

How To: Mix Plaster

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Plaster can be painted



Plaster of Paris can be used for sculpting and modeling. It is made by mixing gypsum powder with water to form a paste that hardens as it dries. When dry it remains soft and easily manipulated with tools to make a wide variety of sculptures, models and decorations.

Plaster of Paris can be dangerous if not treated with the appropriate care. Gloves and goggles should be worn, and it must be used in the Primary classroom with careful adult supervision.

Ingredients:

- Plaster of Paris or gypsum
- Water
- Cup or jug for measuring
- Newspaper
- Bucket
- Mixing bowl
- Spoon

Make

- Cover the floor and work surfaces with newspaper sheeting.
- Fill a bucket with water for washing hands and spoons.
- Have your mould ready to receive the mixed plaster, as it will set in 5-15 minutes.
- Half fill a plastic bowl with water. Sprinkle in plaster until it starts to build up above the surface of the water. When doing this try to disperse the plaster evenly across the water. Never pour the powder into a single space. As an approximate guide, use one cup of water for every 2 cups of plaster.
- Keep adding plaster into any empty areas of water until it is covering every area of the water's surface and is no longer easily absorbed. Leave for one minute.
- Stir the plaster gently from side to side with the spoon to eliminate lumps and bubbles forming. Look at the spoon as a test: if its surface can be seen through the plaster, the mixture is too thin.
- When the plaster has a thick smooth consistency, it is ready to use.
- If you want coloured plaster, add paint or food colouring at this stage, carefully stirring it in until it is uniformly distributed.
- Leave the plaster to stand for no more than one minute before pouring into your mould. Make sure again that there are no air bubbles.

Tip

Always add plaster to water – never the other way round.  
Don't ever mix plaster with bare hands – this can lead to burns.  
Only use plastic bowls for mixing and never pour plaster down a sink as it will quickly solidify and block the drains.

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