

# WOOD CLAY

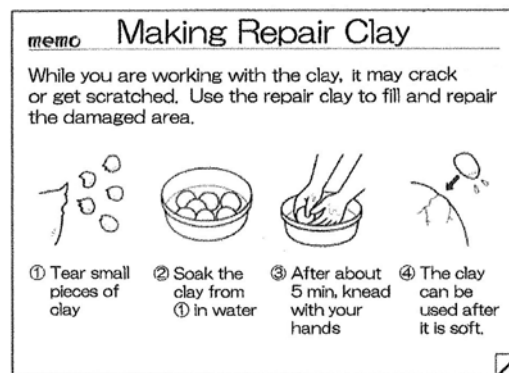
Wood clay is a very pliable material made from ground wood. This material is a by-product of the pencil making industry. It is organic and non-toxic. Wood clay is easy to sculpt in the moist state and can be carved when dry. It burns out and has non-toxic fumes. Firing the material does produce some smoke. To avoid possible irritations, fire PMC pieces using wood clay components in a well ventilated room or outside.

Wood Clay has many unique features not found in paper clay. Wet clay will attach to other wet wood clay very well. You can tear off a piece and very easily attach it at another location.



This clay is excellent for making inner core forms for PMC.

Make the desired shape and fill in any cracks with “repair clay”. Create a surface texture according to the design you want to develop.



Dry the clay completely. You can dry at room temperature for 24 hours or in a dehydrator for 4-5 hours to insure that the entire wood clay piece is completely dry. If there is any moisture in the wood clay, the heat of firing will convert it to steam which can split the PMC layer as it escapes.

When the clay is dry, you can shape and smooth the piece with carving tools, files, sandpaper or other materials used to finish wood. A smooth surface will make it easier to apply PMC paste. Remember that the PMC layer will mute any texture on the wood clay core surface. To create fine details in the PMC it is better to apply these on the surface of the PMC layer.

Here are a few helpful tools for shaping and finishing wood clay.



The unused portion of the wood clay should be wrapped tightly in plastic wrap and then stored in a zip-lock plastic bag. It can be softened slightly by adding water but is best kept moist in a tightly sealed bag.

After firing there will be some ash to wash out of the piece. You should wash all of the ash from the PMC if you want to tumble polish the PMC. If the ash comes out in the tumbler it will contaminate the tumbling solution. The result will be dirty solution, tumbler shot and, probably, dirty PMC pieces. If this happens, clean the tumbler and shot with a mild acid (i.e. vinegar), flattened cola (which also contains a mild acid) or shot cleaner.

Mary Ann & Ken Devos  
PMC Connection  
October 2006