
BASIC METAL CLAY TOOLS AND SUPPLIES - STARTING OUT WITH METAL CLAY

If you're just getting started with metal clay, selection anxiety probably kicked in immediately you were faced with all of the available Metal Clay tools, clays, books, cutters, textures etc. Purchasing a basic "starter kit" rather than finding and purchasing the required materials, supplies and equipment separately may seem to be the most practical way forward, but in reality most Starter Kits contain the bare minimum of tools and materials.

This is a recommended list of items that will give Metal Clay beginners a solid place to start and continue on with their metal clay adventure.

A highly recommended Metal Clay Book and a DVD are included in the list. The DVD will enable those who cannot attend Metal Clay Workshops to do a continuous series of classes with one of the very best - Artist and Teacher - Hadar Jacobson.

BASIC METAL CLAY TOOLS AND SUPPLIES LIST

RECOMMENDED METAL CLAY EDUCATION, TRAINING AND INFORMATION:

Book: The Handbook of Metal Clay Revised and Expanded - Hadar Jacobson

DVD: Metal Clay Workshop with Hadar Jacobson

TOOLS:

Work surface or Underlay. Can be thick plastic, tempered glass, smooth ceramic tile, plain piece of acrylic or a self-healing cutting mat.

Plastic report cover - thick clear, not anti-glare or frosted. These are invaluable for covering clay when rolling it to help keep it from drying out too quickly. Can be lightly oiled (use olive oil)

Teflon Sheet

Acrylic Clay Roller (Sculpey) or the Cool Roller which has interchangeable rubber rings that maintain various thicknesses of clay

Spacers or Batts for rolling different thicknesses of clay. Graduated Spacer Set of 6 **OR** the Cool Roller with interchangeable rubber rings that maintains the thickness of clay.

Craft Knife and Tissue Blade. For cutting and slicing clay - both essential tools. A Clay Scraper is another very useful little tool.

Needle tool - Both the regular alloy handled Needle tool and/or the Ultra Clay Pick (which has an ultra-fine point and can be used to cut easily around and through clay) are very useful.

Water Container. A small solid bowl with some weight is useful. Anything too lightweight will get knocked over.

Small, Airtight Containers. Use for storing pre-made metal clay components (little balls and embellishments) or storing left over bits of dry clay for mixing slip.

Paintbrushes. A small pointed brush, a flat-edged brush, and a medium round brush. Brushes with built-in water reservoirs are also handy.

Needle files. Set of regular needle files and a set of mini diamond needle files.

Bead Reamer Set

Rubber Block. Excellent tool for bracing your work while you sand, polish or carve.

Spray or Spritzer Bottle x 2. One for water and one for Olive Oil. The water spray is useful for rehydrating Metal Clay. The Olive Oil Spray bottle for misting your hands, tools, clay, work surface, etc.

Brass Brush.

Stainless Steel Brush – long or short bristles.

Burnisher – straight or curved

Tweezers - Fine, straight and bent-tipped tweezers (specifically made for picking up gemstones) and cross-lock tweezers.

Plastic wrap or sandwich wrap for keeping clay moist.

Drinking straws – collect as many sizes as you can for cutting holes in clay and forming bails.

Clay Shapers. Silicone-tipped Shapers with a variety of tips. Very useful.

Wax Sculpting and Carving Spatula Set of 4

Sandpapers (wet and dry charcoal type) ONLY USE DRY - in multiple grits - 400, 600, 800 and 1200

3m Soft Sanding Sponges – 3 grades – Green (finest) Blue (medium) and Red (coarse) essential for a good hand finish with metal clay. The best sanding material available for metal clay.

3m Polishing Paper Assortment – essential for a good hand finish with metal clay

Emery Boards or Nail Files in different grits, from coarse to fine. Useful for pre-finishing bone-dry, unfired clay.

Metal Palette knife is useful for mixing slip, reconstituting dried clay and mixing glycerine into clay to make it flexible, etc.

Pin Vice with swivel top wooden handle

Clay Snake Maker/Roller. Useful for making uniform rolls or snakes of clay

Mini Twist Drills (Set of 6) - this set will serve most purposes.

Textures. Anything from leaves, bark, bottle caps, buttons, lace and fabric to texture mats/sheets or texture stamps. Make your own unique textures using Photopolymer Plates.

Quality Stamps. If you're going to sell any of your metal clay creations, you will need to stamp or scribe them with the appropriate quality mark.

Soft Dust Brush – Dust your projects regularly when sanding, filing etc to reveal scratches, dents and imperfections that can be repaired before firing.

Magnifying Glass. Very important tool! If you are satisfied with the finish on your unfired metal clay piece looking at it through a magnifying glass, you will be satisfied with the finish on your fired clay.

Cutters. Small Kemper Shape Cutter Sets and Makins Cutters.

Pliers. Round nose, flat nose and chain nose.

Rawhide Mallet

Fibre Brick and/or Stainless Steel Net

MATERIALS:

CLAY. Silver Metal Clay – PMC (PMC+ or PMC3) or Art Clay Silver (Art Clay Slow Dry or Art Clay 650). For each choice you make, I suggest you buy the lump or clay type, paste, syringe and paper (if applicable)

Olive Oil. This prevents clay from sticking to your fingers, tools, cutters, work surfaces, moulds, texture sheets and other materials. Olive oil - Unbranded Light Olive Oil Spray or Olive oil in a spritzer/spray bottle

Liver of Sulphur Dry/Lump or Liver of Sulphur Patina Gel often referred to as LOS. Can be used for beautiful rainbow patinas or dark grey-black patinas on Metal Clay. LOS gives definition to textured pieces.

DRYING:

A food dehydrator **or** a hairdryer (When using a hairdryer - prepare a cardboard box making cut outs to prop up and position the hairdryer to blow warm air into the box. Wedge or tape the hairdryer into place** Place metal clay pieces to be dried on Teflon secured to a heat resistant surface (smooth tile, rubber block etc) The hairdryer box can be partly covered with a towel to harness the heat (**ALWAYS ensure that the hairdryer fan area is **NOT** covered)

FIRING:

A kiln with an electronic temperature controller suitable for metal clay is always the first prize for Metal Clay enthusiasts but a butane torch + fibre brick or a gas stove top (or gas BBQ) + stainless steel net will certainly do the job initially.

Butane Torches and Butane Gas are available at any good hardware store or at Dick Smiths