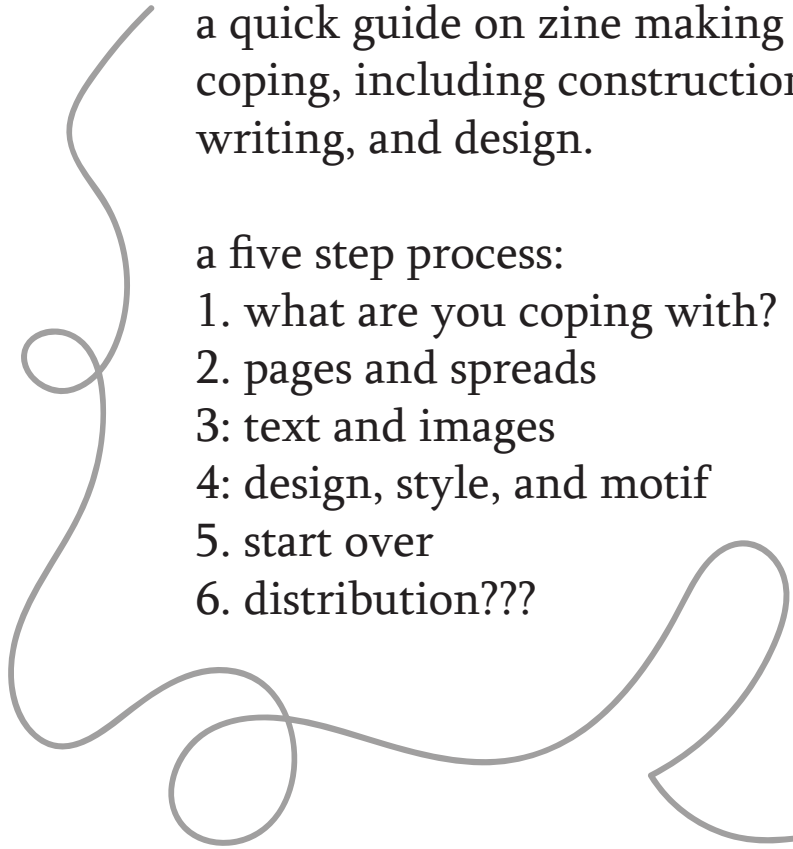
fold 'em all in half



stack 'em  
and staple  
here



and ur  
done :-)



a quick guide on zine making as coping, including construction, writing, and design.

a five step process:

1. what are you coping with?
2. pages and spreads
- 3: text and images
- 4: design, style, and motif
5. start over
6. distribution???

the first edition was published on my itch on april 4th, 2020. this version was created for the los angeles contemporary archive on june 5th 2023.



you can find my zines and games at [trophyhusban.itch.io](https://trophyhusban.itch.io) <3 <3 <3 <3