

Grow Microgreens on Paper Towels in 7 Simple Steps

[Microgreens](#) / By [Adam Sayner](#)
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List of Materials Needed To Grow Microgreens on Paper Towels

To grow microgreens on paper towels, you'll only need a few things:

- **Microgreens seeds.** Any kind of vegetable seeds will work, but seeds marketed as microgreens seeds will have been specifically bred for use as microgreens.
- **Paper towels.** Try to avoid brands with any dye or coloring that could get absorbed by your greens. If you have unbleached paper towels that's best, however these aren't available for purchase everywhere.
- **Water.** Regular tap water will work in a pinch. Ideally though you'll want to use water that has been distilled or filtered. Or if you have time, you can let tap water sit for a few days so any chlorine can evaporate off.
- **A container to grow in.** Most microgreens growers use plastic 1020 trays which are 10" x 20" (25 cm x 50 cm) in size. But if you're just getting started, you can use any kind of plate or baking tin with a bit of a lip to prevent any excess water from spilling over.
- **A spray bottle.** To mist your microgreens daily and keep them moist.

How to Grow Microgreens on Paper Towels (Step by Step)

How do you plant sprouts on paper towels?

[Growing microgreens](#) or sprouts on paper towels only requires a few minutes to get started, plus a couple of minutes of maintenance every day. Here's what you need to do.

Step 1: Choose Your Microgreens Seeds

Before you can start growing microgreens, you need to decide on a variety of plant to grow.

Almost any vegetable or herb with edible leaves can be grown as a microgreen. The greens will have a surprisingly strong flavor that is similar to the full-grown plant. For example a radish microgreen will have a spicy radish taste.

Common seeds grown as microgreens include sunflower, amaranth, spinach, mustard and basil.

We recommend that you don't grow cabbage, beet, or carrot microgreens on paper towels. Although these varieties are commonly grown microgreens in soil trays, their deeper roots will struggle to grow on paper towels.

You should also avoid any plants in the nightshade family like tomatoes, peppers or eggplants as their sprouts are poisonous.

Our article [Complete List of Main Types of Microgreens You Can Grow](https://grocycle.com/types-of-microgreens/) outlines 20 of the most popular microgreen varieties. <https://grocycle.com/types-of-microgreens/>

Step 2: Soak Your Microgreens Seeds

Before placing your seeds on a paper towel, it's best to soak them in water first. Depending on the seed variety, you might want to soak them for a few hours or even overnight.

This step is optional, but it will help to soften and open up the hard exterior shell of the seed. We find that we get better germination rates (more seeds sprout from the batch) and they sprout sooner if we soak them first.

Note: Some seeds like basil or chia cannot be soaked in advance. When these seeds get wet, they produce a thick gel that makes them hard to separate and spread evenly across your paper towel.

Step 3: "Plant" Your Microgreens Seeds

It's time to give your microgreens seeds a place to grow.

Start by soaking a few sheets of paper towel in water. Once you've soaked it, you want to squeeze out most of the water. You'll know your paper towel is the right level of dampness when only a drop or two of water comes out when you squeeze it.

Getting the right level of moisture is critical for making sure your microgreens grow correctly. If your paper towel gets too dry, the seeds will dry out and not grow. If your paper towel is too wet, you can drown the seeds or you may run into issues with mold.

Now fold your paper towel so that it's a few layers thick and use it to line the bottom of your container.

While you can start your microgreens on a plate, it's best to use a baking dish or container with sides that are a couple of inches (five to 10 cm) tall to give your microgreens room to space if you're planning to cover them.

Use a small spoon to evenly spread your seeds across the surface of the paper towel. Take care not to apply too much pressure or you may crush some of the seeds.

After adding your seeds, mist them with a few squeezes of your water bottle. Then cover them with another sheet of paper towel.

If you live somewhere with a very dry climate or you're growing in winter, you may also want to cover the container with plastic wrap or a clear lid to raise the humidity.

Step 4: Put Your Microgreens Somewhere Dark

Your seeds need to be kept dark for about a week to mimic the natural conditions of growing underground. Place your container in a cupboard or cover it with another container so that it isn't exposed to light.

Although it can be tempting to check on them, try not to uncover them more than necessary.

Step 5: Check Moisture Levels Daily

After 24 hours, you should start to see some seeds starting to sprout. Especially if you soaked them before putting them on the paper towel.

Check your paper towel each day to see if it's at the correct moisture level. If it still feels wet, you can leave it and cover the tray back up. If it feels dry, you can gently spray it with a water bottle to rehydrate it.

Use a mist setting on the spray bottle and avoid spraying too hard as you may dislodge the newly-forming roots from the paper towel.

Repeat this process of checking on your microgreens and adding water as needed.

Around day five, your seeds will have turned into sprouts. But they are not truly microgreens yet and won't have fully developed their nutrients and flavor.

Step 6: Uncover Your Microgreens

After seven days, your microgreens should be getting quite tall and have tiny leaves that have formed.

At this point you want to uncover your container or take them out of the cupboard and expose them to light. This will cause them to start the photosynthesis process and turn from a pale yellowish-white color to a vibrant green over the next few days.

Continue adding water to your paper towel as-needed to ensure that it's kept moist, but not overly wet or damp.

Step 7: Harvest Your Microgreens

After your microgreens have been exposed to light for at least a day or two and their leaves have turned a deep green color, they're ready to harvest.

You can let your microgreens grow for a few extra days so they get to a larger size and develop more nutrients. However eventually the seeds will run out of energy to provide them with and they'll start to die back. So we recommend harvesting your microgreens by day 13 after planting.