

**This is a big ol' binder of helpful resources,
studio procedures, and references to anything
and everything to do with Clay at
Art Off Center pottery studio.**

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People to Stalk On



@ Little Street Pottery.

Very teacherly with clear concise explanation. A funny, spunky vibe to her videos

@ Earth Nation Ceramics

Has tons of content from beginner to advance. Keeps it light and fun with jokes



@ Florian Gadsby

Incredibly talented production potter with fantastic demos. Very calming voice & straight to the point

@ Jon the Potter

Production potter with years of videos. Keeps it fun with his dad vibe and jokes



@ Danielle the Clay Lady.

Years of experience teaching clay at her established studio. Very teacherly and a great way to learn

The Process of Ceramics Simplified From Mud to Magic!

page 3

**Pick the right clay
for your idea.**

Prepare the clay.

(This varies depending on whether
you are wheel throwing or hand
building)

Page 10

Make your thing.

First work with the clay in the wet
stage - form your basic shape or
profile. Then, after it has dried some,
finish your piece by trimming, adding
attachments, & final details.

page 5

Clean up yo' stuff.

Place tools **CLEANED** and back
where they go, put any spare
clay in reclaim buckets, wipe
down your area.

Page 27

**Turn your clay work in
for BISQUE FIRING.**

Page 26

Glaze your pottery.

You can dip or brush apply from
any of our community glazes.
(Refer to glaze wall)

Page 40

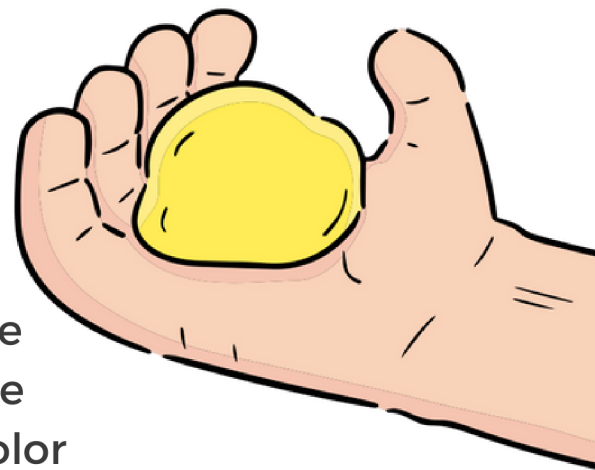
**Clean up & turn in
for GLAZE FIRING.**

Page 35

**BOOM! All done. You
have a finished piece!**

CLAY BODIES

While there are thousands of clay bodies available for purchase, the 3 basic types are porcelain, stoneware and earthenware. The maturity temperature, work-ability, and color of these 3 categories can vary based on what is added.



What we offer in our studio:

Laguna B-mix

Very smooth, porcelain-like clay. Great for wheel throwing. Light grog. Fires to a cream color bisque and off white cone 5/6
- Shrinkage 12.5%

Speckled Buff

This clay has specks that bleed through the glaze. Great for wheel or handbuilding. Medium grog. Fires to a speckled tan.
-Shrinkage 12%

Soldate 60

Great for both sculpting and raku firings. Can also be used for handbuilding and throwing. Medium grog. Light pink bisque to light cream cone 5/6 to Cone 10
-Shrinkage 12%

Earthenware

Great for both wheel and hand building. With or without grog. Light orange bisque to deeper reddish orange at cone 06 glaze
-Shrinkage varies around 7-8%

Want to learn more?

Watch this video for an in depth explanation of clay bodies!



How to Choose
Pottery Clay - A
Beginners Guide
@Pottery Crafters

Studio Policies on Clay:

Price of Clay**



Price per cubic inch - \$0.06
See website for shelf/kiln rates



**Price of clay, underglazes and glazes included in multi-week classes

We fire to ^06 & ^5 at our studio!



This is for earthenware or stoneware clay firing

**No outside clay
is permitted in
the studio!**

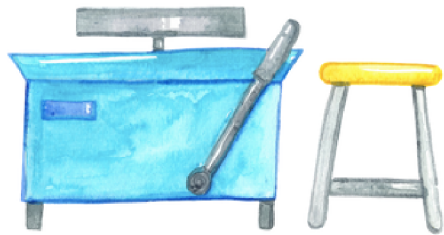
"Why?"



Because different clay bodies are like cookie dough, they cook at different temps and have different personalities. We need to make sure all our "dough" is of the same type.

Preparing Clay for your Project

After wedging, preparing your clay can differ depending on the project you plan to tackle. Here are a few things you can do to prep your clay before you start making, throwing, or building:



VS



Wheel Throwing (Pg 11)

- Wedge clay
- Prep multiple balls of clay based on how many forms you want to throw
- Keep track of the weigh of each ball of clay

Hand Building (Pg 17)

Pinch:

- Wedge clay
- Prep multiple balls of clay
- Keep track of the weigh of each ball of clay

Coil:

- Wedge clay
- Prep multiple coils at the desired thickness

Slab:

- Wedge clay
- Roll out slabs using a rolling pin or the studio slab roller
- Scratch then smooth both sides with a rib

REMEMBER!

