

Learn How To Create Realistic Figures in Polymer Clay

Polymer People: An Artist's Method of Sculpting the Adult Head in Polymer Clay

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P O L Y M E R



P E O P L E

An Artist's Method of Sculpting the Adult Head in Polymer Clay

Diane Dobson Barton



<http://www.artist-how-to.com>

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the Adult Head in Polymer Clay”**

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Table of Contents

6	Introduction
7	Tools Sculpting Tools / Using Your Tools / Reference Photos / Work Surface
11	Basics Proportions / Ethnicity / Color / Conditioning / Curing / Glues
16	Beginning Core / Basic Shape
19	Method One Ear / Nose / Mouth / Eye
28	Method Two
44	Finishing touches Smoothing / Blemishes / Hair / Painting / Signing
48	Eyes Making Eyes / Eye Color / Inserting Eyes
51	Teeth Making Teeth / Setting teeth / Tongue
54	Gallery
55	Reference Common Errors / Trouble Shooting / Polymer Clay Comparison / Sources
61	Index

Tools



Clay

In order to begin forming the head we of course will need some polymer clay. You may have a favorite blend or brand of clay you prefer to use. Super Sculpey is my personal favorite for this type of project, because of its price, translucency, and the way it handles. It also cures up to a nice strong solid material. I know first hand that it is possible to drop a finished piece without so much as a crack or chip.

If you are new to polymer clay, or just unsure of the best brand to use, I suggest you buy a few small 2-3 oz bars of different

brands and test them to see which works best for you. **See the Reference Section for brand comparison and sources.*

Sculpting Tools



The tools you use can be as basic as a cuticle stick, wooden skewer, dental tools or hand crafted to fit your own individual needs. I suggest you try out a few and fill in with your own handcrafted tools as needed. I have witnessed a cuticle stick, along with a knitting needle tool, can help accomplish amazing things. It along with a knitting needle to smooth the surface is a wonderful place to start.

Knitting needles come in a variety of sizes and are relatively inexpensive, and are used to make **Knitting Needle Tools**. You can keep your eyes open at garage sales and thrift stores, and find knitting needles practically free.

1. Cut down the knitting needle to about 3 inches from the tip, with a Dremel tool or metal clippers.

2. Add a custom handle from scrap polymer clay and you have a tool that will give you many years of use. The handle itself, if created very smooth and round, can be used to smooth out larger surfaces such as cheeks. I recommend you have at least two different sizes of knitting needle tools. Begin with the sizes 6 and 10.

A **Needle Tool**, made from a sewing needle, is used on finer detail than a knitting needle tool can perform.

1. Make custom handles
2. Insert a sewing needle(s) of chosen size to give you a tool for minute detail.
3. Have your tools work double duty, create different textures at the opposite end to create hair, or other often used textures.
4. Once you create the handles/tools from polymer clay, cure according to manufacturers directions.

Below are ways to use your tools. This is only a sampling, once you begin working with the clay you will find other things that work well for you.

Using Your Tools



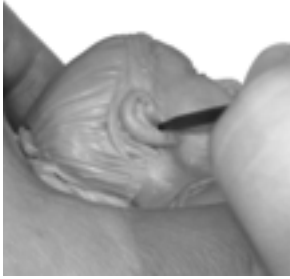
Roll the smooth handle of a tool across the surface to flatten.



A cuticle stick is used here to help create lines and 'nudge' the clay into shape.



A cuticle stick is just the right size for use in creating the lips. In most cases using either side of the stick, round or flat, will create just the right shape.



A knitting needle's uses are almost endless. Here it is used to help define an ear.



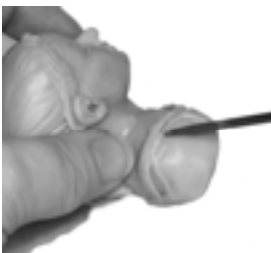
A small sized knitting needle tool used to refine the hairline.



Depending upon the size of needle used it can smooth a surface as shown above with a smooth handle, or create impression in the hair, eyes or clothing.



If you press the side of the needle tool into the clay rather than drawing into it, you will get a smoother line without 'crumbs'.



If you have only one tool, a knitting needle tool is a must have!

Hammer

Have a hammer that you feel comfortable using. If you have little forearm strength a small hammer is the best way to go. It also stores easier than a larger one.

Reference Photos

Once you work your way through the examples shown in this publication, reference photos are a step toward making sculptures that resemble people you know. Ideally you would have images showing at least three views; straight forward, profile and three-quarters.



Print or have printed images large enough that you can see what you are looking at. For the exercises here, fitting all three onto one 8.5 x 11 sheet of copy paper works well. You do not need to have expensive prints. Simple black and white photocopies, or personal computer printer work well.

You will be using these as reference points to look closely at persons features so that you can replicate them in the clay. So the more angles you can get from your model the better off you will be.

Work Surface



I prefer to work on a glass cutting board that is flipped over to the smooth side. You can find them at most all discount department stores. Again, be on the look out at garage sales and thrift stores for possible work surfaces that would work well for you. Remember to choose something that is manageable and easy to carry, or stored.

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