

SELF-HARDENING CLAY VS POLYMER CLAY: WHICH TO CHOOSE?

By : Pauline Perles Co



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If you love modeling and creative hobbies, you've probably heard of self-hardening clay and polymer clay. These two materials can be used to bring jewelry, figurines and decorative objects to life.

These days, we're hearing about self-hardening clay everywhere. But what's the difference with classic polymer clay? We'll tell you which one to use for your projects! Here's a full comparison to help you make the right choice between polymer clay and self-hardening clay.

What is self-hardening clay?

Self-hardening clay, also known as no-bake clay, self-hardening clay or no-bake clay, is a ready-to-use paste. It dries in the air, at room temperature, without firing in an oven. It is often composed of clay, cellulose or stone powder.

Advantages :

- No firing required: air-drying.
- Ideal for children and beginners.
- Easy to sand and paint once dry.
- Natural, ceramic-like appearance.

Disadvantages :

- Less resistant to water and impact.
- Risk of cracks if drying too quickly.
- Does not allow for extreme detailing.

What is polymer clay?

Polymer clay (Fimo, Cernit, Sculpey...) is a plastic modeling clay that hardens when baked (generally at 110-130°C).

It comes in a wide range of colors and finishes (pearlescent, translucent, metallic effect...).

Advantages :

- Very solid once fired.
- Ideal for jewelry and miniatures.
- Vivid, long-lasting colors.
- Can be polished, varnished or combined with other materials.

Disadvantages:

- Requires a domestic kiln and firing.
- A little more technical to handle.

Comparison table: self-hardening clay vs. polymer clay

Details:	Self-hardening clay	Polymer clay
Hardening	Open air, no firing	On baking (generally between 110° and 130°C)
Drying time	12 to 48 hours	15 to 30 minutes in oven
Resistance	Good	Very good
Flexibility	Very easy	More technical
Recommended use	Decoration / Simple modeling / With children	Jewelry / Miniatures / Figurines
Finish	Paint, acrylic varnish	Varnish or polish
Prices	Generally less expensive	Slightly more expensive
Brand	Fimo Air, Smarta, WePam, etc.	Cernit, Fimo, Sculpey, etc.

Which clay to choose for your project?

For children or beginners: choose self-hardening clay. Easy to handle and no-fire, it's perfect for discovering modeling in complete safety. If you prefer polymer clay, choose Fimo Kids, which is softer and easier for children to model.

For jewelry and miniature creators: opt for polymer clay, which is stronger and more precise. It produces fine, colorful and long-lasting creations. You'll be able to create shell pendants, flower earrings or a heishi necklace.

For decorative objects or textured sculptures: no-fire clay gives an artisanal finish, ideal for one-off pieces to be painted or given a patina. For a trendy, useful and simple DIY if you're just starting out, consider modeling small soothing stones. Or try your hand at coasters to decorate a table, or an abstract sculpture to dress up a piece of furniture!



Our tips for use

- Store your clay in airtight tins to avoid drying out.
- Lightly sand self-hardening clay before painting to ensure a smooth surface.
- Follow the correct firing times and temperatures for polymer clay to avoid softening.
- Protect your creations with a suitable varnish for greater durability.

Now all you have to do is roll up your sleeves and let your creativity flow!

Result