

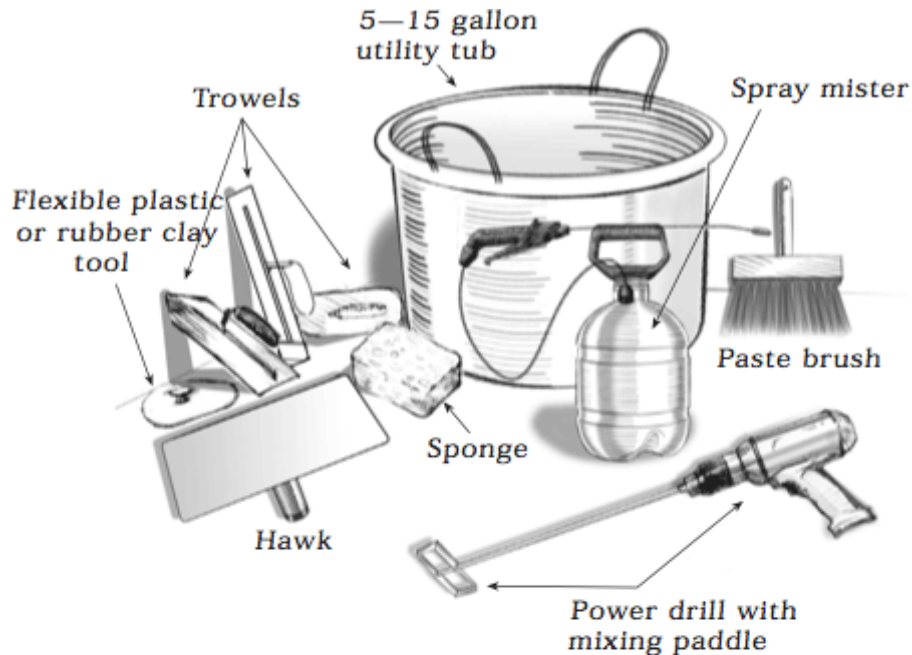


# AMERICAN CLAY

Naturally Beautiful Walls

## Traditional American Clay Application Instructions

These Instructions are for handy homeowners, first-time users and people who have no time constraints. If you are a contractor *and have experience with American Clay plaster*, you may save installation time with the **Dos Manos American Clay Application Instructions**.



### What You Will Need

- Painters tape
- Drop cloths
- Pump-style garden sprayer or airless sprayer
- 5-gallon buckets or 15-gallon tubs
- Tile sponge
- Paint roller with covers (very short nap or smooth foam)
- Large paint brush
- Trowels: stainless steel trowel or Japanese trowel; a Lexan trowel for polished finishes
- Plaster hawk
- Spade handle ½" gear-driven low-speed mixing drill and plaster paddle
- These instructions

### You may also need

- Substrate Preparation Instructions** — if the wall you are plastering over is anything other than a painted or sealed surface (flat or slightly textured) or a gypsum plaster
- 150 grit (.08 mm) sandpaper — if the surface you are plastering over is glossy

## Overview

All surfaces require 4 major steps to complete the plastering:

1. Substrate preparation
2. First coat application
3. Second coat application
4. Compression

## Substrate Preparation

**“Substrate” refers to the wall surface you will plaster over.**

**Maintain temperature in room at 50°F (10°C) or more for 24 hours before and after application.**

**You may follow the General Preparation and Sanded Primer Elite directions** below for painted or sealed surfaces (flat or slightly textured), slick cement finishes and gypsum plasters (e.g. Structolite®, Gypsolite, Imperial®, Diamond®, Red Top®, Kal Kote® etc...)

**New wallboard, blueboard and unsealed joint compound** also use the General Prep and Sanded Primer Elite instructions below, but prior to that, please see the specific recommendations for joint compound application and preparation at **Traditional Substrates Preparation**.

