

Curved Illusion Cane by Robert Wiley

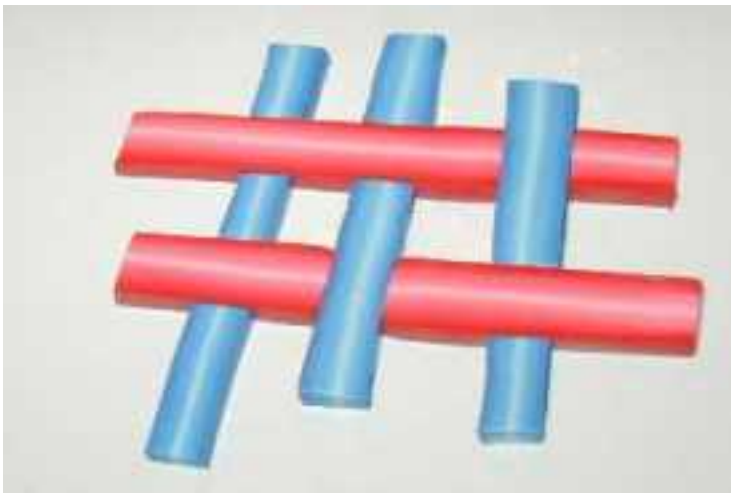
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I was asked to write an article about how to create the curved illusion cane that has been made famous by City Zen Cane. I have tried to duplicate their cane, and the following is what I've come up with.

Supplies:

- White polymer clay and one other color of clay
- Clay blade
- Acrylic brayer or rod
- Pasta machine



In this article, I will be using White Premo and the Christmas Red Premo to make the cane. A little of the color can be mixed into the white clay to tone it down and to assist in the illusion that the entire piece is red.



Step One:

The first step in making the illusion cane is to start with a Skinner Blend. Here the white and the red have been prepared for making a Skinner blend.

Once blended, the clay should grade from the solid color to something that is almost white.



Step Two:

The clay needs to be thinner and longer going from red to white. To do this, put the clay through the pasta machine, color end first, and reduce the spacing between the rollers.

Continue running the clay through the pasta machine on ever thinner settings until the clay is as thin as is reasonable to work with or until the clay begins to distort.



Step Three:

Cut the clay into strips that are almost a single color. The width of the strip will be determined by how much the Skinner Blend was stretched in Step Two.

Here, I was unable to stretch the clay as much as I wanted because the pasta machine was beginning to distort the shape. These slices are about 1 inch wide. They need to be a solid color -- no noticeable gradation from one end to the other -- to yield a smooth color gradation when they are stacked in Step Four.



Step Four:

Starting with the solid color strip of clay, stack the strips on top of one another to form a loaf that grades from dark on the bottom to light on the top.

Try to make one face reasonably straight. Neatness helps but is not required. It does help to gently roll the brayer over each slice after it is laid down to force out any trapped air out. Start near the center and roll to the edges.



Step Five:

Use the brayer to compress the loaf until it is half the thickness of the final cane. In this case I wanted the cane to be about 1/2 inch high, so I flattened the cane to about 1/4 of an inch.

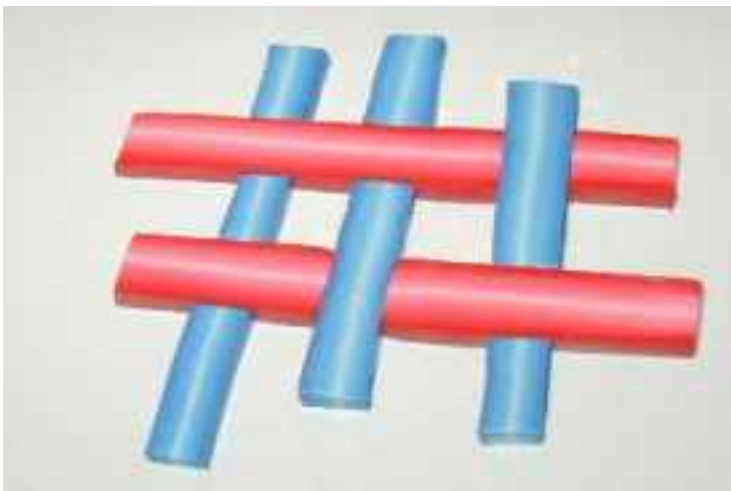


Step Six:

Cut the clay in half, either front to back or side to side.

Take one of the two pieces, turn it over, and place it on top of the other piece. The two white edges should now be against each other and the cane should have the dark color on the top and the bottom.

Again, use the brayer to squeeze out any trapped air and to ensure a good seal between the two pieces. On the slice in the picture, the ends are distorted and will be need to be removed before being used as a slice in a project.



A simple pattern using a red and a blue illusion cane.