

Questions and Answers

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Hi there,

I enjoy your site very much and every time I visit learn something new. I am new to your clay world and love trying out different things. I do have a problem though: I am trying to do a photocopy transfer onto my clay, of my mom when she was a baby with her mom. The photo is black and white and I took it to every photocopy center in town had copies made, then tried to transfer it to clay so I could make a bead for my mom for Mother's Day.

Well nothing has worked I even tried photo transfer paper. I am ready to just throw in the towel on transfer projects. If you have any suggestions they would be greatly appreciated. I have e-mailed other polymer clay sites and I guess no one has the time to answer my silly questions.

Thank you,
Val

Hi Val:

What a great idea for Mother's Day! I am so sorry your adventures in phototransfering hasn't worked out.

This is what I do. I copy the photo using a copy machine (it has to be a toner machine, as most if not all of them are). With the photocopy, I place it image side against the white clay. Then I smooth the paper so the image is firmly touching the clay. Then I walk away for 15 minutes. When I come back, I slowly peel the paper away. The toner migrates to the clay, leaving the image on the clay.

When I wanted to speed up the process, I smooth the image onto the clay, wipe alcohol across the paper, dry it for about four seconds with a heat gun, wipe again, dry again,

wipe again, dry again, wipe again, peel away. The alcohol and drying causes the image to migrate to the clay quickly.

I hope this helps.

Deirdre



Last month, Roxanne asked about how to get a better yellow. Here are two responses:

Hi

About getting a light lemon yellow with Sculpey clay. I had great luck coloring clay with Decorating Chalks, Just add the color you want to white clay. Do a search on the web under Decorating Chalks. Lots of places sell them Also, to avoid smushing canes, try cutting them on an old mouse pad. It absorbs a lot of pressure

Bonnie Merchant

Hi Roxanne,

If you have the older Sculpey III Yellow, it's actually somewhat translucent compared to the other brands and will allow other darker colors to show through somewhat if they are close; this will result in a greenish/olive tinge. I don't know if this is the yellow you have though, and since you're using so much white and Sculpey's white is very opaque, that should have fixed that problem anyway.

You can try adding a tiny bit of red or orangey-red to your clay and see if that helps, but changing a primary color to something "truer" isn't easy. It's better to start with a different yellow more to your liking; perhaps like Premo's Cadmium Yellow or another yellow which leans more toward the red side than the blue/green side. Sometimes the fluorescent versions of a color can really punch it up too.

My page on color ([Color](#)) gives a lot of hints on how to blend colors, as well as many actual color recipes. It also talks about how to make your own samples or where to check out some that are online. You can purchase a few color mixing charts from some of the clay manufacturers as well, but they will be for their own clay brands, I believe. Good luck!

[Diane Black](#)

[Glass Attic](#), a polymer clay "encyclopedia"



Last month, Cheri had a question about hand carving beads and Janis had a question about making scrimshaw jewelry. Here is a response:

Hi Cheri and Janis,

Here are a few category pages at my website GlassAttic that should give you lots of good info about polymer carving and scrimshaw, making molds, and simulating ivory/bone:

- [Carving](#)
- [Molds](#)
- [Stamping](#)
- [Faux Ivory](#)

Hope this helps!

[Diane Black](#)

[Glass Attic](#), a polymer clay "encyclopedia"



Last month, Terri asked how to use old Fimo. Here are some responses:

Hi Terri.

Here is one more tool for conditioning old fimo, a mini-food processor or a blender. These may be found at garage sales or thrift shops. Break up your clay into small chunks, add a few drops of mineral oil or diluent (or use Fimo Mix Quick at the recommended amount) and chop it up in short bursts.

As the clay gets broken up into cottage cheese sized bits it will start to stick together. Keep doing this and adding more oil until it sticks together pretty well and is warm to the touch. Then you can take it out and work it with your hands until you can flatten it and start using the pasta machine. Sometimes putting it into a zip lock bag helps keep the crumbles from getting all over. Hope this helps.

Trina

Hi Terri,

There are definitely ways of bringing that clay back to life *if* you want to put the energy and the time into it (some folks say you can do it even if the clay is more or less cured!).

If it's *really* hard, the very best thing is to put it through a hand-cranked metal meat grinder (the old ones used for sausage--check at thrift shops) to really break it up and bring a lot of force to bear on it (a food processor can also be used but it doesn't add the pressing force that helps even more). Then you can add something like mineral oil, Vaseline, or a softer clay such as SuperSculpey to the broken up clay, or you can use something specifically for that purpose such as Sculpey's Diluent or Fimo's MixQuick.

Some people like to let the clay sit for awhile with the softening agent before beginning the conditioning process to cut some of the work (some even use a vacuum seal machine), and eventually the softener will spread into the old hard clay. Breaking the clay up first or pressing it into sheets may speed this process.

After that you'll need to roll the clay out (I use a long, 18" acrylic roller for the most force) and either put it repeatedly through a pasta machine, or "ball/log/twist/double" it over-and-over till sufficiently softened. Warming the clay speed that up.

There is a lot more info on those things plus other ways to prepare clay for use on this page, if you want to take a look: [Conditioning](#)

P.S. I've done the same thing you're doing with my old scrap and hard clays for classes over the years at my son's school. I found the easiest thing to do was to just make an all-day project out of it , and do some things assembly-line style.

