

Hand-building Pottery Tips & Techniques

- Clay dries quickly, so **keep unused clay in container** when not in use to prevent drying out.
- Pay attention to **create uniform thickness** all over and **thin rim at end**. Feel with eyes closed.
- **Rub out cracks** as soon as they develop to prevent them from getting too large and hard to repair.
- When slab-building, **turn the slab over with every few rolls**. This allows it to roll out easier.
- **Don't roll thinner than 1/4"** (use wood slats) or it will be difficult to support during construction. Thinning will happen as you add texture and you can thin the rim at the end.
- Clay is slippery when wet and difficult to control detail, so **try not to use water** if you can avoid it.
- **You don't need to use slip coil-building**. You do need to smooth it at least on the inside so that it will hold together. You can leave the outside coils visible or smooth them together.
- **Score & Slip when joining edges of slabs** or adding decorative features (scratching up both edges & adding just enough slip/paste-like clay to cover scratch marks). This acts like a clay glue. Using too much slip makes it difficult to work with so wipe excess away rather than smear it around.
- When adding decorative features with slip, wiggle & chant magic words while applying gentle pressure until you **feel slip attaching like glue**.
- Rinse hands in bucket & dry if fingers are slippery or coated with dry clay. **Keep hands clean & dry** for best results in smoothing clay and adding finishing touches like thinning the rim.
- Most importantly, **have fun!** It's a Playshop! ~Teresa Speakman, Primitive Mud Pottery

