

Making Air Dry Clay and Embellishments

By Christi Calvert Brogan

Air dry clay and embellishments made with it are so simple to make and have such endless possibilities that you'll wonder why you ever paid for "retail" ones before! First, you'll need a batch of air dry clay, either homemade using the recipe posted below or purchased.

Additionally you'll need:

Heat gun

Fun foam (thin or thick, but I prefer thick)

Scissors

Deeply etched rubber (not foam) stamp or other item you wish to make an impression of, preferably heat resistant. This could be a metal figurine, a crumbled up piece of aluminum foil, etc.

Optional: glycerin, vegetable oil spray or automotive protectant spray (like "Armor"))

Air Dry Clay for Scrapbookers:

1 cup Cornstarch

2 cup Baking soda

1 1/4 cup Cold water

Sift dry ingredients together into a medium saucepan. Add water. Cook mixture on medium heat for about 5 minutes or until it thickens and starts to pull away from the sides of the pan. Remove from heat and dump out onto waxed paper. Once the clay is cool enough to handle, knead it for at least 5 minutes. Store clay in an airtight container or plastic bag. Can be colored with acrylic paints and/or stamping inks.

Using Rubber Stamps for air dry clay molds:

Ok. To start, you'll want to make sure you're using deeply etched rubber stamps (not foam). You'll also want to make sure they're not too detailed as the more detail the less likely for success with this project. Here are two examples of good stamps to use and one example of one not to use:



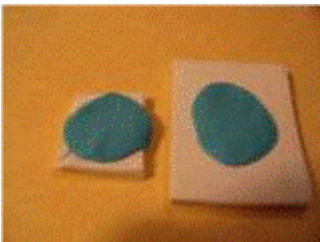


Next, you'll want to cut yourself a piece of fun foam slightly larger than the stamp you'll be using. Now, you can either pin your fun foam to a heat proof surface or hold it with tweezers/tongs for the next part. This is when you'll use your heat gun. Using the gun, heat the surface of the fun foam until it begins to look grainy or pebbly... If using the thinner foam, it may curl a bit in the heating (which is why I use thick) but don't worry about it as long as you get it hot to the grainy stage. Once it gets to that stage, quickly press your rubber stamp into the hot surface and hold for approximately 10 seconds, making sure to maintain pressure. If you are at all concerned about your stamp sticking (I've never had one stick, but there's always a first time!) use the veggie oil spray or automotive protectant spray to put a light coating on the stamp before impressing it. After the 10 second hold, gently remove from the foam and you should have a good impression in the foam surface. As long as you don't reheat the foam, that impression can be used over and over again. If you are unhappy with the impression though, just gently heat the surface again and it should disappear

Here are the two from my example stamps:



Once the foam is cool, you're ready to use the clay. Take a small ball of your clay and press it into the impression, making sure to smooth out the top. I've tinted my clay blue here so you can see it better:



Now, let these dry until the clay is completely dry, about 24-48 hrs in good dry conditions or longer in humid/wet ones. Once dry, gently pop the clay off the foam and

trim to desired size. Optionally, you can carefully remove the clay BEFORE drying, but if your clay is too "wet" they may not hold the impression as well as those left to dry first. Here is what they'll look like coming out of the mold. These, made from the homemade clay recipe above, were not dry yet and didn't hold the impression as well, so make sure to let them dry!



If you've done a good job of smoothing the back side, these should be able to be just attached to the page with glue dots or glue stick. You can also paint the images with acrylic paints or pigment inks.

You can also chalk or ink the foam impression itself and use that as a page embellishment if you like. Or you can choose to direct stamp into the air dry clay. If you choose to direct stamp, you can use the glycerin or again, automotive protectant spray to prevent the stamp from sticking, but use a THIN coating so as not to make the resulting image too "greasy". The glycerin is much less acidic than plain oil spray and will be less likely to damage your scrapbook, but still make sure to take care when using anything with an oily base on your pages...

Fun foam is great for all kinds of things scrapbook related, from making shakers, to creating your own pop dots to making your own stamps. To make your own stamps, just cut with a die cutter, or print a shape with your printer and cut with a sharp craft knife, then attach with rubber cement to a wood block or with removable adhesive to your acrylic mounts and you've got yourself a custom stamp.

As with the rubber stamped mold, you can also use ordinary household objects to make "molds" for your clay. Think "heat resistant" when looking at potential impressions you'd like to make. Metal charms and embellishments work well, as do other metal items like mesh screen, "seal" stamps and the like. You can use other items to create impressions in the air dry clay itself and even create "reverse" images of other air dry clay items. The possibilities are only limited by your imagination!