

Advanced Casting Instructions

This page contains advanced tips for casting. **Don't feel that you have to follow everything here when you first start.** I would strongly suggest that you first read over the information on the Casting Instructions Main Page and start casting your mold a few times.

How to Mix Just Enough Plaster for One Mold

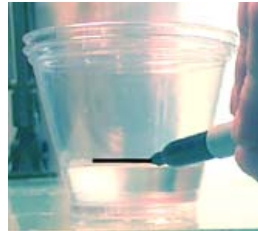
- Start with two 9 ounce plastic cups. Fill one of the cups with about 1/2" of water. You can find these at Wal-mart very cheap.
- 1.

Nest the cup with water inside of the empty cup.



- 2.
- Draw a line** on the outside cup at water level. **Remove the inner cup** (with the water), mix up and pour your plaster into the mold.

It looks like I could have used more plaster. Be sure to scrape the mold.



- 3.
- After the plaster sets in the cup, **flex the cup** and the plaster will crack away leaving a clean cup.

We'll use the cup again by placing it back inside the cup with the line.

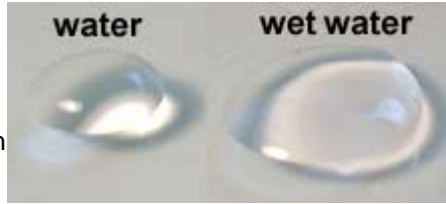


- 4.
- Since we needed more plaster the next time, place a new mark on the outside cup a little higher. **Never use the outside cup to mix plaster in.** Only use it to measure by placing other cups inside of it. After a few casts, you'll be able to get the mixture very close to filling the mold without much waste.

Using the "Wet Water" Method for Perfect Castings

One reason plaster won't flow into the mold is because of **surface tension**. By using an additive that breaks the surface tension, you can make the water "wetter", allowing it to spread and flow easier.

1. "Wet" water can be made by **adding a little rinse agent or dish soap**. My favorite is called "Jet Dry" which is a rinse agent that you add to your automatic dish washer.

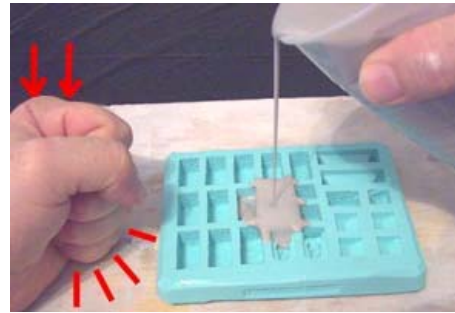


You'll notice the drop of wet water on the right spreads out more than the drop of plain water on the left.

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2. Fill a spray bottle with water and **add a teaspoon of "Jet Dry"** to it. Shake it up and spray it directly on the mold.



Shake off the excess water and fill the mold as usual.



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3. You'll notice that the plaster will flow everywhere, even off the top of the mold, making more of a mess than usual. **Be sure pound on the work surface** as you're filling the mold to bring air bubbles to the surface.



When you need to fill a lot of molds, place a **half gallon of water in a bucket** and add **3 tablespoons of Jet Dry** to it. Dunk the molds in the solution and shake off the excess before filling with plaster.

How to Set Up Your Work Area for Casting Multiple Molds

Here's a way to set up for multiple mold casting. Start by laying out or taping down a **large trash bag down to protect the work surface.**

The "**pound board**" is a small board with pieces of kitchen sponge taped to the bottom. We'll pound on this board to remove air bubbles.

The "**trash tub**" is an 18 gallon tub I picked up at wal-mart. It's handy because it's wide and short. If you can't find a tub, **a wide low cardboard box with a trash bag inside will do.**

1.

The bucket of wet water (as mentioned above) contains about **1/2 gallon of water plus 3 tablespoon of "Jet dry"** rinse agent. You can also use dishwashing detergent instead.

Be sure to **protect your clothing by wearing an apron** or old clothes that you don't mind getting plaster on. My favorite casting material is Excalibur which can purchased from www.gameplangames.com.