If you prep extra balls, coils, slabs, ex of clay --> Cover it in plastic until you are actively making with it! Clay dries fast and time flies when working in clay, don't let your clay dry out while you work!



Wedging

What is it?

The process of kneading the clay with the hands to remove air bubbles and ensure a homogenous mass. AKA: Prepping the clay

Why do it?

Wedging makes the clay more pliable, ensures a uniform consistency, and removes air pockets as well as small hard spots in the clay before you use or reuse the clay for a project.

How do you do it?

Wedging is a vary tactile, muscle memory type of step. The best way to learn how, is to watch someone do it & practice. Click the QR code to view a fantastic overview of how to wedge clay.



[Beginners Intro to Wedging your Clay.](#)

[@ Earth Nation Ceramics](#)

What to look for as you wedge:



Ram's Head



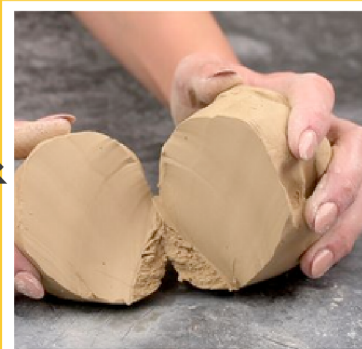
OR

Spiral Shell



&

Cross-cut free of air pockets



Drying stages of Greenware

What is Greenware? →

Pottery that has been shaped but not yet fired, especially while it is drying prior to being fireable



Slip

The slip stage is created by adding water to your clay. The level of runniness depends on the water added and what you are doing with the slip.

Plastic

At this stage, your clay is malleable (flexible), and you are able to create something on the wheel or hand build. When the clay is at this stage, the shapes you can mold your clay into are endless. After this stage, the molding is over. You can trim, attach, and decorate, but the ability to move the clay around is gone. If you try your clay will start to crack.

Leather Hard

The leather hard stage is when the clay is hardened a little more so you can trim, add handles, and make other alterations before the clay gets too hard. The clay is called leather hard because it has the feel of soft leather (and feels cold to the touch!) The clay has stiffened up enough to be able to handle it without marking it up with your fingers.

Bone Dry

The bone dry stage is when the moisture is out of the clay and it's dry enough to bisque fire. This process can take at least a week or even longer, depending on the climate you live in. If it is very humid, you have to exercise patience. Getting your clay to the bone dry stage is very important. If you think it's dry, it's best to wait a little longer just to be safe.

Greenware Stages Simplified:

1

SLIP

Watered down clay that can be used as a pottery glue.



PLASTIC

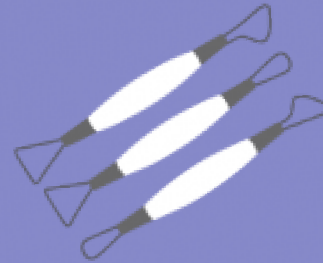
Clay you can easily mold and model.

2

3

LEATHER HARD

Clay that is somewhat dry. Good for carving.

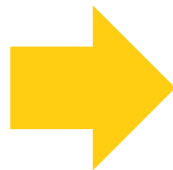


BONE DRY

Clay that is dry and ready to be fired. Very fragile. Also called greenware.

4

Resource Videos



Understanding Greenware
@Chad Zielinski



POTTERY BASICS - A beginner's guide to the stages of CLAY's
@Jonthepottery.



Making the Thing



Throwing on the Wheel

What you need to begin:

- ball of wedged clay
- bucket o' water
- small sponge
- bat
- needle tool
- rib (wood, plastic or metal)
- Knife style tool (metal or wood)
- wire to cut your piece off at the end
- apron
- towel

The steps, simplified:

1. Suction
2. Cone
3. Center
4. Open
5. Pull
6. Shape
7. Trim
8. Clean
9. Remove

But wait,
there's
more!

Throwing doesn't end here! Now you let your piece dry until it is leather hard. Then you can return to the wheel to trim your clay piece! More info on trimming on pg 13.

Beginner Wheel Throwing Videos:

We think the best way to improve and learn is to watch and try. Below are some great videos we recommend watching.

WE HIGHLY RECOMMEND THROWING WHILE WATCHING!

[Beginners Pottery Playlist](#)
[@ Earth Nation Ceramics](#)



["How to Centre Clay and Throw Pots on the Pottery Wheel"](#)

[@ Florian Gadsby](#)

["Beginner Wheel Throwing Class"](#)
[@ Timsee Clay](#)



["How to Center Clay on The Wheel Easy. A 5 Step Beginners Guide"](#)

[@ Pottery Crafters](#)

REMEMBER

You must remove your clay from the bat before storing (plates are an exception). Below is a video of how to do that!



