

Making a Better Dremel Polishing Wheel

by Desiree McCrorey

[print version](#)

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While I thought my main polishing tool was a Foredom bench model, I find, more and more that I'm favoring my variable speed Dremel for its convenience, extreme portability and increased suitability for doing small to modest sized items like beads and pendants.

IMHO, the key drawback with my Dremel, however, had been its tiny cloth polishing wheel, a thin little disc that's about 3/8th inch thick and 1 inch in diameter.

The area that actually touches the item to be polished was very small - too small for my needs. Dremel's cloth wheel was also a bit too coarse for polymer clay (which is understandable since it was not designed with polymer clay in mind).



In the article [Making A Better Dremel Polishing Mandrel](#), I describe how I made a mandrel to accommodate holding more than one Dremel cloth polishing wheel.

On this page, I want to share with you how I made a superior (IMHO) polishing system. I didn't think this one up, Becca Crauswell (the 'angel') did, who told a wonderful e-mail friend who suggested I try making one. So last night I did! In fact, I made two.

Then I tested my new polishing system on some unfinished polyclay eggs I had laying about. (heh heh)

I must say I've buffed/polished for quite a few years using various methods and machines, including a Foredom bench polisher with a cotton wheel, not to be confused with the slightly courser muslin wheel. **The wheels I made last night and mounted on the Dremel is the best polishing system for polymer clay I have ever tried.**

The trick is the polyester felt. It produces a wonderful shine in at least a 1/3 - 1/4 of the time. I highly recommend trying this, if you can.

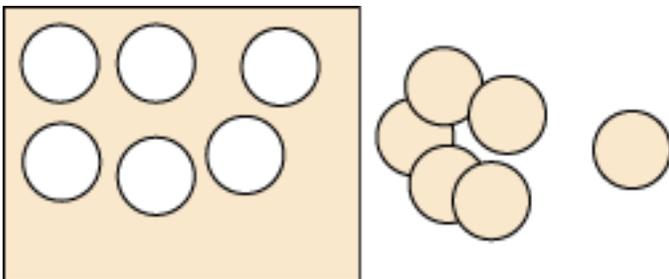
I went from liking my Dremel to loving it and wanting to polish anything in site. (OK, I'm a little excited right now. :)

And for those who have not polished before, keep in mind you need to do a good sanding job first or no amount of polishing will help.

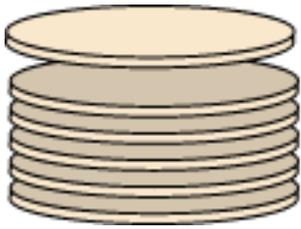


Here's what you'll need if you want to make a wonderful polishing wheel.

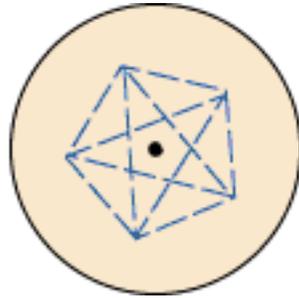
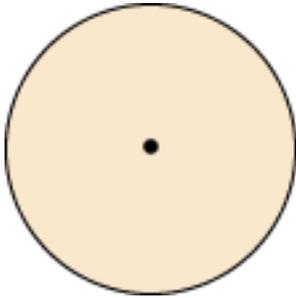
- a square of polyester felt (shown at right)
- scissors
- a 1.5" diameter circle template
- a way to stitch (preferably a sewing machine)
- 1" long mandrel (see [Make a Better Dremel Polishing Mandrel](#) for how to make your own)
- felt marker
- safety goggles



1) Using your circle template, mark out 6 1.5 inch diameter circles on the polyester felt. Cut them out as precisely as possible.

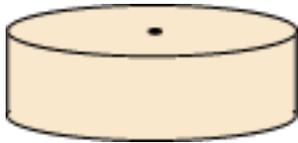


2) Stack circles on top of each other. Press them together.



3) With a felt marker, make a spot dead center in the top circle. Make a hexagonal outline and a 5pt star outline on the top felt circle. Stitch along those outlines. Since the felt material is so soft, the stiffer and stronger you can make the wheel's core, the better.

This outline pattern stitching provides minimal reinforcement for the wheel. More stitching within the hexagonal outline can make it stronger.



4) Trim as best as possible with scissors. I liked one so much I made and added a second wheel. If you make your own mandrel, the screw will accommodate two of these thick fuzzy wheels. (Shown below)



<<< A doubly thick fuzzy polisher

Note 1: I don't know how long these fuzzy things last, but I will assume, for now at least, they will not last as long as the muslin or cotton wheels.

Note 2: These directions are for a wheel that can be mounted on a hand held rotary tool like a Dremel. I suspect you can cut out larger circles for making a polishing wheel that would fit on a bench polisher.

Desiree