



FIMO INFO SHEET

INFO: I/001

Types of Fimo

Fimo first appeared over 25 years ago. Then there was only one type which took a lot of kneading before it became pliable enough to model. Nowadays there are two types of Fimo - Fimo Classic and Fimo Soft. Fimo Classic is closer to the original although with a greatly improved formula. It needs to be conditioned by kneading before it is soft enough to work with. Fimo Soft, when fresh, requires little conditioning and is therefore ideal for those new to polymer clay or for those looking for quick results who have little time to spend kneading the clay. However, due to the softer nature of it the more refined detailed finishes that can be achieved with Classic are not possible. If you mix the two then you will have a clay that needs more kneading than Soft but that has more strength to retain details too.

Care of Fimo

Polymer Clay should be stored in a cool dark place. If it is stored in a warm place such as next to a radiator or in direct sunlight it will dry out. If you have some dried out Fimo it may be saved by adding some Mix Quick (2 parts Fimo to 1 part Mix Quick). Mix Quick will replace evaporated plasticiser and soften the clay. When buying polymer clay it is always wise to gently squeeze the packet to see if it is still fresh before buying.

When storing opened packets of clay do not wrap them in cling film or put them in plastic containers as the plasticisers within the clay will react with the plastic of the film or container and will quite literally melt holes in them. You can place it in some food bags but better still is to wrap it in ordinary kitchen foil before placing it in a container such as an ice cream carton. To make sure your clay stays pliable for days if not weeks just make sure to store your container in a cool dark place.

Working with Fimo

When working with any polymer clay some care and attention needs to be taken. Always follow the manufacturer's instructions and use an oven thermometer when baking the clay. If your oven gets too hot it may scorch your work. Fimo is baked at a relatively low temperature and if it is baked at a high temperature you could get noxious gases coming off it. If something does go wrong with your oven then it is best to turn it out, open all the windows and leave the room shutting the door behind you until the toxic fumes have dissipated. If you don't have an oven dedicated to baking polymer clay then you must thoroughly clean your oven in the event of an accident such as this before you cook any food in it.

Tools worth having to hand when modelling clay are a ceramic tile to work and bake on and baby wipes to keep your hands clean and to stop the dye from some of the colours transferring to others. Cocktail sticks can add strength to models as well as be useful tools to create hands and feet or creases. Knitting needles, lino cutters and cake decorating tools can help with modelling. Wire, wire mesh and kitchen foil are great for adding strength in the form of an armature for larger models. A pasta machine (used only for polymer clay) can help condition clay and mix colours or old clay with Mix Quick as well as giving even sheets for covering bases or making clothes etc. Glass beads make great eyes and are safe to bake. Cake decorating moulds and cookie cutters work well with clay but make sure that you use them only for clay and not food as well. Rubber stamps can be used as well as texture plates. Don't throw your odd bits of Fimo away as they can be mixed and then covered with either pearly powders or metal leaf before baking to make Christmas decorations.

Unless you want to spend all your time picking fibres out of your clay don't wear a fluffy jumper or clothing that sheds fibres when modelling. Always bake your clay in a conventional oven - it is not possible to bake it in a microwave.

Troubleshooting

If the colours of your clay once baked look dull or scorched then it has been baked at too high a temperature. Always use an oven thermometer and check throughout the baking process - never leave your 'cooking' clay unattended.

If your model is brittle or breaks after baking then either the plasticisers have not been activated or they have evaporated off before baking. The clay needs to be conditioned or kneaded before working and then it must be baked at the correct temperature to finish off the activation process of the plasticisers. If the temperature isn't reached when baking the plasticisers won't be activated and the model will just be dried out. When modelling it is wise to bake your work within a week so that the plasticisers don't evaporate off.

If your model has cracks in it after baking it could be because the clay was too thick and therefore unable to bake evenly throughout. You can use scrunched up foil as a base or centre for your model rather than using all clay. Alternatively you can make and bake your model in stages. Fimo can be baked several times allowing you to slowly build up your model eg make the body, bake it and then clothe it.