

Tic Tac Toe Frog and Koi Pond



Do you or your kids like to play tic tac toe? Instead of playing tic tac toe with X's and O's on paper, you can play with frogs on their own pond. Make one set of frogs with orange spots and the other set with yellow spots so you can tell them apart. Paint tile, wood, stiff cardboard, felt, fabric or a small chalkboard to resemble a frog pond. The frogs make their moves by leaping onto the lily pads, while the extra pieces sit patiently to the side, until it's their turn to move. First one to get three of their frogs in a row wins.

What you'll need

Paint – Bright green and medium green, yellow, orange, white, black, brown and tan

Brushes – Variety of flats, a liner, and a small round

Other – Chalk, and support for the tic tac toe game like a tile, board or small chalkboard, piece of felt or material to fit 9 rocks.

Rocks – 10 small rocks for frogs (5 for each player)

Getting the pond ready

Instead of using a floor tile for your pond surface, you can use a small child's chalkboard. See photo 8. If using a large piece of felt, you could use a marker or paint to draw the lily pads and fish on.

Tiles are heavier and can break if dropped, but are great for keeping outdoors on your patio table.

The small wooden chalkboard is lightweight and won't break easily if dropped. You will need to paint the black area to look like water first. You can purchase chalkboards in the craft stores where they keep the unfinished wooden pieces.

Using felt or some other material for your pond would make it easy for transporting the game, just roll it up and put the frogs in zip lock bag or plastic container.

The tile I used in photo 2 was already a greenish blue color with a marble like design. I thought it looked enough like water the way it was so I didn't paint it. If you don't have a blue or blue green tile, just put a coat of paint on it first. Pick any color that looks like water to you. You can make swirl marks with a lighter shade for a more realistic look.

Sketch your design

Lay 9 of the 10 rocks on your "pond" water surface area in 3 rows of 3 to make a tic tac toe pattern. Photo 2

If your surface isn't big enough, you can omit the rocky edge around the water.

With chalk, draw a circle like area around the 9 rocks to represent the lily pads. Photo 2

Sketch the rocky area around the pond if you have room for it. I added grass and flowers to my rock area, but you could just paint rocks if you wanted. Photo 2



Photo 2 – Sketch your design with chalk

Basecoat the fish, lily pads and rocky area

Just like the rocky area, the fish are optional. You could leave them off and just have a frog pond.

Basecoat the fish white.

Basecoat the lily pads bright green.

Basecoat the grass medium green.

Basecoat the rocks brown and tan.



Photo 3 – Start painting the rocks, fish and pads.

Adding detail

Paint the koi various shades of bright orange, white and black. They can be a solid color, two colors or all three colors. Paint tiny black dots for the eyes. Photo 3 & 4



Photo 4 – Detail the lily pads, fish and grass.

To make the lily pads more realistic, highlight the outside edges of the pads with a lighter shade of green by adding yellow or white to the medium green paint.

Use medium green to paint veins radiating out from the center.
Photo 4

Add detail to the grass and rock area if you have one. For the tiny flowers I used the end of a paintbrush and dipped it into orange and yellow paint, then make groups of flowers in the grass.
Photo 4

I also added tiny white bubbles coming out of the fish's mouths.

This picture shows how adding highlights and veins to the lily pads make them look more realistic. Photo 5

To see the completed pond and fish, see Photo1



Photo 5 – In process of adding details.

Paint the frogs



Photo 6 – Step by step process of painting the frogs.

Paint the frogs' bright green.

With chalk or a charcoal pencil, sketch a line down the center from head to tail. This will help you keep the frogs markings symmetrical.

Sketch legs and head shape.

Next come the eyes and spots. I like to paint them white first, to make the color brighter, but you could skip this and go straight for the color on the spots. You need to make 5 one color and 5 the other color.

Add an orange iris to 5 of the frogs and yellow for the other 5. Add a tiny black dot for the pupils. Photo 6



Photo 7 – Frogs next to tile koi pond.



Photo 8 – Yellow spotted frogs won this game, 3 in a row.

In Photo 8, it shows how the chalkboard was painted to look like a pond. The green area around the pond was unfinished wood, just painted green. You could add tiny flowers to this area. The black chalkboard part was painted a blue with faint swirls painted in the water with a lighter blue.

More Ideas

You could also create a checkerboard and paint rocks red and black. Since the rocks won't stack, like real checkers, you could paint a different looking rock to represent the stacked checker. Another game you could make would be backgammon, using 2 different colors for markers.