

What is Polymer clay?

Polymer clay is a type of modeling clay that can be manipulated with bare hands. The material hardens and cures only when baked at certain temperatures in either a toaster oven or conventional oven. Polymer clay is non-toxic when handled but is not safe for consumption. Be sure to follow the baking instructions on the back of the package inserts to avoid burning the material.

This clay is made from resin, PVC plastics, and other materials. At certain temperatures, the polymer clay begins to cure and harden; once cured, the material remains hard. Before curing, polymer clay softens under slightly warm conditions (such as the warmth that your palms generate while kneading) for easier blending and sculpting.

Although several brands and types of polymer clay are available to purchase, we recommend the Sculpey® Polyform Products for a variety of sculpting projects.



DOGGO™ BAKE

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Baking the Polymer Clay

A Toaster or a Conventional Oven A toaster oven at home is sufficient to use for baking small polymer clay sculptures, and a conventional oven can be used for larger sculptures. Depending on the polymer clay brand that you decide to use, always look at the package insert for baking instructions.



**250° to 275° F for
20 to 30 minutes**

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Protect Your Sculptures While Baking

- Do not bake polymer clay at a higher temperature than recommended. Doing so can cause the clay to burn or scorch. Always follow the package insert for directions. If you are uncertain, use 250° F for 30 minutes.
- Avoid letting any part of the polymer clay sculpture touch or be close to any heating element or flame.
- If the sculpture feels rubbery or the surfaces remain easily scratched, the clay is underbaked. Rebake the piece at the same temperature for another 20 minutes.
- Place your sculpture on any flat, oven-safe platform to avoid touching the sculpture during transport. For small sculptures, a folded piece of aluminum foil is sufficient.
- For larger sculptures with thinner parts, the use of armature is needed to add foundation to the piece. During baking, prop the sculpture with aluminum foil surrounding the entire piece or a particular part to prevent from sagging or breaking during baking.



Fixing Cracks and Breakages

Cracks in a sculpture can occur during baking; breakages can result from mishandling. In such cases, use Sculpey Bake & Bond liquid to reattach the broken pieces, and then rebake the sculpture according to the package insert (275° F for 30 minutes).



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Storage and Safety

- Without conditioning, polymer clay can eventually dry out and be slightly difficult to knead after several months of exposure to air. Store your polymer clay in a closed container, away from extreme heat or cold. If your polymer clay is dried and difficult to work with, use a polymer clay softener. You can find this product on the Sculpey website or at a hobby store.
- Polymer clay is not meant to be ingested or used for food. Avoid creating sculptures or using tools that will come into contact with food. If you use a kitchen utensil for sculpting, make sure to designate that tool only for that purpose.
- Condition your clay now and then to keep it soft and malleable for future use. The warmth of your palms and fingers is sufficient to knead and blend small amounts of polymer clay. For larger amounts, cover the clay with saran wrap or a moistened warm cloth for a few minutes until the clay warms.
- Protect your hands by using a pasta maker or a kneading machine to blend the polymer clay. This approach can be especially helpful for beginning crafters who have not yet developed the hand strength for this craft, as well as for people with arthritis or carpal tunnel syndrome.



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The Artist-Author: Joan Cabarrus

Artist/author Joan Cabarrus is an art entrepreneur, founder of JFCRN Limited, creator of the DoggoBake Animal Sculptures product line, a registered nurse, and The Singing Sculptor on YouTube. She has authored several animal-related sculpting book tutorials and hosts and produces The DoggoBake Show, available on YouTube beginning January 2021.

As a professional artist, Joan's mission is to cultivate creativity, resourcefulness, and compassion for animals through sculpting and art that is accessible to everyone. Her happiness as a creator lies in the practicality of applying critical thinking, problem solving, and resourcefulness to produce innovative, enjoyable art. She believes that thinking courageously and practically as an artist helps us strengthen skills that also apply to bigger tasks in our daily lives.

Visit her Website: www.JFCRN.com



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