**Other substrates (brick, concrete block, adobe, and all other substrates not listed above) have different preparation requirements.** Check **Traditional Substrates Preparation** for in-depth information on prepping your particular substrate or call the manufacturer at 866-404-1634 for more information.

## General Preparation

**Do any “General Prep” steps required to bring the surface to a relatively flat, dust free, well-bonded surface.**

1. Scrape off any loose or flaking paint or other surface material.
2. Knock down high points of 1/16” (1.5 mm) or more for a Loma or Marittimo finish. Knock down high points of 1/32” (.8 mm) for a Porcelina finish coat.
3. Clean and fill any mortar joints and depressions deeper than 1/16” (1.5 mm) for a Loma or Marittimo finish. Clean and fill depressions deeper than 1/32” (.8 mm) for Porcelina finish coat. Use a filler that bonds to the substrate.
4. Lightly sand any high-gloss paint or glossy sealed surface with 150-grit (.08 mm) sandpaper to provide a “tooth” for the primer.

**WARNING:** If you scrape, sand, or remove old paint, you may release lead dust. Lead is toxic. Exposure to lead dust can cause serious illness, such as brain damage, especially in children. Pregnant women should also avoid exposure. Wear a NIOSH-approved respirator to control lead exposure. Clean up carefully with a HEPA vacuum and a wet mop. Before you start, find out how to protect yourself and your family by contacting the National Lead Information Hotline at 1-800-424-LEAD or log on to [www.epa.gov/lead](http://www.epa.gov/lead).

5. Remove any dust with a vacuum or clean with a sponge mop with a 25% penetrating sealer / 75% water solution.
6. Wash sooty or greasy surfaces with a TSP substitute cleaner of your choice. Let dry.
7. After any joint compound dries, prime it with a conventional zero VOC paint primer or spray on American Clay Penetrating Sealer (diluted 1:1 with water) to avoid possible color variations caused by different back-suction rates (see **Substrates Preparation** for more information).

## Masking

Protect floors with drop cloths or plastic. Tape all adjacent surfaces. Keep tape 1/8” (3 mm) away from the surface being plastered, so tape does not pull off any plaster when tape is removed.

## Sanded Primer Elite Application

**Stir Sanded Primer Elite thoroughly, scraping the bottom of the container** so that all sand is integrated into the primer. The sand is critical—it enables the plaster to bond to the wall.

**Apply Sanded Primer Elite with rollers and/or brushes.** If primer is sprayed on it must be back-rolled (gone over with a roller) immediately after spraying. Use a roller with a short nap (1/8" or 3 mm) or a smooth foam roller, and avoid over-rolling.

**Prime every square inch!** Second coat of plaster can peel off spots where there is no primer/sand.

**Prime protruding corners / vulnerable areas twice.** Allow first coat to dry, then apply second coat to the corner.

## Mixing Clay Plaster

**Mix up the first coat of plaster, which is always Loma.** Second coat plaster (Loma, Porcelina or Marittimo) is mixed the same way and can be mixed at the same time. Let plaster sit for 30 minutes prior to application (the longer it sits, the better it becomes). Plaster may be mixed as much as 30 days prior to application.

1. **Add 1½ gallons (6 L) of clean water** to a 5-gallon (20 L) bucket.
2. **Add ½ bag plaster** and mix.
3. Add enough water to dry pigment to create a slurry (optional, helps prevent starring\*) and mix.
4. **Add pigment** (wet or dry) to bucket and mix.
5. **Add remaining plaster and more water if needed** to bring plaster to a soft-serve ice cream consistency. Total water content will vary between 1 ½ to 2 ½ gallons (6-10 L), possibly more, depending on humidity level. Scrape sides of bucket and continue mixing until all lumps disappear.

\*Starring is when bits of pigment do not break up during mixing. When troweled, the bits of pigment leave dots or streaks of darker color in the plaster. Pre-mixing pigment with water helps minimize starring.

