

Air Drying Clay

Air drying clay requires no firing and has a hardener and/or fibres added to give it strength. It has good plasticity, can be squeezed, pulled and pinched into shapes. Moulded and modelled into 3 dimensional forms, rolled out flat in the same way as pastry and cut with a knife or clay cutters.

Decorative effects can be added with wooden stampers or by modelling detail and joining it to the surface of the clay form.

Children of all ages new to clay will initially be happy to explore its qualities but later they will benefit from an introduction to some very simple techniques.

Preparing the Work Area



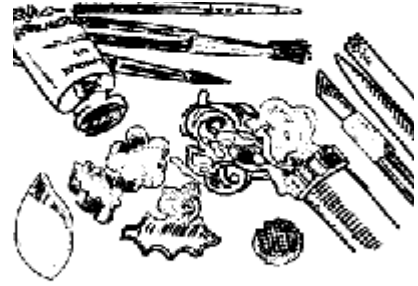
- Protect children's clothes, tables and floors.
- Model clay on a wooden board but roll up coils on heavy polythene or a laminated surface to prevent sticking.
- Ensure everyone marks their work with their name before leaving it to dry - recognition is difficult after a few days.
- Designate a safe area for finished work to dry. The drying time for clay is 3 days, depending on the thickness and conditions.

Storing Air Drying Clay

Keep clay moist and malleable by storing it in sealed plastic bag. If it becomes a little hard, splash water on it before sealing the bag. Once hardened air drying clays cannot be reused.

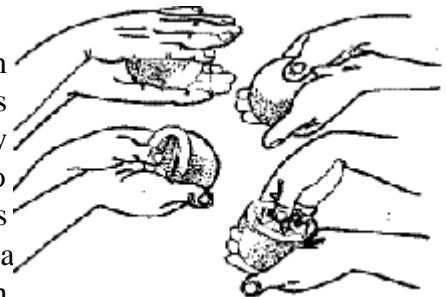
You will need

Air Drying Clay
Stampers, Cutters
Rolling Pin
Wooden Battens
Clay Tools
Garlic Press
Water
Aprons
Cloth for wiping hands
Small sponges for smoothing the surface (keep it moist in a polythene bag).
Tooth brushes for creating rough surface for joining pieces



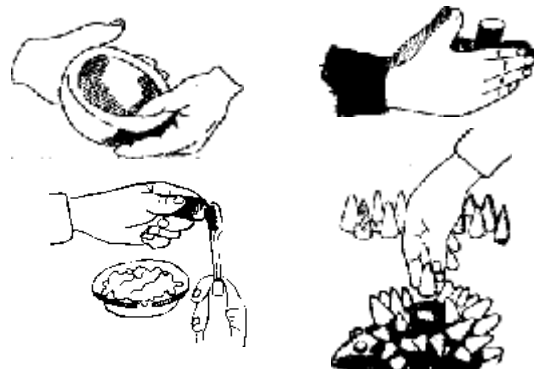
Pinch Pot

Pinch pots can form the basis for many models. Two pinch pots joined make a sphere which is also a useful



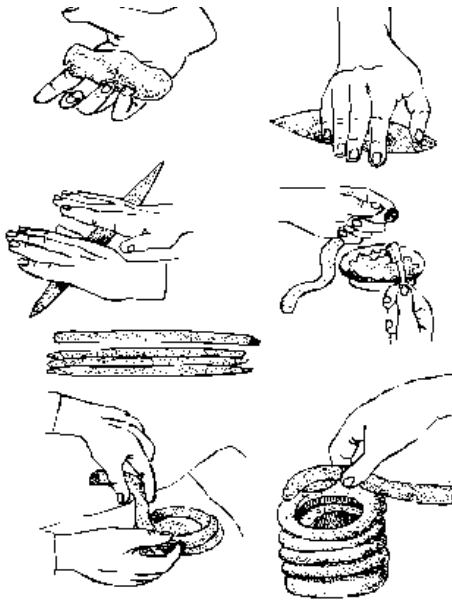
shape for making models. Take a small ball of moist clay and press your thumb into the centre, leaving a base of about 1cm. Form the walls, by gently pressing the thumb and fingers together rotating continuously until a cup-shaped pot is made.

Tap the top edge onto the work surface to square up the rim, and rolled gently on its side to smooth the side of the pot. Join two pots with same diameter rim, by scoring with a knife before pressing the two halves together. Smooth over the join and add a thin coil of clay to make it stronger.



Coiling

Make the coils by rolling a piece of moist clay into a ball and then on a flat surface roll it with splayed fingers from the centre out pressing gently to produce coils of an even thickness.



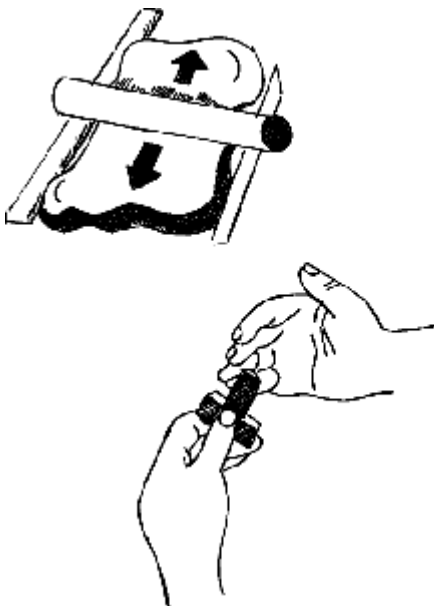
Slab building

You will need

Rolling Pin
2 pieces of wood 15mm
Hessian or
Sugar Paper
Knife
Clay Tools



Roll sheets of clay (slabs) to make tiles, plaques or mirror frames, drape into plaster moulds or build into cylinders, cones and tubes. Cut pendants and broaches from a thin slab of clay using clay cutters, or by cutting round a template with a sharp knife.



Modelling Clay

Make small models on sheet of polythene to prevent the clay drying out too fast. Make models chunky to add balance and support. Break figures into simple shapes and avoid thin legs that will collapse easily, sitting figures are easier to model.



Modelling a human head with the correct dimensions requires skill - make life drawings using a soft pencil first, notice the position of the eyes nose and ears, look at the face from the side and back, how the chin meets the neck or the brow the nose.

Make larger models hollow to avoid them becoming excessively heavy. Build the model by adding clay around a compact ball of news print without sealing it up completely. Model the basic shape using your hand and modelling tools, add clay to build up features. Turn the model frequently to look at it from all sides. Cover the head with a damp cloth and polythene to prevent the model drying out before work is complete.

Paint small models once they are dry with poster paint. Paint the models head first and let each colour dry before applying the next. Hold small models with a pair of tweezers and dip it into varnish.

