

Basic Sculpting Techniques

Scoring This technique is basically drawing on the sculpture by lightly cutting the clay to aid the placement of parts, to create lines, or to separate small structures; for example, the lines of the nose.



Pressing This technique involves pressing or pushing your fingertips or a sculpting tool into the clay to create a dip. Trimming the clay is not necessary to create a dent or space.

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Digging This technique requires the use of a small loop tool to remove clay from a small area. This approach preserves the integrity of the nearby sculptured clay; for example, removing some part of a deep structure, like the face folds or lines of the nose.



Pinching For this technique, use your fingertips to pinch and thin out a clay structure, such as the ends of the ears.

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Maneuvering For this technique, manipulate the clay or parts of the sculpted structure; for example, manipulate the nose to create symmetry or the ears to achieve the desired position.



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Basic Sculpting Tools



Ball Stylus Ball stylus tools come in different sizes. They are needed to sculpt tiny corners, smooth clay surfaces, and create wave-like forms for fur or concave inner shapes for the ears or eyes. They are also used to create dips for visual placements of extra items, like small gems or beads. A medium ball stylus can help you create wider wavelike appearances when shaping the cheeks or forehead.

Dental Picks A sharp, thin tool is required for detailing small sculptures. Picks help you draw, score, separate facial parts, and create deep holes for placing items like whiskers.



Gum Stimulator A gum stimulator has a sharp tip that can create textured depths in a small sculpture. The rubber tip is soft enough to blend clay yet hard enough to provide control when blending tiny corners. If you have another sculpting tool that resembles a gum stimulator, you can use that as well.

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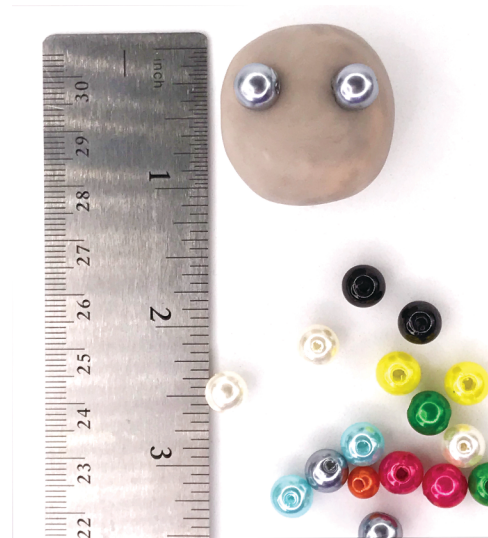
Other Supplies



Large Hog-Bristle Paintbrush

To create whiskers, you can use individual hog bristles from a paintbrush. (We do not recommend adding whiskers to dog sculptures, as doing so can make the dog look like a cat.)

Plastic Beads You can use pairs of small plastic beads with holes to create eyes for your animal sculptures. There are other ways to create eyeballs, but using ready-made, round beads with holes can lessen the time needed to create a pair of perfectly round shapes. They are safe to bake at 275° Fahrenheit, and the holes enable you to insert a hook to adjust the placements of the eyeballs.



Sand Paper, Fine and Rough

A cured polymer clay sculpture can be smoothed by sanding its surface. You can also use sandpaper to even out the back of a sculpture so that you can place the sculpture in a bezel or glue on a magnet.

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Other Supplies

Baby Oil and Soft-Bristled Brush Baby oil helps smooth polymer clay surfaces and remove excess debris. Along with a small soft-bristled oiling brush, you can reach tiny corners with light sweeping. Make sure to use only a small amount of oil.



Aluminum Foil Aluminum is safe to use as a baking platform for small sculptures. Foil is also often used as armatures in larger polymer clay sculptures.

Cyanoacrylate Clear Gel or Silicone Adhesives These liquid glues are sometimes more suitable for permanent adhesions of items to a cured polymer clay sculpture; for example, gluing whiskers to cheeks, adding yarn fur, or placing beads as eyeballs.



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Other Tools

Magnifying Lens A magnifying lens can help you better view your project while you sculpt. Uses a glass under bright lighting can help you detail the sculpture more precisely.



Rotary Tool Use this tool to create sharp edges, smooth-edged holes, or sanded details in your cured polymer sculpture.

Rotating Platform Creating full-figure animal sculptures requires a 360-degree, three-dimensional view, so a rotating platform is helpful when sculpting. This tool is also useful if you want your animal sculpture to stay within a specific base-board size.

A lazy Susan can act as an alternative platform if a sculpting table is not readily available. Make sure that the platform is stable and does not wobble.



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Other Tools

Pasta Machine or Rolling Pin

Although you can use only with your fingertips and hands to blend, these tools can help you more evenly mix and blend your clay. Any tool that flattens the clay can also help to create other parts of the sculpture; such as a dog collar or clothing.



Caliper or Ruler A caliper is a good tool for measuring proportions if you use an animal photo as a reference. You can use calipers to measure a small reference photo or object, and then multiply or divide the measurement to recreate the proportions at a larger or smaller scale. Also use it to determine the distance between the eyes, to visualize the depth of the eyeballs in a side view, and to measure the distance of mouth openings.

Alternative Tools You can improvise and create your own sculpting tools by using items like sewing needles to substitute for dental picks, a drinking glass instead of rolling pin, or sculpted tips made from polymer clay that are secured on sticks instead of store-bought tools.



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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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