Make Your Own Window Clings

In cities like Chicago, windows can become a hazard to migrating birds. Birds might try to fly through the glass they can’t see, or they might fly towards glass that reflects the sky, plants, or their own reflection.

You can use window decals or clings to break up the transparency and reflections of your windows and help prevent bird collisions! To make window clings at home all you need is:

- Puff paint OR Elmer’s Glue, dish soap, and markers
- A smooth surface, like plastic wrap, wax paper, or a sandwich bag
- A paintbrush (optional)
- Stencils for tracing (optional)

**Step 1.** Determine your decal design! You can use one from online or design your own. You can trace the outline of an animal in a photograph or just make small circles or flowers (at least the size of a dime).

Step 2. Put your wax paper, plastic wrap or sandwich bag over your stencil so you can see the stencil through the plastic. You can use binder clips or paper clips to make sure the stencil doesn’t move around too much.

Step 3. Prepare your glue or use puff paint. If you don’t have puff paint, you can make your own clear adhesive: Put 2 tablespoons of Elmer’s glue in a cup and stir in a few drops of dish soap until everything is fully mixed together.

Step 4. Apply the glue or puff paint to the plastic. If you’re using puff paint, you can squeeze the paint directly on the plastic and use a paintbrush to smooth it out. If you’re using homemade glue, use the paintbrush to brush the glue on the stencil. Make sure there is enough glue or paint to withstand being lifted from the sheet, it might take a few coats.
Step 5. Let the glue or paint dry. It will take 2-24 hours depending on how thick the cling is.

Step 6. Only for the homemade glue: Once the cling dries, you can color it! Use markers to gently color in your clings while they are still on the plastic.

Step 7. Once the marker or puff paint is dry, carefully remove the clings from the plastic. Peel them off slowly and make sure they do not fold over and stick to themselves.

Step 8. Place your decals close together on the outsides of your windows. Birds see small spaces as room to fly through, so the gaps should be no more than 2-4 inches. For puff paint clings, attach the flat side to the window. For homemade glue clings, attach the non-colored side to the window.

Make sure you share your finished window clings with us on social media!

If you do find an injured bird, you can contact Chicago Bird Collision Monitors at 773-988-1867.

Activity adapted from Audubon New York
Window Cling Stencils

[Diagram of three bird silhouettes]