

Trimming Handout

Take This



Untrimmed bowl

Make This



Trimmed bowl

Read

Preparation: Get a bowl thrown by the instructor to learn how to trim. Then trim a bowl that you have thrown.



Untrimmed bowl thrown by instructor



Un-trimmed bowl thrown by student

Tools: Water bucket with water, needle tool, sponge, large and small trimming tools



Tools needed for trimming sitting on a wheel with small slug of clay

Set up: Refer to the “Throwing” handout on how to sit at the wheel and/or how the wheel turns.

The steps to trimming a bowl:



Untrimmed bowls cut in half showing (with hash marks) what will be trimmed off

Leather hard: Before trimming a bowl, let it dry until it is leather hard. Leather hard is when the clay is stiff but not hard. It should feel like thick leather. This will normally take a few hours in the open air. Cover the bowl until it is ready to trim.

Removing the bowl from the bat (project board): If the bowl is dry enough, it can be removed from the board by simply rocking it back and forth. If it is too wet, use a wire tool to cut it off the project board.



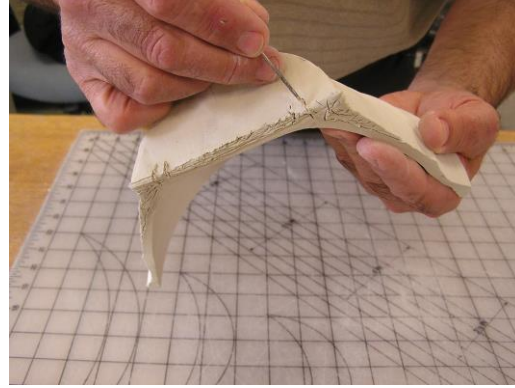
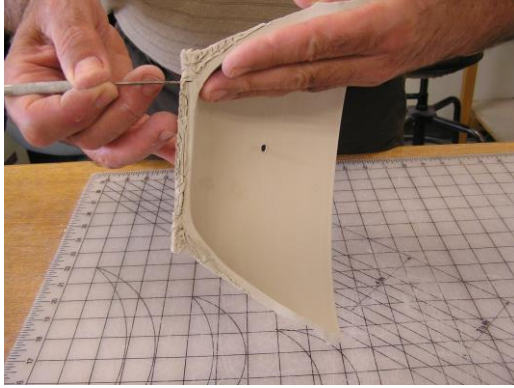
Bowl being removed by hand



Bowl being removed with help from a wire tool

Marking the bowl: Mark the bowl in two locations to help you determine where to cut away the extra clay. The first two marks are on the bottom of the bowl. To make these marks hold the bowl with a non-dominant hand (right hander hold it with the left hand). While holding the bowl with the dominant hand, run fingers down the insides until they touch the bottom. Holding in that position, turn over the bowl and feel where the walls end and the floor begins. This is where marks should be made. The first mark is at the point the walls turn to the bottom. The second is 3/8” towards the outside of the bowl.

Marking your bowl (using the bowl cut in half to see where to hold the bowl)



Left hand inside of the bowl and needle tool marking the bottom (two marks)

The two marks on bottom should correspond to where the foot should be. They should be directly under the walls of the bowl.



Bowl cut in half with needle tools showing where to make the two marks

The second mark is on the outside of the bowl. Normally bowls are thrown where the walls are about 3/8" thick except near the bottom. The mark on the outside should correspond to where the walls begin to get thicker than 3/8". The best way to find this location is to sit the bowl on a table or the wheel head. Then run one finger inside and one on the outside across from each other moving from top to bottom. When the walls begin to thicken, put a mark on the outside of the bowl.



Bowl sitting on a table with fingers inside and outside



Marking the outside



Bowl cut in half with needle tool marking the walls where they begin to get thick

Caution - before putting the bowl to be trimmed on the wheel head, make sure the power is on to the wheel and the pedal is in the off positions.

Centering the bowl for trimming: Place the bowl to the center of the wheel. Look for the circular marks on the wheel head as guides to where to place the bowl. Start the wheel spinning slowly. Hold the needle tool in front and slowly move it towards the bowl, moving a little bit at a time and holding the tool very tight. When it completes a rotation with a small scratch on the bowl, stop the wheel. Move the bowl away from where the scratch is. Make small movement and repeat until the needle tools makes one mark around the full circumference of the bowl.



Holding needle tool to mark bowl for centering

Attaching the bowl to the wheel head: To keep the centered bowl in place during trimming, use small slugs of damp clay to hold it to the wheel head. Place four slugs around the bowl and push 2 down at a time. If you push one at a time you can move the positions of the bowl.



Pushing the slugs into the bowl Pushing the clay onto the wheel head Use 4 slugs

(NO – fingers pushing into bowl) (Yes – fingers pushing down onto wheel)

Trimming at medium fast speed: If the wheel is spinning too slowly, this will cause carving marks on the bowl.



**Trimming marks
spinning too slow**



**Picture of smooth walls. Wheel is
spinning fast enough to get smooth walls**

How to hold the trimming tool: The trimming tool should be held flat to the bowl.



**Small trimming tool at a
90 degree angel to the bowl (NO).**



Small trimming tool flat on bowl (Yes)

Trimming: Trimming is the process of cutting away all the extra clay on the piece of ceramics and trying to get all the wall and bottom the same thickness.



Cutting away the extra clay on the walls of the bowl



Cutting away the extra clay on the bottom of the bowl



Smoothing the cut marks with the large trimming tool



Smoothing the remainder of the bowl with a wet sponge

It is very important to carve your name or initials on the bottom of your bowl and on all ceramics you make. This marks your project and is appreciated by anyone you give it to.



Carving your name and date on the bottom of the bowl



Removing the bowl from the wheel head – remove the slugs and then the bowl



Watch – The Video.

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