

Make your own ceramic vase



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Materials you will need

- Clay
- Weighing scale
- Wooden table or a Medium-density fibreboard (MDF) slate
- Spray bottle
- Plastic sheet
- Bucket of water
- Banding wheel
- Clay carving tools
- Clay hand-building tools, includes the following:
 - Rolling pin
 - Small sponge
 - Small towel
 - Scoring tool
 - Wooden knife
 - Wooden blending tool
- Paddle
- Ruler
- Ceramic glaze
- Kiln (optional)

Steps to follow

1. PREPARE THE COILS

- Cut a chunk of clay and start **wedging** it as if you are preparing bread dough.
- Weigh the chunk of clay on the weighing scale, it should be no less than 700 grams
- When you have 6 to 10 chunks of 700 grams of clay, take each chunk and start rolling to create thick long ropes.
- To roll the coils, use your whole hand to squidge it into a thick sausage. These coils should be as thick as your thumb. Start with the tips of your fingers then as the coil gets longer, stretch your fingertips out and move to the ends. You can roll multiple coils at a time.
- Place the little rolls of clay in a thick plastic bag or an empty bucket with a lid to avoid drying while you're working.

2. CREATE THE BASE

- Get a chunk of clay. Use a rolling pin to flatten it, to get an even sheet of clay.
 - Once your base is ready, place it on a banding wheel and trace a circle with your index finger as you turn the banding wheel around.
 - Cut it into a circular shape using your pottery knife.
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3. CREATE THE WALLS OF THE VASE

- **Crosshatch** around the edges of the base and the coil using a scoring tool.
 - Stick the first coil on the base firmly and lock the two sides of the clay into each other.
 - Push the coil into the crosshatching to blend it into the base. Start at one end, push it down with your forefinger and thumb to blend the ends and go around with the same motion.
 - Blend the clay internally and externally.
 - Repeat the process until you reach the desired height.
 - As you build the wall, with each coil, lean it slightly outwards to make it wider gradually as you reach the top.
 - Put one hand on the inside to support as you blend all these coils together. You can use your thumb or your finger, and blend downwards.
 - Use a wooden blending tool to blend the lines where the coils attach to each other to make the attachment stronger and uniform.
 - Remember to support your piece from the inside when applying pressure from the outside.
 - To make the vase look curved, use the wooden paddle to shape the vase by placing one hand inside and hitting its exterior repeatedly as you turn the banding wheel.
 - Smooth out the surface as much as possible with a wooden knife.
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4. DRY TO LEATHER HARD

- Leave your pot to stiffen up until it is leather hard. If it is a sunny day, your pot might go leather hard in half an hour, an hour. If it is cold and there is a lot of moisture in the air, it could take a day.

5. ADDING THE NECK

- After drying the vase, score it again and add water using a spray bottle. Keep crosshatching and adding water until the clay is soft enough to receive the new clay you are going to add for the neck.
 - Create the neck of the vase using the same attachment method as before.
 - Once done, leave the clay to dry before working on the finishing touches and decorations.
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6. DECORATING THE VASE

- Make two small coils to attach decorative handles at the neck.
 - Add an extra coil at the neck of the vase.
 - Take a wooden spatula and roughly blend the exterior of the whole vase to get a surface resembling a stormy sea or windy desert dunes.
 - Cover the vase loosely with plastic to let it dry slowly over the next few days.
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7. DRYING AND FIRING

- On the fifth day the vase will be **bone dry**. Take it out into the sun to ensure that it does not retain any moisture.
- Once the piece is completely dry, place it inside the kiln for a bisque firing (at 1000 Celsius)
- Wash the vase with a wet sponge and sand it after firing.
- Add the glaze of your choice onto the vase.
- Place the vase in the kiln at a temperature of 1230 Celsius after the glaze dries.
- The firing takes 12 hours however the kiln needs to take 24 hours to cool down before you can open it to reveal your finished ceramic vase.

Glossary

Coiling: A method of creating pottery by building up the walls of vessels through stacking and joining coils of rope-like rolls of clay

Crosshatch: Making marks with intersecting sets of parallel lines

Leather Hard Clay: Leather hard is a stage of drying pottery where the clay is partially dried but still retains some moisture. Leather hard clay still can be worked but is firm enough that it won't distort or deform.

Bone Dry Clay: The final stage of the drying process before the clay is fired in the kiln, at this stage the clay has lost all the moisture it can lose before it gets fired.

Glaze: A vitreous solution that is applied on ceramics for functional and decorative purposes.