Dunk your molds into the bucket and leave them there until you need them. **Don't leave them in the solution over night!** I did by accident and the mold had a strange residue on it (it rubbed off but still had me worried).

2.

Place a small plastic cup in your casting material box. You'll use this to scoop out and sprinkle the powder when you mix it.



Take a **16 ounce plastic cup** and fill it a **little less than half full.**

3.

Sprinkle in your casting material until you get lumps on to top surface that have soaked up the water. When you don't have any water standing on the surface, and all of the particles are wet, then you've added the right amount of plaster.



Stir the plaster well. It should be the consistency of a thin milk shake or pancake batter.

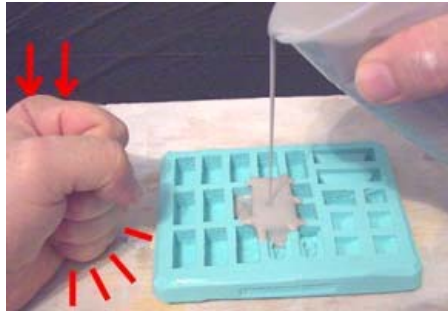


4. Remove one of the molds from the "wet water" bucket and **shake off** the excess water. In fact, **smack the mold face-down** on the table to remove the excess water. If there are **any soap bubbles in the mold**, they will keep plaster from flowing where it should!

Pour directly from the cup. Pound lightly on the board as you fill the pockets of the mold.

- 5.

You will fill about 4 molds before you run out of plaster.



After you complete your first four, wipe off the spoon and pound board.

- 6.

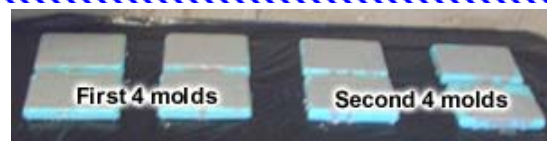
Start mixing up your next batch of plaster while the first four molds are setting up.



As soon as you've **completely poured your second set of 4 molds**, then it's time to **scrape the first four**.

- 7.

Place a paper towel over the tops of the molds. You don't have to do this, but it just makes scraping much neater. You also need a paper towel to clean off your scraper anyway, so **I use the same paper towels to do both jobs**.



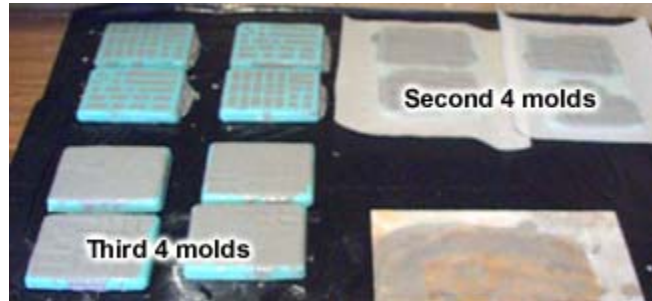
Scrape the excess plaster off with a 4" wide putty knife. At this point, the **plaster should be the consistency of toothpaste.**

8. Clean off the scraper using the paper towel from the mold. Let the excess plaster flow off the side and onto the trash bag surface. When the plaster cures, the excess will easy to remove.



After the first set of molds are scraped, mix up and pour your **third batch of molds.**

9. When finished, it's time to soak and scrape the second set of molds. You would continue this process until you run out of molds or space to place them on the table.



When you've finished filling and scraping all of the molds, **let them set for at least 25 minutes.**

10. Remove the blocks over your trash can so the excess scraps will fall in. I'm placing my pieces into a dehydrator rack so they will dry quickly.

If there is any plaster residue on the mold surface, simply **rub the palm of your hand on the mold** to remove it. These molds don't need any special preparation or cleaning between casts.



11. There are other methods that my customers will use to cast the blocks so **don't feel that this way is the only way you can do it.** Many customers use the glass method (placing a piece of glass over the top of the mold instead of scraping it).

In my experience **you get a much more exact block height** if you wait until the plaster is of a toothpaste consistency and then **scrape all the molds uniformly.**