

THE MOSAIC CANE

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pcPolyzine.com tutorial:
THE MOSAIC CANE
designed by Elissa Powell

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Mosaics - an endless source of intrigue! Through infinite patience and painstaking work, an artist can create a timeless piece of beauty. Mosaics can be created with polymer clay - with just as awesome a result as with the original tile and grout! With my usual eye toward simplicity, I present my version of the mosaic cane. Also, check out this video that now has over 13,000 [YouTube views!](#)

Mosaics consist of only two basic elements - tiles and grout. In my mosaic, the tiles consist of varying colors of either opaque or translucent clay and the "grout," which separates the tiles, thin sheets of an opaque clay in a contrasting color. My mosaic cane is more a [abstract](#) surface treatment rather than a meticulously planned composition. The "tiles" are free form shapes. Still, the possibilities for its use are endless!

Materials

- Equivalent of two to three small blocks of conditioned FIMO or Premo (because of their strength) - either translucent or opaque.
- Small bits of colored clay to be used for tinting, if making a translucent cane.
- One small block of clay of a contrasting opaque color (usually black, white, grey, or silver) to be used as "grout."
- Pasta machine
- Large work surface
- Cutting blade

Preparation:

Step One:

For the translucent mosaic, divide the translucent clay into the number of colors you want and tint each part with the desired color.

Step Two:

Roll all of the colors into short logs of equal length.

Step Three:

Pass the "grout" clay through the thickest setting of the pasta machine to form thick slabs. You'll roll out the slabs into thinner lengths as needed.

Step Four:

Pass one grout slab through a thinner (5 or 6) setting to form your first strip.

Instructions:

Step One:

Start by rolling several very thin sheets of "grout" clay.



Step Two:

Roll your tinted translucent clay into cylinders of the same length, and cover the sides of each with sheets of the grout clay.



Step Three:

Press these together . . .



. . . and roll . . .



. . . until you have formed a larger roll of all the colors together.



Step Four:

Now begins the cutting. Find a place to slice that will



cut through at least two colors and slice straight down.



Step Five:

Lay a sheet of "grout" on the cut surface, and then smooth it . . .



. . . and trim the excess from the edges.



Step Six:

Now, here's the trick. Before reassembling, turn one of the sections upside down, so that different colors are adjacent to each other.



Step Seven:

Repeat the slicing, covering, turning, and reassembling process four or five more times, each time covering one of the cut surfaces with the grout clay, turning one section upside down, trimming the edges, and pressing them back together. When cutting, divide up large areas of the same color. Cut across previous cuts to break up the colors into even smaller sections.



Step Eight:

To distribute the colored sections in a pleasing way, sometimes you may want to cut a slice and return it to a **different** position on the cylinder. That's ok . . .



. . . as long as you cover any exposed cut surface with more of the grout clay.



Step Nine:

When you have achieved a pleasing distribution of colored areas, roll the cane back into a cylindrical shape . . .

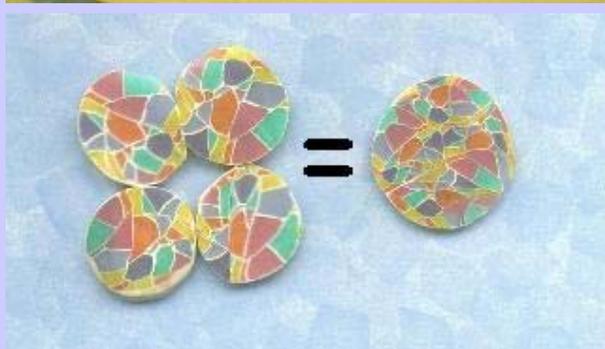


. . . and here is your mosaic!



Step Ten:

As the final step, reduce the cane to a length four times the original and cut into four even lengths. Press these four lengths together, and roll, to form a mosaic cane with smaller "tiles."



Some finished mosaic hearts



A Few Suggestions

1. Vary the size of your "tiles." It makes for a more interesting composition.
2. For bead making or heart making, scrap clay can be used on the inside. When using translucent, cover the scrap ball with a thin layer of base color. The base color will pleasingly affect the appearance of the mosaic. A Skinner blend base can be delightful!
3. Very interesting effects can be achieved by passing slices of cane through the pasta machine to enlarge or distort the patterns. Then overlay with thin slices straight from the cane.
4. I have achieved some interesting effects by laying thin translucent mosaic slices over opaque mosaic. Check the sample hearts!
5. A little glitter or foil under a thin sheet of translucent mosaic can be stunning!
6. What **can't** you cover with this cane? Be creative!