

How to Use Detailed Cake Cutters with Polymer Clay by Bob Wiley

After people see the dragon on the Altoid tin covered with faux wood [see Bob's [Faux Wood Inlay](#)], they ask me, "How did you get the dragon cutter to produce a nice piece?"

The actual process requires patience and a few tools. The tools that I use are a needle tool, a dental pick, an acrylic brayer, X-Acto knife, corn starch, and some wax paper.

Since this technique will be used as a veneer, roll out the polymer clay to less than 1/16 of an inch thick. This is the number 6 setting on my pasta machine (number 7 is the thinnest setting).



Then place this piece of clay on the wax paper and gently roll over it with the brayer. The purpose is to get the clay to stick to the wax paper. It does not need to be a perfect seal; a few air bubbles are no problem, but most of the clay needs to stick to the wax paper.

Next, pour some corn starch onto another sheet of wax paper and press the cutter into it. Try to get the corn starch into all of the corners of the cutter.

Press the cutter into the clay on the wax paper. Some of the cutters are not flat on the bottom. In this case, it sometimes helps to pick up the wax paper and press the wax paper and clay into the cutter from underneath.



Leaving the cutter in place, gently pull as much of the loose clay from around the cutter as possible. If some of it will not come off, leave it for later.

To remove the cutter, hold the wax paper on the table with one hand and very gently lift the cutter with the other. When the cutter is between 1/4 and 1/2 inch above the table, stop and check around the edge of the cutter. Let go of the wax paper if necessary.

There should be some place where the clay has stayed with the wax paper and pulled away from the cutter. Carefully insert the needle tool, dental tool, or even a toothpick in this space and gently work the rest of the clay away from the cutter.



Once the clay has been removed from the cutter, use an X-Acto knife to cut away any of the excess clay that was not removed earlier.

To use this piece as an inlay, prepare the background clay by rolling it to the same thickness and putting it on the item to be covered. Press it firmly in place and roll over it with the brayer if necessary.

Powder up the cutter as before and press it into the background clay. It is not necessary to cut through everywhere. Very carefully remove the cutter. With the X-Acto knife, cut along the impression left by the cutter. Using the needle tool and the knife, remove the clay that is to be replaced.



Next, take the wax paper with the inlay on it and turn it over onto another sheet of wax paper. Lightly press on the first wax paper and clay to get the clay to stick to the second sheet of wax paper. Very carefully peel the first sheet of wax paper from the clay leaving the clay stuck to the second sheet. This will reverse the inlay piece and make it easier to insert.



Holding the wax paper, position the inlay piece over the cutout and peel the wax paper off of the clay. **Do not press** the clay. Typically, some of the detail points have shifted. These are easy to adjust using the needle tool and the X-Acto knife while gently nudging the inlay into place.

To seal the seams, roll over the piece with the brayer or use a clay shaper to press some of the larger gaps together.



You should now have an inlay that is ready to be baked, sanded, and buffed.