



CERNIT INFO SHEET

INFO: I/006

Produced in Belgium, Cernit is considered one of the strongest polymer clays available on the market today. It has a porcelain-like finish when fired making it very popular with doll makers. It is easily conditioned and is also very flexible once it has been hardened in an ordinary domestic oven. Cernit is currently available in 7 different ranges: Number One, Glamour, Translucent, Neon Light, Nature, Shiny & Doll. Cernit is ideal for a wide variety of craft projects including jewellery, ornaments, household decor, card and scrapbook embellishments and buttons. It can be worked on glass, wood, metal and even papier mache as it is baked at such a low temperature. It is possible to use a wide variety of techniques with Cernit such as Sutton Slice, Skinner Blend, Caning, Mokume Gane, Extruding, to name but a few. Once baked you can carve, sand, drill and paint it.

How to Store Clay

All polymer clays should be stored in a cool dark area. If they are stored in a warm place, such as next to a radiator or in direct sunlight, they will dry out or even harden in the packets. (Soft Mix can be added to old or harder clay to rejuvenate it and replace some of the evaporated plasticisers.) When buying polymer clay it is always wise to gently squeeze the packet to make sure that it is still fresh and workable.

When storing opened packets of clay do not wrap them in cling film or put them in plastic containers, such as old ice cream cartons, as the plasticisers within the clay will react with the plastic of the film or container and quite literally dissolve the plastics, creating holes in them. You can store raw clay in some food bags but it is best to wrap it in ordinary kitchen foil before placing it in an airtight container. That way your clay will stay pliable for days or even weeks provided it is in a cool dark area.

Conditioning the Clay

The basic constituents of polymer clay are a PVC resin and a liquid plasticiser. The clay needs to be conditioned before working with it to start the activation process of the plasticiser element within it. This makes it easier to bond pieces of clay to each other and also makes it stronger once baked. You can soften or condition the clay either with your hands, a roller or by running it through a dedicated polymer clay pasta machine.

(Please note you should never use any tools for food preparation once you have used them with polymer clays, especially items such as a pasta machine which is notoriously difficult to clean thoroughly.)

If the clay is very fresh you may find it too sticky or soft to work with. This is because it is overloaded with plasticiser. If the clay is only slightly sticky you may find a little talcum powder on your hands helps to prevent the clay from sticking to your fingers too much. If it is far too soft and sticky before you even start conditioning you will find it better to place it between two pieces of photocopy paper to leech out the excess plasticiser. For this to happen you will need to leave it for at least an hour or more for it to lose its sticky quality.



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Top Tips for Working with Polymer Clay

Always wash your hands before and after handling polymer clays as they are toxic if ingested.

For best results work in a clean and dust-free area. Try to avoid fluffy clothing that sheds fibres unless you don't mind finding them in your clay!

Ceramic tiles make great surfaces to work and bake on. (You can also use dedicated polymer clay teflon sheets.)

The Cernit Number One consists of plain opaque colours. Some are more opaque than others once baked. Check the packaging to see if your colour choice is 100% opaque or only 50% opaque to prevent surprises.

Cernit Translucent appears opaque when raw but become translucent during the baking process.

It is worth making yourself a little colour chart of baked clay as Cernit does have a tendency to change colour by slightly darkening during the baking process. This way you'll have a guide as to exactly how your colours will turn out when your project is complete.

You can mix the various coloured clays to create an almost infinite number of colours to work with.

If you find your clay getting too soft and floppy whilst working let it rest for a few minutes - this will allow it to cool and harden up a little before continuing your work.

Always preheat your oven so that it is at the required temperature when you place your work in it to be baked. That way the plasticisers won't start evaporating off before the activation process is finished.

Always use an oven thermometer when baking polymer clay to ensure that your oven reaches the required temperature without overheating and never leave baking clay unattended.

If your work looks dull or scorched it has been baked at too high a temperature.

If it is brittle or breaks after baking then either the clay wasn't conditioned properly to start the plasticiser activation or it wasn't baked at the correct temperature to finish the activation process. The manufacturer's temperature guidelines must be followed for the clay to achieve it's hardened yet flexible quality once baked.

If cracks appear in your clay after baking it may be because the clay was too thick and so did not bake evenly throughout. You can use wire and scrunched foil as armatures and centres for your work reducing the amount of clay needed. Alternatively you can bake your work in stages, building up the depth of clay as you go.



You can polish baked clay using wet sandpaper - start with 240/360 micron and finish with 400/600 micron to achieve a super silky smooth finish. For extra shine you can use a buffer wheel on a small modelling hand drill. Some professional polymer clay jewellery makers use a stone polishing tumbler to polish their work. You can also apply matt and glossy varnishes to the clay once baked for a quick matt or gloss effect and additional strength.

To stick baked clay to itself or metal jewellery findings you can use Superglue or Epoxy Resin.