



“Torso Casts” come in several sizes. Pregnant belly casts often start below the midline of the breasts and end above the pubis. Some folks want to include the breasts. A full torso would include the shoulders, some of the neck, maybe some of the upper arm, and possibly the hips and pubic area as well. Any more than that and it becomes a full body mold.

The larger the mold, the more advanced a project it is. If this is your first lifecast, don’t even try it. Get some experience with hands, faces, etc. first.

The larger the mold, the more you’re going to have to “engineer” the plaster bandage casing around the alginate. Its got to be very strong or it will bend, break, twist or otherwise distort during removal, handling or pouring of the casting. To keep these very large molds rigid, pieces of wood like 2x4’s can be “plaster bandaged” onto the outside of the plaster bandage casing.

Setting time of the alginate is another crucial issue. The TorsoGEL alginate is really an ideal material for large projects. The long 8-minute set time combined with the warm 80°F water and LifeCasting Arts’ “non-slump” formulation makes these big jobs as easy as they can be.

You’ll need to have at least 2 operators available. For a smallish pregnant belly casting, you’ll need about a 1# to 1 1/2# of TorsoGEL. You’ll need to mix it as quickly as possible which means with a power drill and a jiffy mixer. You’ll also need a lot of plaster bandages. Some people dip gauze into quick setting plaster instead. While this is a less expensive option, it is also a lot messier.

The model must have something to lean on and some way to support their arms. A piece of plywood at a slight angle (10° or so backward with a couple of straps for the model to hold onto works well. We’ve also made a couple of stands with padded armrests on top so the model can rest their arms up comfortably. “Arms up” also lifts the breasts a little which most people think looks better.

The model must also NOT lock their knees. For some reason, standing with locked knees makes people faint. It happens all the time at weddings. Tell the model to let you know if they begin to feel nauseated or queasy or dizzy as these are the first signs. Ask the model how they are feeling several times throughout the procedure. Play some music that the model likes and talk to them throughout.

The whole thing, from the model’s point of view, should take no more than about 20-25 minutes. Your job takes longer.

Two piece (front and back) torso casts become more difficult. First, it is very difficult to assure that the model is in the same pose during the two molds. Any difference will be quite noticeable when the castings are reassembled. Second, the two halves won’t fit together tightly unless both the front and back molds are done at the same time- much more advanced. Third, unless you wish to display them side by side, you’ll have a small engineering job designing and building mounting hardware that allows you to hang the two pieces right next to each other.