



Child Hand Casting Kit

Procedural Instructions

This kit is recommended for the hands of children age 6 months to approximately 6 years.

THE POSE

In general a more relaxed hand makes a more attractive hand cast.

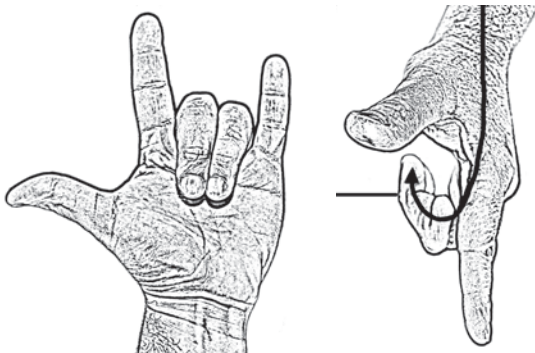
Certain poses are very difficult for alginate lifecasts:

The Fist- This is difficult because it can be hard to get the large ball of the fist out through the “wrist hole” in the alginate mold. This generally isn’t a very attractive pose anyway and isn’t recommended for first time lifecasters.

The ASL “I Love You” sign- This pose has the index and pinky fingers pointing up and the middle and ring fingers bent in toward the palm (shown below). This is extremely difficult because it is nearly impossible to get the casting stone to flow “up” into these fingers in the mold. Usually these fingers end up looking like they’ve been cut off. NOT recommended for first-time lifecasters.

Any pose where one or more of the **fingers are bent MORE than 90°**- There are a lot of these and all are difficult for the same reason as the “I Love You” sign. If fingers are bent more than 90°, it is essential that they touch the palm during the molding process. This way the casting stone can flow down and any air bubbles can escape through the palm.

For the same reason, “holding hands” can be a problem, make sure that the fingertips of both hands are pressed up against the other hand as in the picture below.



The hand can be holding an object in the mold. The object is left behind in the alginate when the hand is removed and when the sculpture is finished, the stone hand is holding the object. Little cars and baseballs are always popular.

Two warnings:

1. The object will not be able to be removed from the sculpture without breaking it and,
2. The object cannot be made of a porous material or the alginate will stick to it.

It is possible for the hand to be wearing a ring or two as long as they are pretty flat. No big stones or intricate texture as these will damage the mold when the hand is removed.

GETTING READY

You’ll need a table that is a good height for the child to comfortably put their hands into the bucket. On the floor works well for most children or on a low coffee table.

Do not let the alginate get on any good clothes or on the carpet as it will be difficult to remove.

Practice the pose several times so everybody know exactly what they’ll be doing.

MIXING THE ALGINATE

1. Use the thermometer to adjust your water temperature to about 80°F and measure out 3 cups water (24 floz.)
2. Open the bag of alginate and roll down the sides about half way.
3. Pour the water into the powder and roll the sides back up.
4. Encircle the bag with your index finger and thumb down at the top of the water powder mixture. This will push out any extra air from the bag.
5. Grab the bag at the top very firmly.
6. Lay the bag down on a tabletop and begin rubbing and massaging the mixture. Push with the flat of your hand against the table. Pay special attention to the bottom corners of the bag and the neck of the bag near where you are holding it closed.
7. It may be necessary to squeeze out some more air after about 20 seconds. Continue mixing.
8. Mix in this way for about 45 seconds.
9. Turn the bag upside down and put the top of the bag into the plastic cup.
10. Squeeze all of the alginate out of the bag into the plastic cup. If you do this carefully the alginate level in your cup should be more than 3/4 full. Don't take too much time with this.
11. The alginate should be light pink at this point. If it is already white, hurry on to the next step.



MAKING THE MOLD

12. Put the cup down and have the child put their hand into the alginate mixture and immediately bring it out again.
13. With your fingertips, rub the alginate into the child's palm, between their fingers and around the fingernails. This helps to eliminate air bubbles.
14. Re-insert the hand and have them push their hand all the way to the bottom of the cup. Then have them come up about 1/2 inch. Watch that the hand doesn't touch the inside of the cup. It will be very easy to see this because you will see the skin through the plastic.
15. As small bubbles rise to the surface of the alginate, pop them with you finger.
16. When the alginate is no longer sticky on the surface, wait another 30 seconds before starting to remove the hand.
17. Break the "seal" around the forearm and have the child start wiggling their hand and fingers back and forth. We need to get them to feel "air" all the way down to all their fingertips before beginning to pull up and out of the mold.
18. When pulling out of the mold, **SLOWER IS MUCH BETTER THAN FASTER**. Fast hand removal can damage and distort the mold leading to a bad casting. The hand should be almost completely clean when it is removed. No alginate should be sticking to the hand. If you turn the mold upside down, pieces of alginate should not fall out. If they do, its because the child was moving their fingers during the critical few seconds when the alginate was setting.

