

# SYV Children's Museum

## MAKE MINI ADOBE BRICKS

From: New Mexico Historic Sites

<http://nmhistoricsites.org/virtual-classroom/fort-sumnerbosque-redondo-memorial-virtual-classroom/make-and-use-an-adobe-brick-mold>



### What You'll Need:

- 3 scoop sifted dirt
- 2 scoops wood shavings
- One scoop water
- Bucket
- Shovel
- Mold of some sort (can be made of wood, or metal like a muffin tin, or really anything you like, with any shape you like)
- Optional: oil (like cooking spray), cardboard

### What to Do:

- 1) Gather materials. The dirt is best if it is somewhat sandy with some clay. Too much clay and it will be a sticky mess; all sand, it won't stick together. Garden soil or potting soil has organic material and won't work. Gather some wood shavings. These are binders meant to hold the bricks together.
- 2) Mix dirt and wood shavings to a ratio of about 8 - 10 parts soil to 1 part shavings.
- 3) Add water in small amounts at a time. Once you have the mud the consistency of play dough, then take a small ball and press it in your hand. If lots of water squeezes out, add more soil. If it sticks to your hand, your soil has too much clay. If it falls apart when you open your hand, you have too much sand. If it holds its shape, then you are ready to proceed.
- 4) Press the dirt into your mold. Some tips here: if you want the forms to release easier, spray them with some type of oil (cooking spray works). Then work on a flat surface preferably on a piece of cardboard so that the mess is contained and you can take the bricks outside to dry if you are working inside. Press the mud into the molds and tap with the tip of your finger to work the mud into every edge of the mold. Once all the molds are full, try to remove the excess mud off the top so that the mud is flat, to make for easier stacking when dried. You can shape the bricks on a concrete sidewalk by rubbing the brick along the concrete, if they aren't perfectly flat when they come out.
- 5) Let the mud set up in the mold for a period of time. If you leave them and they completely dry, you can break the bricks getting them out of the mold. Resting period can be 20 to 30 minutes. If water seeps out of the frame, then it will take longer to set up. This can be tricky. Work slowly and gently shake the form and you can press gently with your finger. If it begins to lose shape, then wait longer. Once you get the forms off, then take the bricks outside to dry.
- 6) Have fun making whatever you can imagine with your bricks! Build them on top of each other, or side by side. A hint to make structures stay together: use some mud between the bricks like glue.

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**HAPPY CRAFTING**

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