I blended all similar colors (beginning with the lightest ones so I wouldn't have to clean my food processor), then divided the resulting clay so I could make different variations (e.g., adding a bit of black or the complementary color to make shades/tones, or adding *lots* of white to make a pastel, or adding a warmer or a cooler color so that I could for instance take a medium blue and create a bluish-green and a bluish-purple from it.)

I rolled all colors into same-diameter logs, which made it easier to see what I had and how much to cut off for various projects. If you're interested in reading other people's hints and experiences re working with kids and clay too, take a look at this sub-category on my Kids page: [Kid's Page](#) and keep up the good work!

[Diane Black](#)

[Glass Attic](#), a polymer clay "encyclopedia"



Dear Editor:

Hi! I keep seeing folks who are applying fur to their polymer clay animals and I would LOVE TO KNOW HOW ITS DONE!! It's driving me crazy!! ha! (guess I didn't have far to go!) Anyway, anything you can tell me would be appreciated.

Thanks!

Vicki

Dear Vicki:

I haven't seen fur attached to polymer clay animals. I'd love to see an example!

My educated guess would be they are attaching the fur to the clay using Zap-A-Gap, Quick-Tite, or one of the other cyanoacrylate glues.

Readers? Any ideas?

Deirdre



Dear Editor:

Hi -- love your e-zine and have learned a great deal from reading it.

I've been sanding many of my pieces so I can buff them to a high shine but notice that this process is leaving a white film on the beads despite the fact that I am sanding them in a basin of water to which I've added a drop of dish detergent (which I understood was supposed to eliminate this problem).

I thought the film might buff off but have noticed that especially on black pieces, it alters the color and can't completely be removed. I am, of course, using wet/dry sandpaper (automotive type). Do you have any suggestions for correcting this problem? Thanks for your help!

[Sue O.](#)

Dear Readers:

Any help for Sue?

Deirdre



Dear Editor:

I am hoping that you will be able to help me. I am trying to make the beaded hairsticks. Let me tell you some of my problems - please help if you can - or direct me to where I can get some help! :)

First of all, the head pins I found were too flexible and they bend - not good - so I picked up some floral wire - a bit stiffer - but still bends... any suggestions there???

Next - my glue - I have tried so many different glues, I cannot find one that works. The glues that I have tried seem to be too flexible - almost like a rubber cement - they cause the beads to move on the stick - also - I can pull the wire right out of the end of the stick - **HELP ME PLEASE!**

I have a pair of hairsticks I received as a gift, and the glue on these hair sticks seems to be a very hard glue, it seems to have some body - as opposed to superglue - being very thin, do you have any suggestions at all???

I am very frustrated with my project - and I would greatly appreciate any and all suggestions that you may have...

Thank You,
Tiffany Strickland

Dear Readers:

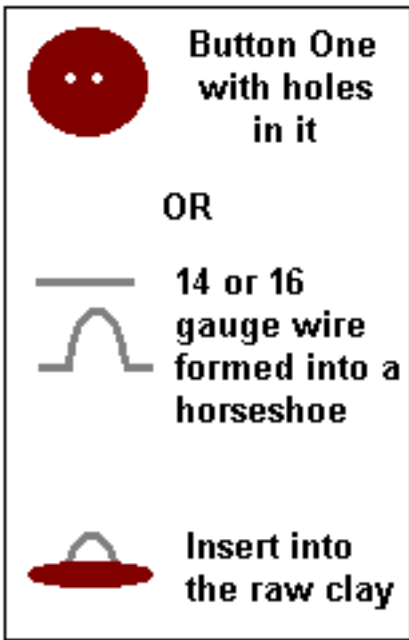
Can anyone help Tiffany?



Dear Editor:

I want to make sewing buttons with this medium but am having trouble locating a source of the button shanks. Any ideas?

Thanks,
Nancy



Dear Nancy:

I'd either make flat buttons with holes in them, or, to make a shank, take a piece of 14 or 16 gauge wire, form it into a horseshoe, stick it into the back of the uncured button, and cure it. Check out the picture to the left for a visual.

Good luck!

Deirdre



Dear Editor:

Please refer me to someone who can help with my questions...

1. What is RTV Silicone liquid mold mix
2. Where can it be obtained
3. Is it user-friendly?

You mentioned that Micro Mark carries it, but when I searched the products, I did not see it listed- is there another name for it, or did I just miss it?

I am wanting to make some molds from my polymer clay designs. Would appreciate your assistance.

Thanks,
Sherry Palmer

Dear Sherry:

RTV silicone liquid mold mix is a medium for creating your own molds. You mix the two parts of the medium together, pour it over any item, then, after it hardens (at room temperature -- you don't have to do anything), pop out your item and voila!, you have a mold.

You can read more information about these molds in [Polymer Clay Push Flex Molds](#), and the latest issue of POLYinforMER, the newsletter of the National Polymer Clay Guild, features an excellent article by Dotty McMillan on how to use RTV Silicone liquid mix to make molds.

Micro Marks sells the [silicone putty](#) by the pound, but you can also buy smaller batches at [Microsonic](#).

While I've never used RTV silicone liquid mold mix, I understand it's a breeze to use. Just mix, cover, and wait.

Let us know how your experiments go!

Deirdre

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