

# Hearty-Clay & Press Molds

by Dianna Effner

Technique Sheet - Molds available from Expressions 800 452-2480

I'd like to tell everyone about a wonderful clay that I recently discovered. It's an air dry clay called Hearty Clay. After working with this clay enough to learn a little bit about it's characteristics, I must tell you that I'm really delighted with it. I love the smooth, soft velvety texture and it's feather light quality makes it ideal for things like Xmas Ornaments and wearable art. It comes in white and 12 other colors. The colors can be mixed together to make any color you desire. It dries with a matte surface that looks a bit like suede. I can think of so many things that I could make for dolls using this clay and of course it's perfect for making small dolls. I plan to develop a series of molds to use with this clay. Some of my ideas are already in the works. My first project was to make a miniature doll for my 10 inch doll, Little Lou. Little Lou's story tells of an old doll in her great grandmothers collection named "Antonia" who was made in Italy of wool felt when great grandma was a little girl. That was the inspiration behind the creation of the little "cloth doll" mold.

Using a press mold is quite a bit different than pouring a mold. It takes a bit of practice as any new medium does. I want to share some of the things I've learned from working with the Air Clay. I'm going to call it Air Clay because it's so light and soft and because it is an air dry clay. I think there are other similar clays available. So rather than refer to it by brand name I'll just call it Air Clay.

I'm going to use the "Flesh" color. It comes in an air tight foil package. It requires a little bit of kneading to condition it before you begin to make something. Air clay is always drying out whenever it is exposed to the air so it's important to keep it wrapped up tightly until you're ready to use it. After I remove it from the foil wrapper I keep it wrapped in plastic wrap inside of a zip lock bag. I moisten a small sponge and put it in the bag because even when the clay is wrapped well there is some drying going on. The moisture from the sponge will help keep the clay moist for quite a long time. If it does lose moisture over time it becomes more firm to the touch. I then just work a little bit of water into it to restore it to it's original consistency. If it becomes completely dry and hard it cannot be restored.

It is important to note that if you get a little bit too much moisture in the clay it will become too sticky and it will tend to stick in the mold. Experience will tell you how much you can moisten it, but basically it should feel velvety like it does when you first take it out of the package.

I start with the head mold. I take some Air Clay and knead it briefly to even out the consistency. I take a little more than I need to make a head because I've learned that in the case of pressing the head it just works better to start with a little extra.



## The Head

Step 1. Open the Head mold and set the back half and the neck plug aside.

Step 2. Take a piece of clay big enough to form a ball about 1" in diameter. Form a smooth ball by rolling the clay between your palms.

Step 3. Make a teardrop shape by rolling the ball into an elongated shape and carefully shaping one end into a dull point. Take care that the clay is smooth and doesn't develop creases or cracks as you shape it.

Note: I have found that if the clay seem a little stiff or dry adding a drop or two of Water based China Paint medium will condition the clay making it softer without making it sticky. (Glycerin would probably work, too.)

Step 4. Place the point down into the nose and chin area of the head mold. Press the clay straight down into the mold allowing it to fill the face. Shape the back of the head with your fingers and work the excess into the neck plug area.

Step 5. Press the back half of the mold straight down onto the front half matching the keys for perfect alignment. Press firmly and remove the top or back half. The excess clay will have squeezed into the neck plug area and onto the flat surface of the mold.

Step 6. Use a round toothpick and cut off the clay that is in the neck plug area. Trim the excess clay that has spread onto the flat surface of the mold.

Step 7. Fit the neck plug into the mold pushing it up into the head taking care to match the keys on the plug with the key holes on the mold.

