

How To Make A Hand Casting

When you want to make a casting of a part of a person, you need to make certain that you are using a molding material that is conducive to human skin, patience, and comfort. For example, you won't want to use a substance that would cause allergic or toxic reactions with skin, nor would you want to use something that is too hot for a person to be able to tolerate. Alginate is the mold material of choice as it is skin-friendly.

Be certain to read all of the instructions that come with your material or your kit before you begin. Also, be certain that the person whose hand will be the model is wearing old clothing, in case things get a bit messy. Be considerate and explain everything that will be done to the model, so that the person will know what to expect. This will eliminate mistakes and misinterpretations.

Modeling a hand isn't half as stressful to the model as is a face or head mold. Therefore, modeling a hand is usually quite easy and comfortable for the model.

Make sure that the model's hand is clean and dry for the mold, before getting started. When the model is ready, mix your mold material. You should wear gloves when you do this, as it makes cleanup much more easy and sanitary. If you are allergic to latex gloves, you can simply wear vinyl ones.

Remember that with once Alginate is mixed, you have about only a few minutes time in which to work (see label for specific set times), so if this is your substance of choice, you'll have to keep time in mind while you work. This is why having the model ready beforehand is critical to the best results.

The easiest way to do a hand is by creating a half-cast. To do this, you should prepare your material in a shallow container that is small, but large enough to easily fit the hand with an inch or more all the way around. When the material is ready, place the hand in the material, making certain not to touch the bottom of the container. The material should reach about halfway to three quarters of the way up the hand (approximately 1 inch) since you will need to be able to remove the hand when its set.

It is possible to do a three-quarter or full cast, by preparing a bit more material in the container. When the material is ready, place the hand further into the material, making certain not to touch the bottom of the container. This time, the material should cover part of the top of the hand, or the entire top of the hand, as

long as the “exit” hole is large enough for the hand to wiggle and fingers curl out of when dry. This is more challenging, and not as ideal a choice for beginners.

Wait 2-3 minutes after material has set on the surface and gently wiggle the hand free. The setting action creates a vacuum against the skin so a gently wiggling of fingers, then palm is needed to break the suction to remove the hand.

For extra interest in the piece, feel free to have the model wear a ring or two. This adds life and individuality. Note, however, that if you will be covering the hand where the ring is, it should not have any protrusions, as this will make the removal of the hand from the material much more difficult and can rip the mold.

After the hand is removed inspect it for loose pieces then turn it upside down to let it drain for about 15-minutes before attempting to pour in your casting material.

You have a number of choices for casting materials including ArtMolds’ CastRite, Hydrocal, Hydrostone and even fast set resins (ArtMolds Alginates can be used with most fast-cured resins.). After choosing your casting material mix according to label directions. Gently pour it into your mold. After filling the mold, pour out the casting material. This procedure will allow the casting material to better coat the mold surface and reduce air bubbles. Now pour your material into the mold a second time gently tapping the sides of the mold to allow trapped air to escape.

Once the casting material is set (usually in about 1-2 hours) you can demold and examine your work of art.