



What you need

- Dowels or separator pegs
- Pencil or edible ink pen
- Greaseproof paper
- Cake scriber or cocktail stick
- Small hacksaw, sharp knife or heavy duty scissors
- Royal icing



Getting Started

Introduction

If you are making a stacked cake, whether sponge or rich fruit, each tier (apart from the top) needs to be supported with dowels to prevent the risk of the tiers sinking into each other. You can use wooden/plastic dowels or separator pegs as long as they are bought from a cake supplier so that they are food safe, just remember to wash & dry them before use. The number of dowels you use depends on the size & shape of the cake, usually 3/4 dowels up to an 8 inch cake, 4 dowels up to a 10 inch and 5 dowels in larger cakes.

The preparation and covering of the cakes beforehand is really important as every cake should be completely level. Dowelling and stacking the cakes is much easier if the covered cakes have been left to harden for at least 24 hours. This reduces the risk of the icing cracking or being marked when moved.

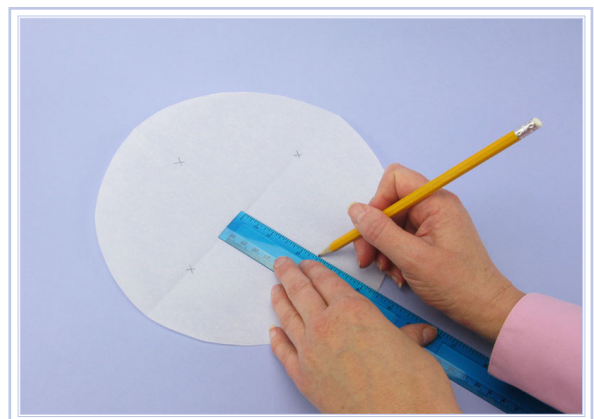
Handy hint - when marzipanning, covering & dowelling your cakes, use a small spirit level to check everything is level - for hygiene simply sit it on a strip of greaseproof.

Step 1

Start with the bottom tier. The easiest way to make sure that the dowels are evenly placed is to use a template cut out of greaseproof paper the same shape and size as the cake. When using 4 dowels fold the template in half and then in half again to create quarter sections.

Now open up the template and pencil a mark on each of the 4 creases about an inch in from where the cake above will sit.

For 5 dowels mark the centre of the template as well. Making a template for 3 dowels sitting in a triangle is more difficult, so we have drawn the template out for you. This can be used for all sizes of cakes, simply trace it out onto a larger template extending the lines from the centre point.



Handy hint - draw around the cake tins to make the templates.



Step 2

Place the template centrally onto the cake and with a cake scriber or cocktail stick, prick through the template marking the icing where the dowels are to go.



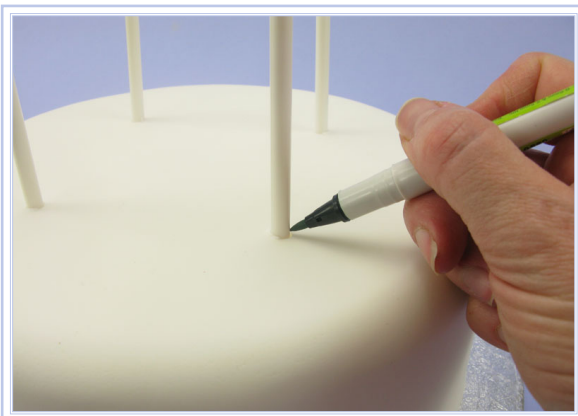
Step 3

Remove the template and push the dowels firmly into the cake until they stop against the cake board.



Step 4

With a pencil or edible ink pen mark a line across each dowel against the icing then carefully pull each dowel out by twisting gently upwards. Wipe away any cake residue with kitchen paper.



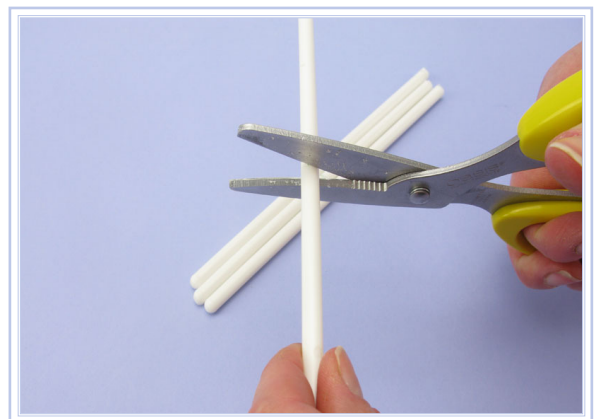
Step 5

Now you need to check the pencil marks and cut the dowels to size. Lay the dowels down flat on your kitchen surface next to each other with the pencil marks facing upwards. If the cake is completely level all the marks should run in an even line and the dowels are ready to be cut to size. If the cake is not completely level, the marks will vary slightly in height so take the dowel with the highest pencil mark and draw a line across all the dowels to this level.



Step 6

One by one place each dowel on a chopping board and with a small hacksaw or sharp serrated knife cut them all to the same height. If using plastic dowels you can use heavy duty scissors to cut or score and snap the dowels but you may have to rub any uneven surface down afterwards with fine sand paper. Just remember to wash and dry the dowels afterwards. Now all the dowels should be the same height which is the depth of the cake.





Step 7

Push each dowel firmly back into the cake. If the cake is level the dowels will all sit flush with the icing. If the cake is not completely level, you may find one or two of the dowels sit very slightly above the icing. This shouldn't be a problem as you cut all the dowels to the same height. Repeat this process on the other tiers (apart from the top) before assembling.



Transporting The cake

For two tier cakes without a tall top decoration, the 'Heavy Duty' cake boxes are ideal but for anything larger we recommend the 'Stacking Box'. This is a sturdy deep box which has an insert to hold the cake in place. They are more expensive but take away the worry of transporting the cake safely. Always place the cake completely flat in the boot of the car packed with cushions to stop any movement.



Handy hint - don't forget to ask for the cake box back!

Step 8

To assemble your cakes place about a teaspoon of royal icing onto the middle of the bottom tier, this will help the cake above stay in place. Place a cake lifter or large knife under the second tier, lift and carefully place into position. Check all around the cake to ensure it is central and adjust immediately if necessary. Repeat this for each tier until fully assembled and leave for 24 hours before decorating.





3 dowels triangle template

