

# Halloween Picture Frame in Miniature Mosaic Tiles<sup>®</sup>

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Welcome to a tutorial using miniature mosaic tiles to create a Halloween picture frame. Once you are familiar with the technique, you will want to make miniature mosaic tile frames for every occasion!

## Supplies:

- pasta machine
- conditioned clay in black and orange
- piece of thick glass or ceramic tile for cutting and baking the clay tiles on
- a length of square brass tubing - whatever size you prefer ( $\frac{1}{4}$  inch,  $\frac{3}{8}$  inch) from the local hardware -- OR --
- Kemper Square Pattern Cutters Set (includes  $\frac{3}{8}$  inch,  $\frac{7}{16}$  inch,  $\frac{1}{2}$  inch,  $\frac{5}{8}$  inch,  $\frac{3}{4}$  inch)
- fine grit file
- jeweler's hacksaw (optional)
- plain flat wooden picture frame painted black (or completely covered in a thin layer of black clay)
- white glue
- non-sanded tile grout
- black acrylic paint for coloring grout
- your favorite Halloween photo or card



## STEP ONE:

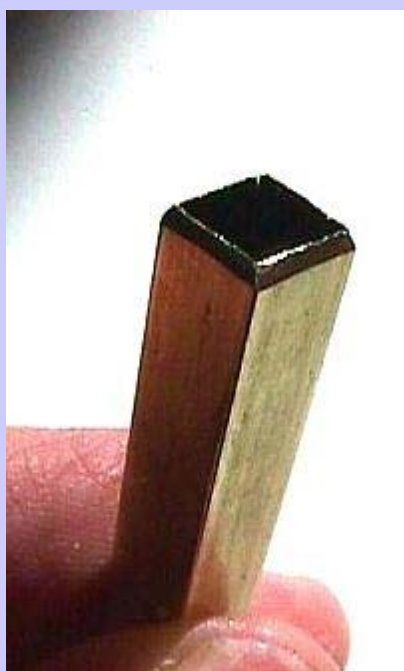
Cut the tubing to a more manageable 2 inch length, if you like.

File all four **outside** edges of the flattest end of the tubing (not usually the end that I cut!) into a sharp beveled cutting edge using the fine file held at a 45 degree angle.

NOTE: If you are using Kemper Pattern Cutters (or other purchased cutters) SKIP to Step Two.



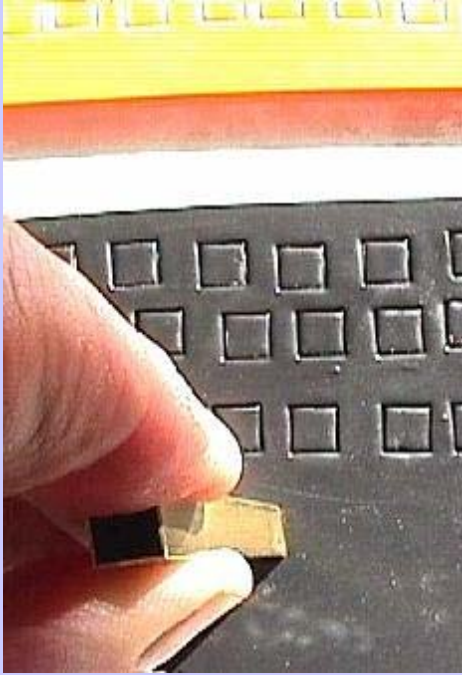
Photo courtesy of [ClayAlley.com](#)



## STEP TWO:

Run the conditioned polymer clay through the pasta maker on a #5 setting. (Presuming on your pasta machine, #1 is the thickest setting).

Place the sheet of clay onto the glass or ceramic tile for baking. Smooth evenly to remove air bubbles and to be sure you have a tight bond to the baking surface.



## STEP THREE:

Dip the sharpened cutting tube into talcum powder, baby powder, or cornstarch (the safest), then press it into the clay. To keep the squares perfect, press straight down and lift up without twisting or tilting the cutter.