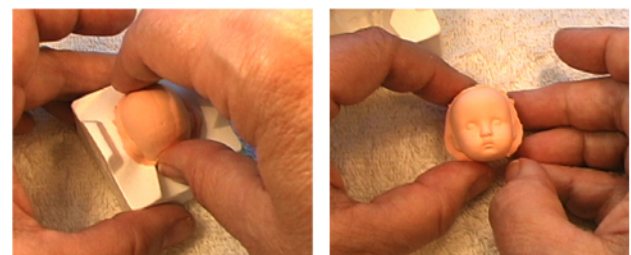
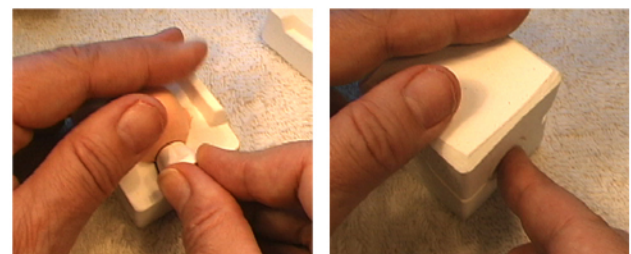
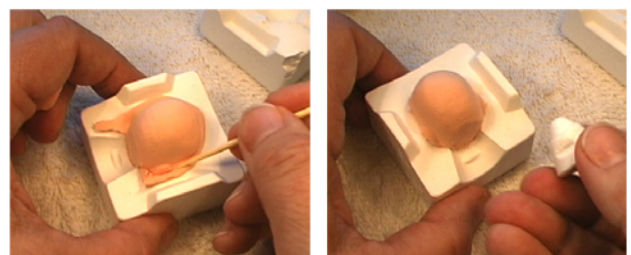
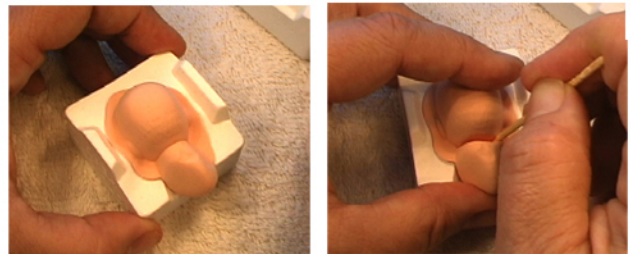
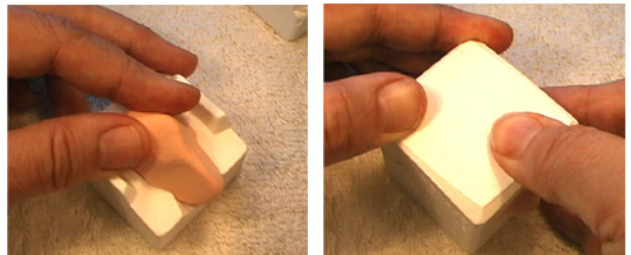
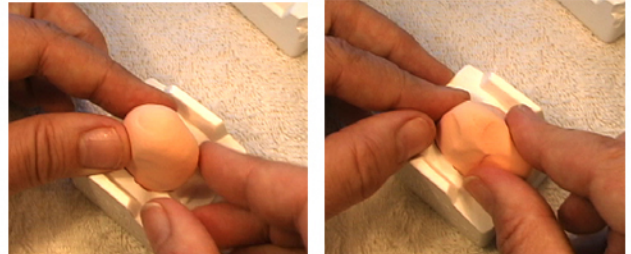
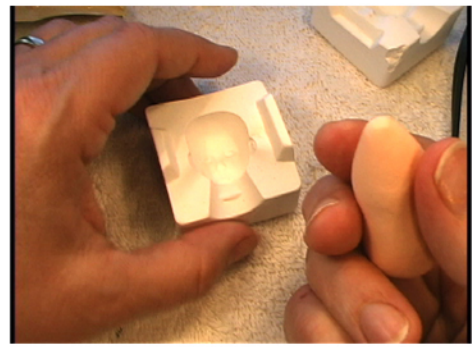
Step 8. Place the back half of the mold onto the front half taking care to keep the neck plug in place. Press firmly and remove the back half.

Step 9. If there is only a little bit of excess clay surrounding the head you may remove the head from the mold now. If there is quite a bit you should trim off the excess and press again as before. When done set head aside.

Note: There are a number of ways to remove the excess on the parting lines. I prefer to wait until the piece is somewhat dry so I don't distort it or mess it up while I'm attempting to remove the excess.

## The Torso

Step 10. Open the mold and try to gauge how much clay it will take to fill the torso mold. Then take the piece and roll it into a smooth ball. Roll into a slightly elongated shape and turn a neck by turning the shape with one hand and shaping a "neck" with the thumb and fore finger of the other hand. Place in one half of the mold shaping the clay to conform to the contours of the mold.



Step 11. Fit the top half of the mold to the bottom half taking care to align the "keys" on the mold and press firmly.

Step 12. Remove the top half and trim with the toothpick. Repeat if necessary.

Step 13. Remove the clay torso from the mold and set aside.

### The Legs

Step 14. It's best to shape one leg at a time. Try to gauge how much clay will form one leg. Then take the ball and roll it into a long piece. Roll it allowing a small bulge to form on one end and shape a "foot" shape with fingers.

Step 15. Fit the leg shape into the mold for the back of the leg.

Step 16. Press the front half of the leg mold straight down matching the keys for fit.

Step 17. Remove the top half of the mold and trim away the excess with a toothpick.

Step 18. Press again as before. Repeat as necessary. Remove the leg from the mold and set aside.

Note: If several presses are necessary to reduce the excess clay in the mold, remove the leg before trimming and carefully replace it in the mold, then trim and press again. The leg will then be much easier to remove from the mold after the final pressing.

