

# HOW TO GUIDE

## a step by step guide to belly casting



# 1

### MOULDING

#### You will need:

A private space with access to warm water; drop sheets, plastic aprons or garbage bags - cut join off to make a skirt to protect Mums lower clothes and feet, Sorboline, Vaseline, scissors, towels or disposable dry wipes

3 or 4 rolls of 20cm wide Gypsona plaster bandage - used for broken limbs.

- Prep the space - heat or aircon a private space. Put drop sheets over floor and furniture.
- A glass of water and a chair for your mum - she might feel dizzy, 1 in 10 mums do! Prepare half a bucket of warm water, Sorboline and Vaseline.
- Cut enough bandages for 3 layers in different directions over belly and breasts - approx 4 x small 25 cms, 12 x medium 40 cms, 9 x large 65-70cms and 4 x larger bandages if she's a big mum.
- Put them behind the water so you don't drip on them during molding. Talk her through the process to make her feel at ease - warm your hands under the tap! She can help you cover her breasts and belly with Sorboline. Use Vaseline for any

'snail trail' or hairy bits! Cover her chest and around past her sides.

- **Ready to start moulding - the first layer of plaster bandage is always important for a good print.**
- Run the bandage through the water, let it drip off a little.
- Place over the body and massage plaster out of the cloth smoothing out air bubbles.
- You can add water by dipping your hands again.
- **Start with small pieces over each breast, trace the natural curve *\*don't go under them!***
- **Start in the middle with longer pieces and work towards the sides, let it buckle in places to capture the breast curve.**

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- Mold around the sides and layer the bandage down to under the belly - overlapping slightly. Include the hip bones then it will stand up on its own.
- Apply second and third layers in the **opposite directions**.
- **Wait for the plaster bandage to dry, around 5 mins.**
- Tap around the cast to make sure its evenly covered. She might say '*it feels like its coming off*' Offer to take a photo before you remove it.
- Run your hands down inside to separate from the body, and get her help by moving back out of the airlock.
- Hold it up to the light checking for thin spots - put more bandage over these on the outside.
- **Place the mould, gently supported, to cure for at least 1 hour.** Do not pour plaster water down the sink - toss it outside or let plaster settle in bucket. Wait 20 mins & drain water off - wrap plaster crumbs in used plastic to throw in the bin.



## 2

### RESIST

#### You will need:

Table  
Drop sheets  
A 5cm paintbrush  
Detergent  
Small bucket of water

- This step is about making a barrier between bandage and poured plaster. Without this they stick together.
- Squeeze enough detergent into the belly and fully coat all the inside surface. Set aside to dry for at least 1 hour. **Note:** *This is best done within a day of pouring.*

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## POURING

### You will need:

A table - best outside with access to water, drop sheets, 2 buckets, long rubber gloves, face masks, scissors.

A beanbag or carton filled with crumpled newspaper to support round belly shape.

6-7 kgs casting plaster per full belly cast - more with arms, hands and shoulders. 20kg bags are cheapest \$20-23 in hardware stores.

- **Fill 2 clean buckets 2/3 with cold water.**
- **Wearing a face mask** pour 1/3 of bag of casting plaster or 6-7 kgs steadily into one bucket until an island forms. Seal up the bag before removing your face mask.
- **Wait for several minutes** whilst tapping the sides of the bucket - if you stir now it will go lumpy.
- Using a gloved hand, feel if the plaster has taken up all the water and has no dry lumps in the bottom of the bucket, gently stir, like a washing machine, to mix plaster evenly into water - it should feel like batter or whipping cream.
- **Let it sit for another 5 minutes** – it will settle. If it feels too thin, you can now scoop water from the surface with a cup.  
**\*Note - Take water off to thicken mix – don't add more plaster.** After the second stir it should be in suspension and slowly start to thicken - may take 10-15 minutes.
- Use the water in the second bucket to wash hands after stirring and removing air bubbles.
- Settle the detergent painted belly mould into a bean bag or carton with crumpled paper - set it level to hold liquid plaster without spilling over and support sides and bowl without it touching the tabletop below.
- When the plaster has thickened pour it steadily into the belly mould **avoiding air bubbles.**
- Quickly pour the rinsing water in to wash the plaster bucket - if you have time its much easier to cleanup the bucket before the plaster sets.
- As the plaster in the belly thickens pull or push it up the sides and spread it evenly over the inside of the mould to a 3 cms thickness allover. **\*Keep the edges thick; make sure the sections between and under the breasts are well covered, avoid trapping air pockets.**
- Scoop plaster out of breasts and belly - can be back filled later if its too thin.
- **Once the plaster has become crumbly its work time is over.** Scratch the mums name in the back of the belly - leave it 15 mins before moving to cure overnight.

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## SCULPTING

### You will need:

A table - best outside with access to water.

Drop sheets , 2 buckets, long rubber gloves, a knife *not serrated*, plasterer's knife, a rasp, scourer sponges.

A beanbag or large carton filled with crumpled newspaper to support round belly shape; a small amount of casting plaster and container to mix it in.

A paint brush, a dustpan and broom

- **Overnight is best**, at least a few hours after pouring, support the belly cast in the beanbag and peel off the bandage layer.
- **Stand it on the table and snap off any thin bits around the edge.**
- Half fill a bucket with water, use the other bucket to sweep plaster crumbs off the work table as they build up.
- **Use a knife or rasp** to carve the plaster edge back to a sweet clean curve and scrape off any excess on the surface.
- **The edges can be smoothed** and slightly rounded with a green scratchy sponge, sand the surface in a circular motion - wash the plaster out and sponge off excess.
- A small amount of plaster mixed to the same consistency can be brushed into large air bubbles and holes – or where too thin add more in the back, especially the edges where it will be picked up and to help it stand up.
- **Smooth over any repair jobs** with sponge before new plaster sets hard.
- Once you're happy with its shape and smoothness stand it in the sun or by a fire to dry for a few days. It has to loose the 2/3 bucket of water and will become lighter and ring like a bell when dry enough.
- **Apply 2 undercoats** - acrylic ceiling white, this will fill small air bubbles and even up the surface, making a good base for painting with artists' acrylic paint.