I dip into the powder every 2 or 3 cuts. It is less time consuming than picking stuck clay out of the tube.

Cut as many squares as you need and a few extras of each color.

Press down lightly with your finger on any tiles which have lifted corners, then very carefully peel up the excess clay leaving the square tiles behind.

Bake according to the manufacturer's directions for 10 – 15 minutes and allow to cool in oven to prevent glass tray from cracking. If using ceramic tile, you may omit this step and remove tile after baking.



## STEP FOUR:

Using any white glue that dries clear, brush glue onto the frame and place your tiles in the desired pattern. Brush on only enough glue for a few tiles at a time.

NOTE: Some clayers recommend pre-treating wooden frames by baking for 30 minutes in a moderate oven to be sure the wood is completely dry. This step reduces the chance of the frame warping after the raw clay is attached and rebaked.

It is also suggested to cover wooden frames with white glue and allow it to dry completely before applying unbaked clay to achieve a better bond between the wood and the clay.

Keep in mind, not all purchased frames are real wood. Some are composite materials. Do your research first and decide if you would like to take the extra precaution of pre-treating your frame.

## STEP FIVE:

When glue has dried and you are happy with the tile placement, grout the finished product. Any hardware or paint supply store will carry **non-sanded** grout in either premixed or powdered form.

I find it easiest to simply get a tub of ready-to-use non-sanded premixed grout and add color to it myself.





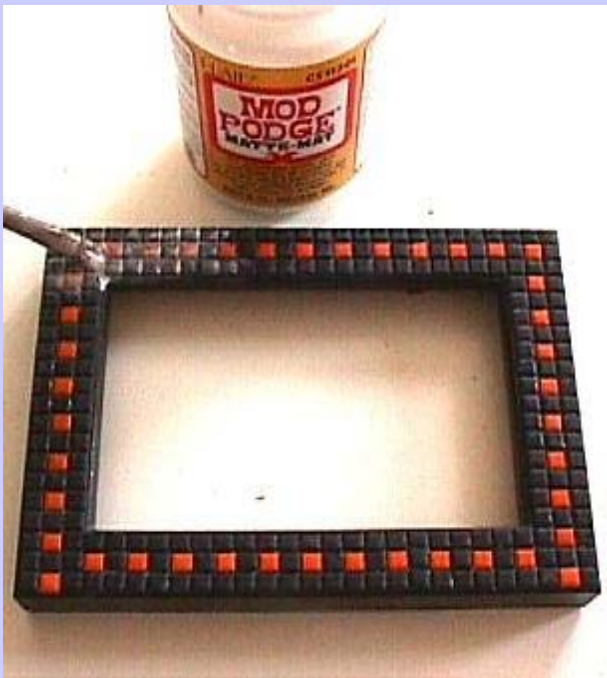
### STEP SIX:

Scoop out a spoonful of grout. Add water if it is powder form – the grout should be the consistency of peanut butter.

In this picture, you can see I've colored the grout by stirring in a little black acrylic paint.

Smear the grout all over the tiled surface. Be sure to work it into all the spaces between the tiles. I usually use my finger, but a knife or spatula works great.

Using a slightly damp sponge, wipe away excess grout, being careful not to remove any grout from the crevices.



### STEP SEVEN:

Allow grout to dry overnight.

Wipe off any residue with a soft rag, then brush on several coats of a water-based sealer. Allow the sealer to dry between coats.

I use Mod Podge® but grout sealer or FIMO or Sculpey matte or gloss sealers work well also.



These polymer clay tiles can be used on almost any surface. Since they are only a millimeter thick, they do not add the bulk and weight of glass or ceramic tiles.

Please keep in mind, though, that the tiles should never be applied to any item that comes into contact with food products.

Enjoy your Miniature Mosaic project!

Happy Halloween!

Sarah Lajoie

