Cardboard Carpentry 101: The Basics

There are a few tricks when working with cardboard that one MUST follow. Below will outline the tools you’ll need and a few of those rules.

1.) Tools You Will Need:
   a. White Glue
   b. Utility Knife
   c. Steak Knife
   d. Yard stick
   e. 3/16” dowels
   f. Pencil Sharpener
   g. Awl
   h. Hammer
   i. Paper bag
   j. Scissors

2.) Additional Tools:
   k. Jig or Saber Saw
   l. Band Saw
   m. 24” and 48” T Squares

3.) Rules:
   a. Weight Bearing:
      The corrugation must run vertically to maximize its weight bearing properties. This is ESSENTIAL. Keep this in mind when cutting the cardboard, and be sure to double check that the corrugation is running in the right direction.

   b. Strengthening Large Surface Areas:
      If using Tri-Wall, two layers can be glued together for added strength. If you’re using single layer cardboard, gluing sheets together until they are 1 ¼” thick will achieve the same result. To do this, spread a thin layer of white glue evenly on the cardboard. We’ve found that an old credit card works best to spread the glue. Press the layers together and apply weight (any heavy item will do) for about 20 minutes. To see a “how-to” video watch:

   [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=evHxOM6GUGE&feature=plcp](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=evHxOM6GUGE&feature=plcp)
Cardboard Carpentry 101: Scoring and Bending

Corrugated cardboard can be bent to create angled or curved pieces. This helps make corners more durable.

1.) Cardboard should be bent parallel to the corrugation rather than perpendicular for ease of bending.

2.) Narrow pieces can be bent by pressing them over the edge of a table.

3.) Wide pieces need to be scored before bending. This can be done using a blunt tool or the round handle of a tablespoon.

4.) To note: Sometimes you have to score farther from where you actually want the bend to account for the thickness of cardboard. For instance, if your cardboard is $\frac{3}{4}”$ thick, you may need to score and bend your cardboard $\frac{3}{4}”$ farther from the actual corner measurement.
Cardboard Carpentry 101: Finishing

Before a project can be primed and painted, all of the cut edges must be carefully covered with paper. This is a tedious and time consuming step but a very important one if the project is going to be attractive and durable.

Things to remember:

1.) Use strips of brown paper bag paper (grocery bags are perfect). Cut 2” strips (of any length) with a scissor or use a straightedge to make an even tear.

2.) Apply white glue evenly to one side of the paper strip.

3.) To avoid messy seams, begin by placing a strip of paper over each corner. Snip the paper wherever necessary so that it can be pressed down flat against the cardboard.

4.) If your piece of equipment has a curved section, snip paper wherever necessary so that short sections can be pressed down flat against the cardboard.

5.) The ultimate goal is to have no flaps, gaps or bubbles in the paper. Rub with your hand or an old credit card after gluing to make sure the paper is lying smooth and flat.

6.) After the paper has dried, you can prime and paint with latex paints.

7.) After the paint has dried (allow 24 hours) you can make your equipment water resistant and glossy by applying a coat of polyurethane.