



How to make
beautiful plates and platters
with



pottery forms

What is MDF and how do I best take care of bART pottery forms?

bART pottery forms are made from premium quality MDF*, so they can last for thousands of uses. You just have to make sure to wipe them clean with a damp cloth if necessary and let them dry naturally in between each use. Usually, a drying time of 2-3 hours is sufficient.

If you leave your form damp for too long without letting it dry after use, there is a chance that the form will develop mould. In this case just wash it off with dish soap and let it dry completely.

Treat the forms with respect, the quite thin edges of the forms can be damaged if dropped.

Store the forms in a dry place so that they are always ready to use.

* Medium-density fibre board—most often known as MDF is a smooth, strong and naturally hydrophilic (water-absorbent) material. All these properties make it ideal for moulding clay. Pottery forms made from MDF are lighter and much more resilient than plaster moulds. Additionally, as many of its components are recycled, MDF does not put a strain on the environment.

Which tools do I need?



It will help if you have the following:

A turntable, a roller, a wire cutter, a surform rasp, plastic ribs, a knife, a needle, a plasterboard or multiplex board, a half rib paper and a bag with sand or rice.

What do I have to do for great results?

- **Choose the right clay.**

For small pieces we suggest using clay with at least 25% 0 - 0.2 mm chamotte and for large pieces clay with at least 25% 0 - 0.5 mm chamotte.

- **Roll your slab.**



Roll out a slab with a slab roller or a rolling pin and rolling guides. While rolling turn the clay slab regularly a quarter turn so that the clay gets stretched in all directions. You can use a smooth cloth under the clay in order to be able to lift the clay slab easier when it is still very wet.

The thickness of the clay slab depends on the type of clay you use in combination with your working method.

We suggest 4 - 6 mm for the small and shallow forms (e.g., Mignons, smallest Geo form, C1 of the Mix&Match) and 7-10 mm for the deep and bigger forms (e.g. bigger Geo forms, Sea Shells, the rest of the Mix&Match).

The small and shallow shapes are also suitable for use as a pressure mold on a foam plate (foam rubber). In this case you can use slightly thinner slabs.

- **Compress your slab**

Compress the clay slab very well on both sides using ribs, in two different directions. This is an essential step to avoid warping and cracking at a later stage.



- **Rest your slab**

Place your clay slab on a plasterboard on a multiplex board so that the moisture can pull out of the clay. The slab will become a bit firmer and easier to use.

Depending on the temperature and humidity and of course the type of the clay this can take from 20 - 30 minutes to 2 - 3 hours. Your slab should become soft leather hard. Cut out a shape that can cover your form. bART pottery forms are designed to be used without a foot. However, if you would like to add a foot, cut at this point some stripes of clay to use as a foot.

- **Decorate your slab**

At this stage you can add texture, decorate with mono-printing, apply underglaze transfers or tissue transfers etc.

- **Drape your slab on the form**

Drape your slab with the textured/decorated side down onto the form and press gently and evenly with your palms on the top and the sides to remove any folds and push out any air trapped underneath.



Use a roller and the ribs again to compress the clay slab onto the form firmly and evenly. Take your time to form your clay slab around the form without forcing it or pressing too hard.





Work from top to bottom until the slab takes the shape of the form.



Cut the excess clay with a wire cutter.

- **Define the lip.**

With the form still in the clay, flip it on a plasterboard or on a multiplex board. Using a surform rasp clean the edges and smooth any uneven areas. Compress the exterior of the lip with the ribs.



- **Add a foot to the form**

If you opt to add a foot, flip the form again on a plasterboard on a multiplex board. Score the area and add a little bit of water both on the plate and the strip for the foot and attach them pressing firmly. Clean the places where the foot meets the body on all sides.

- **Remove the form**

Let the piece set to stiff leather hard stage. It should now be able to hold its shape. To release the form from the clay, place two fingers in the two round holes and lift it, guiding the clay out of the form with the other hand. It can sometimes stick a little bit, so do this gently and check whether the clay is detached everywhere.



- **Smoothen the lip.**



Use the rasp and the ribs to further smoothen the lip.

- **Carving and underglazes**

Now is a great time to add underglazes or carve into piece if this is part of your process.

- **Cover and let dry.**



Put a piece of paper in your plate and put a bag of sand or rice on top of it. Cover it loosely with a sheet of plastic and let it dry slowly. Once completely dry, it can be bisque fired.

pottery forms



Handmade and unique

bART started in 2020 by Alexandra and Bart. Bart had been making pottery forms for Alexandra for years. When she showed some of her plates and platters on Facebook, fellow potters asked her where she got the forms from. This question was asked so often that we eventually decided to make the Pebble series (Kiezels) available through facebook groups.

bART aims to make unique pottery forms. It can be a single form designed by the customer or a series of forms developed by us. All forms are handmade in Bart's workshop. The forms have been developed to be used with clay slabs. Als je nog vragen hebt mail ons.

If you still have questions, please feel free to mail us.

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Stay tuned with our social media for handy videos and tips on how to best use our forms.

 <https://www.facebook.com/bARTkeramiekvormen/>

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