IF ANYTHING HAS GONE WRONG, NOW IS THE TIME TO START OVER AGAIN WITH THE SECOND BAG OF ALGINATE. Just pull the alginate out of the cup and start over.

**DO NOT WAIT TO DO THE CASTING PART.
PROCEED IMMEDIATELY FOR BEST RESULTS.**

POURING THE CAST

19. Open the LiquiStone bag and roll down the sides about half way.
20. Measure out 8 fluid ounces (1 cup) of tap water and pour it into the bag.
21. Squeeze out the extra air like you did before, grab the neck of the bag tightly and mix like you mixed the alginate. Pay particular attention to the bottom corners.
22. With a pair of scissors, cut off about 1-inch of the bottom corner of the bag. Be careful not to spill the stone mixture.
23. Pour a small amount (about 1/3 full) of the stone mixture into the mold. Set down the bag.
24. Tip the mold over so that the finger holes are pointing down. Tap the side of the plastic cup a dozen times or so. You are doing this to work the stone mixture down into those fingers. No air can remain in the finger holes or the casting will not come out well. If a little stone mixture drips out, don't worry about it.
25. Add more stone mixture until the mold is almost full. Tap the side of the plastic cup a dozen more times. This drives out any trapped air bubbles.
26. Fill the mold the rest of the way with the stone mixture. Tap the sides of the plastic cup again several dozen times.
27. Wait for at least 1 hour, but not more than 3 hours before unmolding.



UNMOLDING

28. With a pair of scissors, make a small cut in the top edge of the plastic mold bucket. Tear the plastic cup off the alginate.
29. With a small kitchen knife, begin cutting the alginate away from your hand cast. Do this slowly and carefully because the fingers in the casting are delicate and can easily break if too much force is applied. Be especially careful when removing the alginate from around the fingers. Take the alginate off in very small pieces.
30. You may need to use a small tool like a toothpick to remove the last small traces of alginate from in between the fingers.

CLEANING UP THE CASTING

There are three types of imperfections common in baby hand castings.

1. Completely Missing Fingers- caused by not getting stone mixture into the finger parts of the mold.
2. Distorted Fingers- caused by the child moving their fingers during the critical few seconds when the alginate was setting or held onto some alginate when the hand was being removed.
3. Surface Imperfections- these take the form of bubbles (innies or outies) or little “rivers” in the stone cast- usually on the back of the hand or wrist area.

Problems #1 and #2 are difficult to fix and require resculpting the fingers involved. Problem #3 can be fixed quite easily and this is what we will concentrate on here.

31. “Outie” bubbles sit on the surface like a little round bump. Most of the time they are in anatomical creases of the palm. Small ones can be found on the fingernails and in the small creases of the knuckles. These all can be carefully removed with a sharp knife by scraping or cutting them off. If you have a magnifying lens, you will be able to see these imperfections better.
32. “Innie” bubbles are like little holes in the surface of the stone. These you must fill with more stone. Here’s how. Wet the surface of the casting. Mix a small amount of LiquiStone (from the small bag). With the enclosed popsicle stick, put a little stone mixture into the hole. Carefully wipe any extra stone off with your fingertip or a small tool.
33. Little “Rivers” in the surface of the stone are caused by water running up between the alginate and the setting stone. They can be fixed the same way we fix “innie” bubbles (described in #30 above).

PAINTING YOUR CASTING

Wait at least three days to allow your casting to dry before painting (at least 5 days in humid climates). You can use any type of paint. Acrylics, oils or spraypaints. Krylon and others make wonderful metallic paints that can make your casting look like bronze, copper, gold, pewter or brass. Be careful with white and gold spraypaints as they have a lot of pigment and can quickly fill in all the details. A clear finish will protect your cast from dirt and skin oils but do not put a clear coat on a metallic finish. It will ruin the metallic effect.

Included in the kit:

- 2 bags of HandGEL alginate... 6 oz. each bag
- 1 bag of LifeCAST stone... 18.4 oz. each bag
- 1 plastic molding cup
- 1 thermometer
- 1 small bag of LifeCAST, small cup and popsicle stick
- Instructions

If you have questions about or problems with this kit, visit our website- www.LifeCastingArts.com or contact the Retail Art Store that sold you this kit.



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