

Basic Clay Techniques

Clay can be shaped and manipulated in many different ways. Below are 3 common hand-building techniques that ceramic artists use.

Pinch- Take a small "golf-ball" sized piece of clay. Put your thumb in the middle to make an indentation. Keeping your thumb on the inside and using your fingers like a claw; start squeezing the clay in an upward, circular motions. *Create a small bowl or bird's nest.*



Coil- Roll out long thin coils or "snakes" of clay. Stack your coils on top of each other and experiment with how you can begin to join them to make a shape. *Try to create a form that starts small, gets bigger and then ends smaller.*



Slab- Using your rolling pin, create a flat slap of clay that is about $\frac{1}{4}$ of an inch thick. From the slap cut out 4 smaller squares. Using slip and a scoring tool, *join your squares at their edges to create a box.*



Remember, how we shape and treat our materials at every stage of the process communicates our artistic vision in the final product.