Making Polymer Clay Tiles

Learn to make your own personalized, designer polymer clay tiles with the help of this detailed tutorial from Laurie Mika.

Sometimes you just want to make it yourself—you want a certain color palette or maybe a specific texture you haven’t been able to find. Well, it’s all very doable and Laurie Mika, author of *Mixed Media Mosaics*, breaks it down for you. In this demo, she shares her expert tips for conditioning, cutting, stamping and baking clay. You’ll be hooked before you know it!

To learn more about or purchase *Mixed Media Mosaics* by Laurie Mika, click here.

www.CreateMixedMedia.com

Mixed Media Mosaics is published by North Light Books, an imprint of F+W Media, Inc.
**Hand-Painted Tiles**  Hand-painted tiles are really where it all began for me. I love painting, and I view each small unpainted white tile as a miniature canvas just waiting to be transformed. There is no replication—each tile is uniquely different (trust me, you can't duplicate a tile exactly, no matter how hard you try!). When creating mosaics, it makes all the difference in the world having your own color palette of tiles, colors that you would never find with store-bought tile. The result of adding hand-painted tiles to a mosaic provides added depth and beauty.

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**Making the Tiles**
Polymer clay is fantastic; conditioning it is not! Many people use a pasta machine to condition their clay; I prefer the agony of doing it by hand. Once the clay is conditioned, you are on your way to rolling out a slab of clay and cutting individual tiles of all sizes and shapes.

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**1. Condition Clay**
Take a hunk of white original Sculpey and knead (condition) it in your hands until it's nice and soft.

**2. Roll Out Clay**
Spread wax paper out on your work surface, and, using a rolling pin, flatten the clay to a slab that is about ¼” (3mm) thick.

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**MATERIALS**
- original white Sculpey
- wax paper
- rolling pin
- non-serrated knife
- clay blade
- quilt square rubber stamps
- two roasting pans
- binder clips
- gel medium
- color photocopy of an image
- acrylic paint
- paintbrush
- rag or paper towels
- detail brush
- metallic gel pen
- mica powders (Pearl Ex)
- Rub 'n Buff
- dimensional paint (Scribbles)
- crystals or rhinestones
- jewelry glue
- ink pad (StazOn)
- rubber stamps
- Distress inks (Ranger)
- Sculpey, Fimo glaze or matte varnish

*(From Mixed Media Mosaics by Laurie Mika, 2007; Courtesy of CreateMixedMedia.com)*
3. **Cut strips**
   Use a non-serrated knife to make strips of varying widths.

4. **Cut tiles**
   With a clay blade, divide the strips of clay into a variety of individual tiles.

5. **Score in design**
   Now, you can add scored detail lines, such as harlequin diamonds, stripes, or whatever you like, using the non-serrated knife.

6. **Stamp clay**
   You can stamp images into the clay at this stage if you like, but use simple stamps without fine detail because this type of clay is soft and a bit sticky, and small details can be lost. If you're going to do several stamped tiles, it's easy to make them in a row.

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Knife or blade? A knife is easier for cutting long sections from the clay because you have more leverage. A knife also makes better score lines because it is thicker. A blade makes cleaner lines, for cutting individual tiles apart, but it is too fine for scoring detailed lines, which would disappear with baking.

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(From Mixed Media Mosaics by Laurie Mika, 2007; Courtesy of CreateMixedMedia.com)
Bake polymer clay

Clamp the two pans together with binder clips. Pre-heat your regular oven and bake according to the instructions. (A toaster oven you designate for clay projects would also work.) Note: When the tiles are done baking, be sure to take the pan outside to vent. Set it down, remove one clip and knock the pan to the side, but be careful not to inhale the fumes as they escape! Leave the pan outside until cool. When cool, drop the pan from a few inches up to loosen any tiles that may have stuck to the bottom.

Prepare to bake

Fill a roasting pan with the tiles to prepare for baking. Make sure the tiles are not touching. Next, take a second pan of the same size and invert it over the filled pan.

Square up

Then, use the clay blade to square up the individual tiles.

Pop air bubbles

If you see air bubbles form on the tiles, lightly squash them with your finger.

Create sections

It’s easy to create the look of several tiles together, using just a single tile. Section a longer tile out into a few separate areas, and then add scored designs to the individual sections.

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