

PAPER CLAY WORKSHOP with Sommer Roman



The recipe for “paper maché clay” (source: www.ultimatepapermache.com)

- 1 1/4 cups damp toilet paper
- 1 cup premixed drywall joint compound in a plastic tub (but not DAP brand joint compound)
- 3/4 cup Elmer's Glue-All or any PVA glue
- 1/2 to 1 cup white flour (adjustable)
- 2 tablespoons mineral oil (optional)

Equipment & tools

- material for building your under armature
- masking tape
- strainer
- several large bowls
- measuring cups (according to recipe above)
- spoon
- kitchen electric mixer or electric drill with paint mixer attachment
- water
- knife
- rubber spatula

1. **ARMATURE:** build up volume/ your under armature using a variety of materials of choice (newspaper, foil, bubble wrap...etc.). Cover with masking tape.
2. **SOAK & MEASURE TOILET PAPER:** Put the paper in hot water to get it wet, and press it down into a measuring cup until you have about a cup and a quarter of wet paper. Then put it back in the hot water. You want all the paper fibers to be separated. Just swirl the paper around with your fingers and the toilet paper will completely fall apart.
3. **PRESS OUT WATER:** You want to press most of the water out of the paper, but you have to be really careful that you don't press out too much. If you press out so much of the water that it's almost dry, it won't fall apart when you run your mixer. You'll end up with big globs and bumpy lumps in your paper mache clay. So go ahead and test it in your hand. Can you push it around and have it come apart, even though most of the water has been pressed out? Then you're good to go.
4. **ADD JOINT COMPOUND & GLUE:** Now you can add the drywall joint compound and glue, and start mixing with electric mixer. Mix your paper, joint compound and glue for several minutes. You want the mixer to tear all of the paper fibers apart so it'll be nice and smooth.
5. **ADD FLOUR:** You're going to use the white flour to thicken the paper mache clay. The flour soaks up the excess water in the mixture, and makes it easier to spread the paper mache or create sculpted details. The amount of flour you need depends on how you want to use your paper mache clay, and how much water was left in the paper. Just keep adding more until you get the consistency you want. For instance, if you want a really thin layer or to create a hard solid surface for a first layer, use a small amount of flour to make a really thin mixture of the paper mache clay. But when I want to add texture, or if I want to actually sculpt with the paper mache clay, then add more flour.**An alternative to a kitchen mixer: If you need to mix up a lot of the paper mache at one time, perhaps for a workshop or a very large project, you can use a paint mixer attachment for an electric drill instead of a of a kitchen mixer, and a plastic pail instead of a bowl.
6. **APPLY PAPER CLAY:** apply your paper clay to your armature. Use a knife to spread a thin layer of paper mache clay over your armature. If you'll be using the paper mache clay to add finer details, it's easiest if you put on a thin layer first and let it dry. Then you have a solid surface for your final sculpting.