[Beginners guide to taking pottery off the wheel](#)

[@ Earth Nation Ceramics](#)





Finishing Up: Trimming

What is it?

Removing clay from the bottom and walls of a piece using carving tools. This is done after the clay has dried to the leather hard stage.

Why do it?

- To finish the pot by removing excess clay on the lower part that could not be accessed while throwing.
- To give the pot walls and bottom an even consistency & thickness throughout.
- To give the pot a foot for stability and/or function.
- To give the pot aesthetic beauty and "lift".
- To create a stopping or break point for glaze to prevent run off onto the kiln shelf

How do you do it?

The steps, simplified:

1. asses what needs to be trimmed
2. center you piece
3. add clay to secure your piece
4. carve walls
5. add foot if desired
6. remove & done!

What you'll need:

Trimming Tools - Needle tool - Sponge
Bucket of water - A handful of extra clay



Check out our
feet pics for
some trimming
inspiration and
ideas

Want to use the
Giffin Grip?
Go to pg 59!



Trimming Carving & Feet Videos:



How to Trim Clay Pots!
Tricks, Tips, and
Techniques
@ Jonthepotter



Ceramics for Beginners:
Wheel Throwing -
Trimming a Bowl with
Emily Reason
@ Lark Crafts



Trimming For
Beginners + Tap
Centering Trick
@ Earth
Nation
Ceramics

Remember:
Sign your
work!



How to Trim
Pottery - Easy
and Fun Way to
Learn Trimming
Techniques
@ Little Street
Pottery.

We will
not fire
unmarked
clay
pieces!





Handles & Attachments

The rules for adding attachments and handles:

- Same type of clay
- Same stage of dryness
- Around the same thickness



3 Different Methods

Slab or Coil

Cut from a block of clay using a carving tool, made from a rolled out slab, or a coil made from an extruder.

Pulled

Made with just your hands and a bucket of water. Using light pressure and a pulling motion, you slowly manipulate the clay into a long strap of clay that can be pre-cut or attached directly to your vessel. (Think of the motion like you are milking a cow)

Non-Ceramic

Can be anything from wood, bamboo, or leather. Holes, or lugs, need to be sculpted onto the vessel before being fired so that the handle material can be attached. Handles are added after the final firing.

Helpful Handle Videos:



Ceramics 101:
Handles 3 Ways
@Jescia Hopper



5 Ways to make
HANDLES FOR MUGS
@Jonthepotter



6 Ways to Make Better Handles for
Pottery - DESIGN A GREAT HANDLE!
@Little Street Pottery



10 Ways to Attach
Pottery Handles -
TESTED!!
@Little Street
Pottery

**Handle
Inspiration!**





Hand Building

Handbuilding is a ceramic technique that allows you to create forms with clay and your hands, without using a throwing wheel. Before ceramicists invented the wheel, handbuilding was the only way they could create functional and artistic ceramic forms. The oldest known ceramic artifact was handbuilt and is dated as early as 28,000 BCE! All you need to get started are your clay, your hands, and a few simple tools.

Basic tools to have:

- your hands (duh!)
- wedged clay
- water & a sponge
- slip and scoring tool

Bonus tools if you have them:

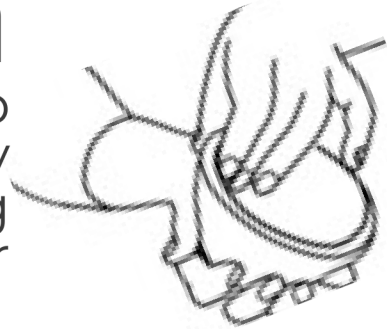
- banding wheel
- sculpting tools
- carving tools
- slab roller
- extruder



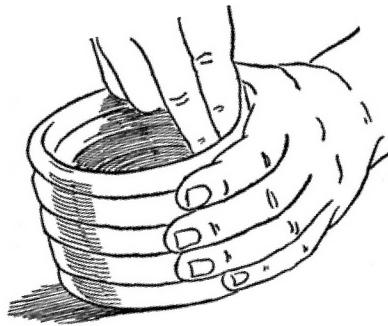
3 Different Methods

Pinch

A pinch pot is a way to produce vessels by slowly turning clay and applying even amounts of pressure, or pinches.



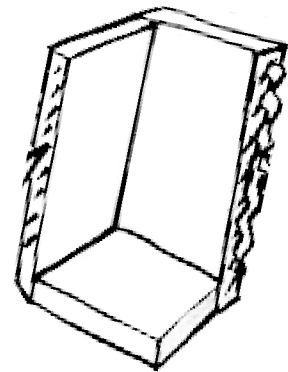
Coil



The coil method involves rolling clay until it forms a long "snake" of clay. By placing one coil on top of another, different shapes can be formed.

