



Another Question from a Customer:

*“Can you give me any tips on casting fingers. I have been trying to cast a little boy’s hands holding a baseball. Each time I remove the mold, there are at least three broken fingers. I have been using a very strong casting material called LifeCAST. I don’t know if when I am getting the mold out of the container that the movement is causing the fingers to break or what. I have casted two other children holding a ball and have had no problems. Also, this weekend, I casted two adults holding hands (one on top of the other). Two of the husband’s fingers were slight away from the other three fingers and those two broke as well. I did let each mold set for 24 hours.”*

Sounds to me like you’re mixing your LifeCAST stone too thin. Too thick and its hard to pour, too thin and its weak when it sets.

A good all around mix ratio for me is about 2.2 to 1 (powder weight to water weight) when mixing the gypsum cement called LifeCAST. You can go a little thinner to facilitate pouring, but you’ll lose final strength.

Also, its generally not a good idea to let the castings stay in the alginate for too long. An hour is the minimum and I always like to remove in no more than 3 hours.

Be careful when removing the alginate. Take it off in small chunks if need be. Try to visualize the pose and be careful especially around children’s fingers.

Another thing that could be going wrong is banging on your molding bucket when trying to get the alginate out. We’ve been drilling a small hole in the bottom of the bucket and putting a piece of tape on it for the molding part, removing the tape and using compressed air to blow the mold out. Doesn’t take much.

Alternatively, you could make a cut down the side of your bucket with a utility knife and tape the cut closed from the outside. It will hold alginate just fine, but when its time to unmold, you just take off the tape and spread the side of the bucket open to break that suction. Should slide out just fine.

This is how we set up the LifeCasting Arts Hand Casting Kit.