Step 19. Repeat steps 14 through 18 for the other leg

### The Arms

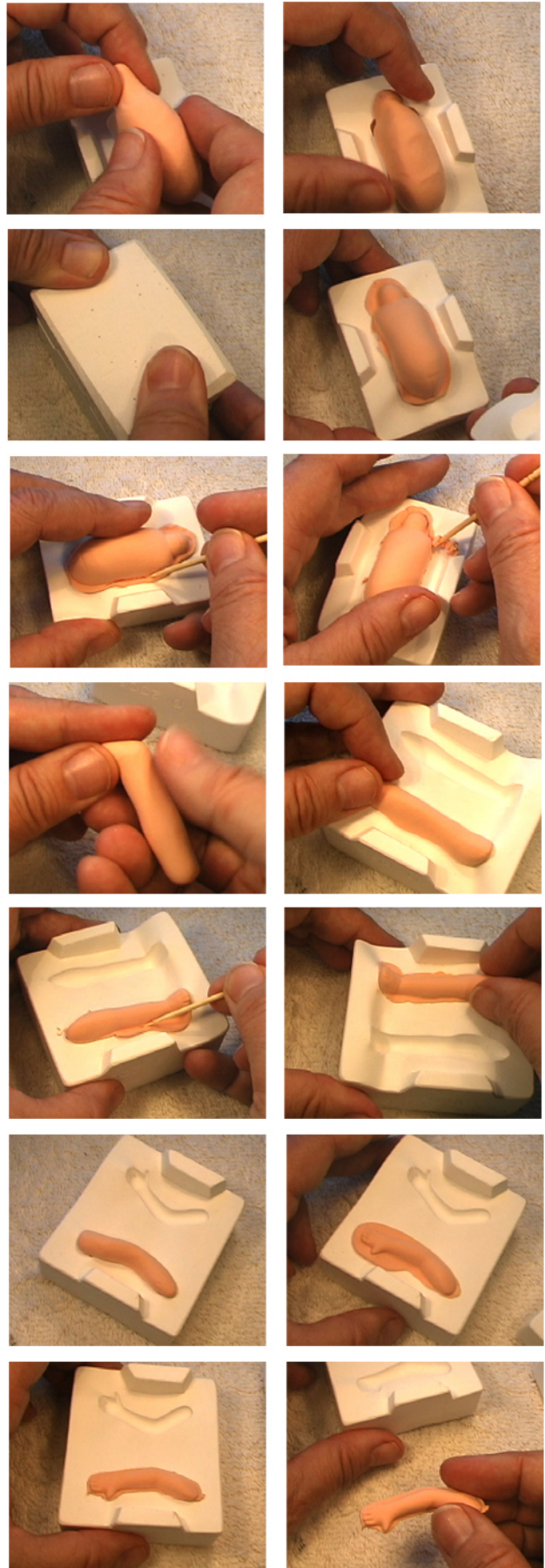
Step 20. Do these one at a time as with the legs. Roll a small piece the size of the arm so that one end forms a slight bulge. Place the piece in the arm mold with the bulged end aligned with the hand.

Step 21. Line up the top half of the mold with the bottom and press down firmly. Remove the top half.

Step 22. Trim excess clay with the toothpick.

Step 23. Repeat pressing and trimming as necessary. Remove the arm from the mold and set aside.

Step 24. Repeat steps 19 through 23 for the other arm.



When the parts are partially dry you can make a channel for inserting the pipe cleaner sections by inserting a tooth pick into the clay. The torso, head and legs are still soft internally the next day after pressing but the arms, being smaller, may be too hard by then. It's probably best to make the holes for the pipe cleaner joints soon after pressing the parts. You can clean away the excess clay at the parting lines at least enough so that you can check to see how the pieces are going to fit together before making the holes. If the clay is stiff enough you can trim with a razor blade or sharp scalpel. If the clay is still fresh you can roll the line smooth with a wet toothpick and rub with a little water.

When the parts are completely dry to the touch you can sand away the parting lines with sand paper or an emery board. When all the parts are smooth you can assemble the doll.

Try fitting the pieces together and joining them with the sections of pipe cleaner without glue so the pieces can be taken apart before the final assembly. It would be easier to make the socks and shoes on the legs before assembling the doll.

### Socks

Step 1. Roll out a very thin piece of white clay. Cut a strip the width of the stocking.

Step 2. Moisten the leg where you plan to apply the stocking. Wrap the piece around the leg and trim the excess with small scissors.

Step 3. Roll smooth downward thinning the edges and covering part of the top of the foot. Shape and smooth the upper edge with the toothpick.

Step 4. Repeat for the other foot.

### Shoes

Mix clay to the color of your choice or make in white and paint later.