## First Coat Application

**Remix** the Loma first coat plaster and add more water if needed.  
**Using a hawk and trowel, apply the first coat as thin as a credit card.**

## Second Coat Application

**Second coat can be Loma, Porcelina, or Marittimo. Apply:**

**Loma as thin as a CREDIT card,  
Porcelina as thin as a BUSINESS card,  
Marittimo as thin as 1½ CREDIT cards.**

Misting the wall lightly prior to applying the second coat will give you more working time because it slows the plaster's drying speed. The key is to mist **lightly**; over-wetting will cause problems!

Apply plaster in vertical strips with irregular edges. Maintain a wet edge at all times and go from one edge of the wall to the other without breaking. Smooth the surface, or leave drag marks and trowel marks if desired. Trowel in all edges (around floors, ceilings, windows, etc.) to leave a clean application.

Plaster—especially Marittimo – may craze (spider check) as it dries. Troweling while the plaster is leather hard (still damp, but no longer tacky) will prevent this. (Compression, the last step, will also remove this).

Adjust the texture if desired: When wall is leather hard, you may smooth the wall by hard troweling, remove trowel marks with a dry sponge, or create an evenly rough surface by rubbing the entire surface with a dry sponge. Advanced plasterers may raise a cream.

## Compression

**For your walls to impress, you must compress!**

**After the second coat is dry, you MUST use one of these compression techniques** to compress and stabilize the surface, prevent dusting, and even out color variations in the plaster. Compression makes the finish surface repairable.

**Sand Finish (sponged):** After the wall is dry, *lightly* mist a 2' x 2" (.5 m x .5 m) segment of wall so that the surface is fully damp (no dry spots remain on the wall) but water is not running down the wall. Then rub the wall with a dry tile sponge, using varying circular-like strokes. Cover the entire section, then move to a new section. Brush any excess sand off wall as you go.

If the wall is too wet, the color will lighten as the sponge rubs the wall. Stop rubbing with the sponge and allow the wall to dry for a short period of time before continuing.

The wall should feel slightly rough, but stable and not sandy, dusty or "hairy" when you finish.

**Matte finish (hard troweled):** After the wall is dry, lightly mist the plaster so surface is fully damp (no dry spots remain on the wall) but water is not running down the wall. Trowel with a stainless steel trowel or a plastic trowel (plastic will prevent gray "burn" marks on plaster). Trowel the whole surface, then move to a new section.

If the wall is too wet, the color will lighten as you trowel. This is known as "raising the cream" or "pulling fat". Let the cream (fat) absorb back into the wall, and continue troweling. Mist less, or use a finer mist, to prevent this problem in the future.

The wall should feel smooth and stable, not sandy, dusty or "hairy" when you finish.

**Marittimo** is frequently given a matte finish, then after the plaster has dried, the sea shell is revealed with a barely damp sponge moving in light and quick circular motions.

**If you have questions about compression, or need a fuller explanation of how to do it effectively, please see "Compression Tips" or call 866-404-1634.**

## Cleanup

**All cleanup can happen with water.** Tools and plaster that has dropped on the floor can be cleaned up with warm water even after it is dry. Sanded Primer must be cleaned when still wet. With darker colors, especially reds, allow the plaster to dry, then rub or scrape off as much plaster as possible. This will remove most of the pigment from the area. Then finish cleanup with a damp sponge.

## Storing Plaster

After a job is over, excess plaster should be dried out on a sheet of plastic and may be re-hydrated with water for repairs. Leaving wet plaster in a bucket for more than 6 months may lead to mold growth. Plaster with straw or mica in it may mold within two days to a week, so use it or dry it out promptly. Some pigments may oxidize and change color if left in a bucket wet for more than 10 days.

## Does the Plaster Need to Be Sealed?

**American Clay recommends *not sealing* most American Clay plasters** because sealers reduce the positive benefits of the clay, make the wall harder to maintain, and sealers can be difficult to apply. **However, areas exposed to splashing water or oil do need to be sealed.** For instructions and further discussion, see Full Instructions.