Slab

Slab building is when you roll out clay to an even thickness. You can then cut those sheets into shapes, folding, bending, manipulating and joining them together to form a finished object.



Coil

Hand Building

What you'll need:



- wedged clay -
- sponge and water -
- scoring tools -
- extruder (if you have access to one) -

The Basic Steps

1. Form a base.
2. Roll out a coil.
3. Attach the coil using a bonding pinch.
4. Thin and raise the pot wall using a flat pinch.
5. Scrape smooth and shape using a rib or scraper.
6. Repeat steps 2 through 5 until you reach the desired size (or run out of clay!)
7. Trim down the rim of your pot using a knife then smooth with wet fingers.



TIP: Extruders can really speed up this process! Go to pg 58 for more info!

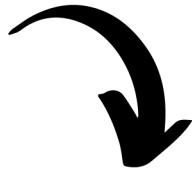


Reference Video:

"HOW TO MAKE A COIL POT"

@Danny Bealer Pottery

What you'll need:



Pinch

Hand Building

- wedged clay
- sponge and water
- scoring tools - plastic butter knife, pencil, toothpicks, or wood modeling tools

The Basic Steps

1. Roll all of the wedged clay into a ball.
2. Use your thumb to push down into the center of the ball.
3. Use your thumb and fingers to pinch the clay from the center hole outwards, forming the walls of the pot.
4. Try to keep walls evenly pinched and add water to surface if cracking or wrinkling forms
5. You can decorate your pot once walls are fully pinched or thinned

Reference Video:



"HOW TO MAKE
A PINCH POT"
@ Danny Bealer
Pottery.





Slab

Hand Building

Slab construction is unique in the way it varies depending on the drying stage the clay is in:

Soft:

Slabs have been freshly rolled out and are still damp. These soft slabs can be formed into flowing structures. They can be used with slump molds or draped over hump molds to create repeatable forms.

Hard:

The hard-slab method is best for angular and geo forms. The slab is rolled and then allowed to slowly dry to the leather-hard stage before being cut and joined with other stiffened slabs to create their form.



"Soft Slab Construction with Scott Jennings"
@ Orchard Valley Ceramic Arts Guild



"Hard slab technique"
@ Katie Cole Maley

"Soft Slab Pitcher"
@ Mallman, ceramics



"Pottery Video How to Make and Design a Stiff Slab Vase"
@ Ceramic Arts Network



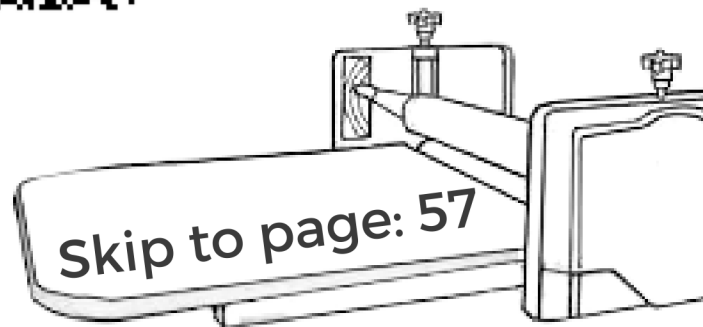
"5 Expert Tips for Working with Soft Slabs | LISA NAPLES"
@ Ceramic Arts Network



"Hard Slab Boxes Part I pottery | 2017"
@ Huebner Pottery

Ready to use the Slab Roller!? →

skip to page: 57



Score & Slip



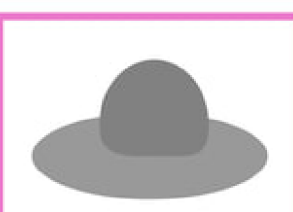
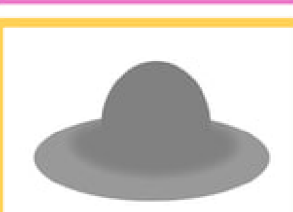
What is it?

Score and slip refers to a method of joining two pieces of clay together.

When do you do it?

This can be done while clay is still in a rather wet or plastic state all the way up until the leather-hard stage. Once the clay is closer to bone dry, it is then too late to score & slip.

How do you do it?

SCORE	
SLIP	
STICK	
SMOOTH	

Reference Vid!



"Slip, Score, and Blend"
@ Lisa Little

Tools:

ceramic score tool OR
fork, toothbrush,
serrated rib, ex

very goopy, wet clay
OR water
(depends on hydration level of
clay)

if joining large heavy
clay together (usually
sculptural) use a coil in
the seam

using a small wet
paint brush can help
blend the seam
together



Woohoo!
**You've
finished
making a
thing!**