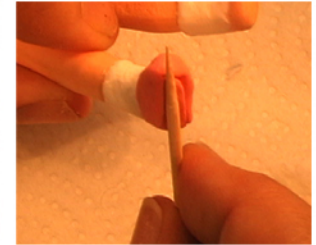
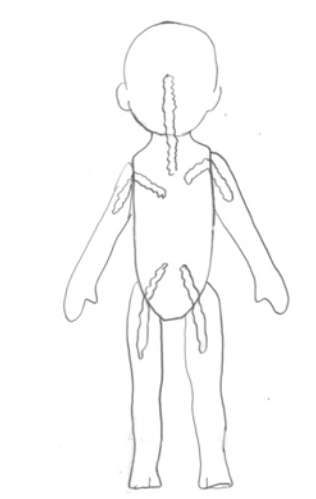
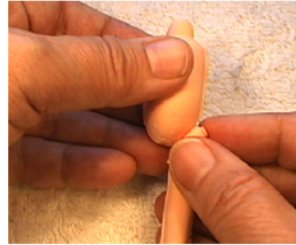
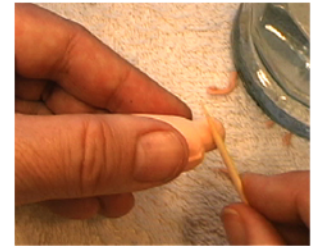
Step 1. Moisten the shoe area of the foot with a wet brush or Q-Tip.

Step 2. Make a tiny roll of clay about 1 inch long and about 1/8 inch thick. Flatten the roll slightly.

Step 3. Match the middle of the flattened roll with the top of the toes. Press the roll along the sides of the foot forming the sides of the shoe and bring the pieces together at the back of the foot. Trim excess with a small pair of scissors.

Step 4. Continue to roll and shape the shoe with the tooth pick. Roll excess to the bottom of the shoe forming the bottom of the shoe. You can add another piece of contrasting color for the sole or detail the edge of the sole by pressing in a line with the tooth pick.

Step 5. Add straps for Mary Jane style or any other embellishments you desire.



## Painting Instructions:

### The Eyes

Step 1. Apply a line of Sienna Brown with the tiny detail brush to the top of each eye as shown.

Step 2. Wet the shadow area above each eye and stipple the color out into that area with the tip of the blender.

Step 3. Add a fine line of Black with the tiny detail brush along the top of each eye.

Step 4. Work up some white paint and paint the area of each eye using the Shaper brush.

Step 5. When White is dry Paint the Iris of each eye in blue or the color of your choice.

Note: The brown in this set is Sienna. For a darker brown add black. I like to add Black to one half of the block of brown paint in order to have 2 tones of brown. Turn the head for visibility and control.

Step 6. Paint a darker shade by adding more paint or a darker color under the lid as shown.

Step 7. Paint the Black Pupil in the center of each Iris.

### The Mouth

Step 8. Paint the line where the lips come to together in a mixture of red with a little black

Step 9. Shape upper lip in light red

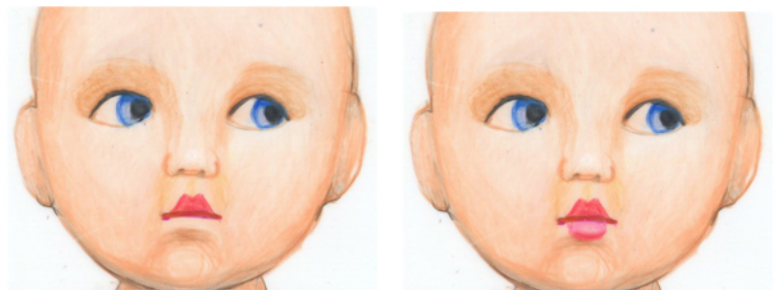
Step 10. Shape lower lip in red mixed with white for a lighter shade. Accent the lower edge of the lower lip in red.

### The Blush

Step 11. Moisten the cheeks with a damp brush or Q-Tip

Step 12. Put a dot of Red color into the center of the wet area. Blend and soften the cheek area with the Small Blender.

You can Blush the knees, ears, elbows, fingers or whatever you desire in a similar fashion.



## Hair (Using pre curled hair for miniatures )

Separate and pull apart the fibers from side to side to about an inch wide. Cut to desired length. Apply glue to the head one section at a time. Press the sections into the wet glue.

Cut a section about 3 inches long and tie with a thread in the middle wrapping around several times. Separate and spread the fibers on each side of the middle. Apply glue to the sides of the head. Arrange the top piece section and press into the glue on the sides of the head. Blend the sides, back and front by picking with a needle. Trim and style.

If you want bangs cut a short section for the bangs. About half the width would be plenty. Apply glue to the front section. Press the bangs into the glue area.

