



What a Character[®]
Mold F6

*2 1/4 inch hands for a 3-inch male face
designed by Maureen Carlson*



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What a Character[®] Flexible Push Mold F6 2 ¼-inch Hand (for 3-inch Male Face)

PREPARING THE MOLD

This mold is intended for use with both polymer and air-drying clays or modeling compounds. A release agent is usually not necessary, but if your clay is especially soft or sticky, you may need to brush the mold prior to each use with water or with a very light dusting of cornstarch or baby powder. Be sure and brush out any visible powder before using.



TOOLS: Pictured are the tools that Maureen used when creating the F6 samples: Straight-blade paring knife, knitting needle, small paint brushes, sharp needle tool.

PRACTICE HAND: We recommend that you make a quick practice hand to see how this mold works. Experiment with what it means to fill the mold too full or to have too little clay in the mold.

USING THE MOLD



From conditioned clay, for each hand, roll a 1 ¾-inch ball of clay.

Note: For success with this mold, clay should be slightly firm, but not stiff.



Roll each ball into a tapered, 3-inch long rope



TIP: Having trouble rolling a smooth, tapered rope? The angle of your hand is the secret for making this shape. Place the little finger side of your hand flat on the work surface, with the thumb side up, away from the surface. Roll slowly back and forth, changing the angle of your hand as the ball changes into a tapered rope.

If you go too far, or press too hard, you'll get a pointed cone. If so, just cut off the point and proceed. Try it. It works.



Your next step will be to shape this tapered rope into a paddle shape. The small end becomes the wrist and the thicker end will be the fingers and palm. Notice in the picture how the base of the hand will be quite thick near the wrist (approximately $\frac{3}{8}$ inch thick), while the finger end (approximately $\frac{1}{4}$ inch thick) will be much thinner. The end of the wrist should be about $\frac{5}{8}$ inch wide.

Notice that the hand is smoothly beveled. No lumps!



To get this smoothly-beveled paddle shape, use the side of your hand, near your thumb, to GENTLY roll and rock across the clay. Then use your fingers to smooth and bevel the edges. At this stage, it's better to start with a piece that is too thick rather than one that is too thin.

TIP: Look at the mold to get a reference for how thick the fingers and palm need to be.



Form each paddle into a modified mitten shape by holding the finger end in place while gently stretching the area where the thumb will be. **DON'T PINCH IT FLAT!!!** Keep fingers and thumb about $\frac{3}{8}$ inch thick.



Compare the two to be sure that both hands match.



Copy patterns from pattern page (so that you have a backup in case the original gets ruined). Cut out both left and right hand patterns. Place patterns over clay paddles. Use sharp needle tool to "draw" around patterns.



Use sharp knife to cut out hand.



Use knitting needle or rounded tool to smooth area between fingers. This will create a slight separation and allow fingers to fit more cleanly into mold.



Round ends of fingers by gently rolling each one, and then patting and smoothing the surfaces. Smooth all edges of hand with patting, rubbing motion.

The end result will look like a glove.



Now place patterns back over each hand and, yes, trim off excess clay. Hurts, doesn't it? But it's necessary as a too-big hand will overflow the mold and make for a messy end result. Smooth ends again. Repeat as needed.

USING THE MOLD



Fit hand into mold, flexing mold to allow each finger to slip into place.



Press hand into mold, taking care to press clay away from mold edge and into hand cavity. Take special care between fingers to be sure that the triangular area of the pink mold shows all the way to the base of each finger. Press firmly in knuckle area. Clay should be even with, or slightly above, edges of mold.



In order to get thicker area at base of thumb and palm, move excess clay from wrist and sides of hand into area at base of thumb and palm. Smooth by gently rubbing.

Before pressing top of mold in place, do a final check of edges.



A small brush can help smooth extra clay into hand.
NOTE: We recommend that you finish completely one molded hand before you start the second.

Place top mold piece in place, being sure to match edges.



Hold mold sides in place, then press firmly across top of mold.

Most likely, the ends of the fingers will be flat. Use your finger or a brush to gently roll clay along edges towards center of finger to create a rounded edge.





Smooth clay away from all edges. You will be able to do some trimming and smoothing once you remove the clay from the mold, but it isn't easy. A common problem is to forget one side (and wreck it) while you're working on the other.

Slowly remove hand from mold. If you are using soft clay, be extra careful, as you may stretch or rip fingers.



Use smooth knitting needle or clay tool to roll between fingers and along edges. You can also press in extra lines with thin, sharp needle tool.

NOTE: HOLD CLAY LIGHTLY TO PREVENT DEFORMING HAND.



To add extra details to fingernails, use knife to cut in edge of fingernail. Then, to create a tapered edge, gently stroke nail towards end of finger.



You may want the hand to remain flat, but this would not be a common position for most uses. Notice how this finished hand has been bent, with the thumb side of the hand going towards the palm. To create this opposing thumb, it is not just the thumb, but the whole thumb side of the hand that is going "around the corner" towards the little finger.



To position hand, support the palm with your finger, then bend thumb and thumb side of hand "around the corner".



Smooth wrist area by rolling wrist between hands. Notice how the wrist is held between those natural "rolling pins" that you have at the base of each of your thumbs. Rub and smooth clay with fingers as necessary to reshape wrist.



Think about how you want the hand to be positioned. Check out your own hand and wrist to see how the angles change as you move your hand.

If the palm area of the hand is important for your finished piece, you might need to reposition the wrist in relationship to the hand. This is tricky, as you can easily smash the work that you've already done, but hand "attitude" can be important enough to make this worth the effort.



To bend hand slightly backwards, or in a cupped position, hold wrist in place, then use thumb to force hand backwards. Smooth wrist as needed.

Place hands in final position, then harden according to the directions for your clay of choice



NOTE: For added strength, position fingers so that part of each finger is fairly close to the one next to it.

ADDING HANDS TO WIRE ARMATURE:

If the hands will be attached to a wire armature, thread a piece of wire into hand **BEFORE** baking. A loop at the end of the wire will keep the wire from pulling back out of the baked hand.

ADDING HANDS TO FABRIC SCULPTURES:

If the hands will be attached to a stuffed fabric arm, add a clay rope around wrist **BEFORE** hardening clay. The fabric can then be attached over this clay ring and held in place with a gathered running stitch or drawstring.

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MoldF6

Hand pattern

