

# Handout - Slabbing Machine

Take This



Ball of clay

Make This



Slab of clay

## Read

**Preparation:** The slabbing machine is used to flatten clay.

- Directions:**
1. Wedge a ball of clay large enough for the project.
  2. Determine how thick the slab needs to be for the project.
  3. Set the adjusting screws on the two sides of the slabbing machine for the thickness you need.



Thickness indicator and adjusting screws



**There are two adjusting screws and thickness indicators, one on each side of the machine**

**Normal Thick:** For most projects use the 3/8" setting. This would include the seat and rack markers, the bottom of coiled mug and the bottom and walls of slabbed houses.

**Extra Thick:** The base of your head is usually adjusted to almost 1/2".

**Extra Thin:** The clay pieces that will be attached to other projects (i.e., like Empty Bowls) are usually slabbed at a little more than 1/4".

**How clay stretches on the slabbing machine:** When slabbing a piece of clay, it will primarily spread to the left or right but will not spread top to bottom. **MAKE SURE** the slab is wide enough for what you need when you put it in the machine.



**Left**

**Right**

**Clay stretches from left to right or right to left, but not top to bottom**

**Limits to flattening ability of slabbing machine:** Before putting the ball of wedged clay into the slabbing machine, make it flat by throwing it down on the wedging table. Throw the clay until it is just a little thicker than what it will be after using the slabbing machine. If the clay is too thick, when it's put into the machine, it will have trouble running through and could break the machine.



**Flattening clay on wedging table**



**This clay is too thick to slab**

**The slabbing process.** After flattening the clay, pull the two canvas sheets to one side of the machine. Place the partially flattened clay between the two sheets of canvas, and check to make sure both thickness indicators are at the same setting. Grab the two canvas ends that are sticking out of the machine on the opposite side of the clay and while turning the rolling handle, pull the canvas with a steady pressure until the clay clears the rollers.



**Putting flattened clay between the canvas**



**Checking the adjusting screws**



**Pulling on canvas at the same time you turn the large rolling handle**



**Open up the canvas to retrieve your slab**

**Watch** – the Video.

**Do** – This is when students put what they have learned into action.