

# Snowman Arms

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When my sister originally made these hand-molded paper mache snowfolks decades ago, she gave them arms made of tiny real twigs – an adorable idea, and really cute.

Unfortunately, as the years passed, the twigs dried out and became increasingly brittle, and even though I shored them up along the way with a coating of Mod Podge, the delicate twigs eventually snapped.

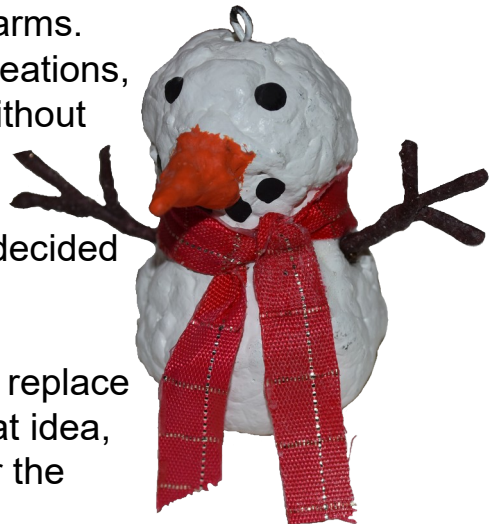
Some had broken off completely, leaving only stubs. As the years passed, each time I hung the snowfolks on the tree, I wondered whether I dare attempt to replace their little arms.

I didn't really like to tinker with my sister's creations, but I also hated to see her little snowfolks without their adorable twig arms.

This year – their 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary -- I finally decided to repair them, with my sister's blessing.

My first thought was to find tiny real twigs to replace the broken ones, but I ultimately rejected that idea, figuring that new tiny twigs would only suffer the same eventual fate. What to do?

The solution ended up being pretty simple, and as luck would have it, I had all the supplies I'd need already at hand.

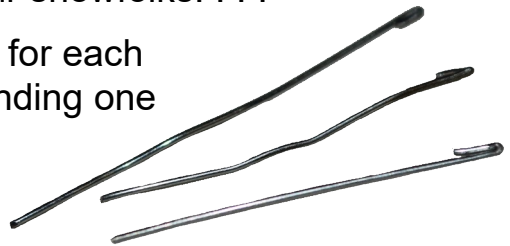




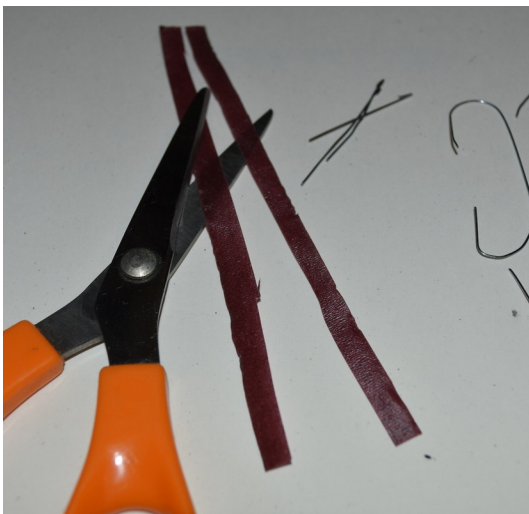
Here they are: thin wire (I'm using ornament hanger wires), brown floral tape, and tacky glue. That's it!

If you've never used it, floral tape is great stuff: it's made of crepe paper impregnated with wax, so it sticks to itself when molded. It most commonly is found in green, but it also comes in brown and white, and I even have a roll of pink (!). It's used primarily for wrapping flower stems when making corsages and some floral arrangements. Oh, and as it turns out, for creating realistic twiggy arms for your snowfolks. . . .

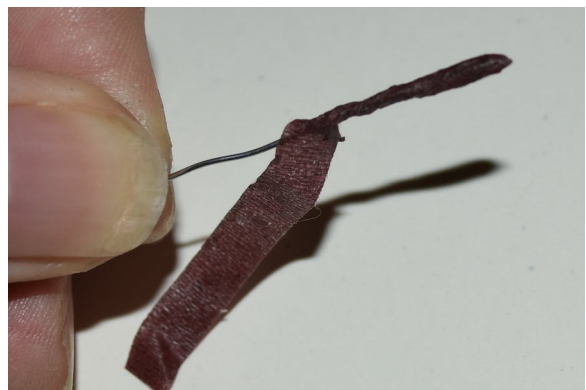
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I cut a piece of floral tape about 4" long, and because the arms are so small, I cut the strip lengthwise into two pieces to make it easier to work with.

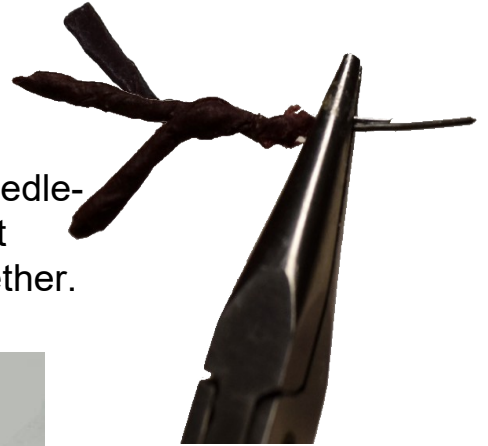


I wrapped each of the wires individually, covering the rounded tip with tape and wrapping about half way down the wire.



I've wrapped all three wires, leaving a tail of the tape on one of them, which I'll use to finish wrapping the group once I've twisted them together.

I'm using my flat needle-nosed pliers to twist the wire stems together.



With all three wires twisted together, I'll finish wrapping the rest of the arm.

The completed arms, ready to be installed.



I used a short skewer to make a hole where the twig arm used to be. I'll add a squirt of tacky glue into the hole, and insert the new arm.



Ta-da: a nice new arm! At first I thought I might replace just the missing arm, leaving the single original intact, but it proved to be much too brittle. It broke off while I was inserting the new arm, so I ended up replacing both arms.

In the end, I think that was the right call. The original twigs had become too fragile and easily damaged, even with their coating of Mod Podge. The replacements keep the “twiggy” effect, but are not so fragile, and will last as long as the snowfolks themselves.



All three of my little snowfolks, restored to completeness with their new arms, looking just as adorable as they did when they first arrived!

