

WHAT'S THE BEST POLYMER CLAY (FIMO, SCULPEY, CERNIT)?

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Are you starting to model and don't know where to begin? Between Fimo, Sculpey, Cernit and the dozens of ranges available, it's hard to find your way around. This guide will help you make the right choice according to your level, your budget and your creative projects.

Comparison of the 5 major polymer clay brands

Brand	Firing temperature	Flexibility	Durability	Target audience
FIMO	110 °C	Varies according to range	Very good	All levels
Sculpey	130 °C	Very flexible	Excellent	All levels
Cernit	130 °C	Slightly firm	Excellent	Intermediate to professional
Kato Polyclay	150 °C	Firm	Maximum	Professional
Pardo Viva Décor	120 °C	Semi-flexible	Very good	All levels

Fimo: the benchmark brand in France



Fimo is so well known that many use its name to designate any modeling material. Its range is the widest on the market:

- **Fimo Soft:** soft, ideal for beginners.
- **Fimo Professional:** firm, perfect for detailed canes and sculptures.
- **Fimo Effect:** translucent, glittery, metallic or leather-effect finishes.
- **Fimo Kids:** suitable for children aged 8 and over, soft and non-toxic.

The main asset of the Fimo range: its creative versatility and the wealth of tutorials available online.

Sculpey: the most flexible, ideal for beginners



Sculpey Premo is acclaimed by jewelry designers for its ability to retain the finest details even after firing. The **Sculpey III** range is even more affordable, perfect for a first purchase.

What sets it apart:

- Easy-to-model paste immediately, without preparation.
- Natural shine after firing.
- Can be easily pierced to assemble jewelry.
- Color palette includes gorgeous golds and pearlescents.

Its only downside: a slightly higher price than its competitors.

Cernit: shine without varnish



Cernit stands out for its natural gloss finish, with no need to apply a varnish after firing. The Nature range offers a stone-like finish that is highly appreciated for high-end figurines and jewelry. The Neon range is the most fluorescent of all pastes. Cernit Doll is very popular for modeling figurines, and Cernit

Number One is a range with 100% opaque colors.

Kato Polyclay: the strongest on the market



Kato Polyclay is the absolute benchmark in terms of impact resistance after firing. Firing at 150°C requires precision, and is therefore reserved for experienced users. Its main characteristic is that it is harder than other paste! You'll need to condition it with a paste machine, to restore its suppleness and mix the color pigments thoroughly.

Pardo Viva Décor: a fine alternative

Less well-known, Pardo offers excellent translucency and pigment compatibility. Suitable for beginners and experienced craftsmen alike.

How to choose the best polymer clay for your project?

Soft or firm: which texture is right for you?

First question to ask: do you want a material that's easy to work with straight out of the packet, or a firmer paste that offers better structural hold?

Soft pastes, such as Fimo Soft or Sculpey III, are ideal for:

- Beginners who are new to modelling.
- Detailed creations and small sculptures.

Firmer pastes, such as Fimo Professional or Kato Polyclay, are aimed at more experienced craftsmen. They require a little kneading to start with, but guarantee remarkable precision and excellent resistance once baked.

Kiln-fired or air-dried?

The vast majority of quality modeling materials - Fimo, Cernit, Sculpey, Kato - require firing at between 110 and 150°C, depending on the brand. This is the process that gives them their final strength.

If you don't have a dedicated oven, or if you're working with children, there are no-fire alternatives. [Fimo air](#), for example, dries in the open air. But beware: these versions are generally less resistant to impact and humidity. To discover the differences in detail, check out our [self-hardening vs. polymer clay comparison](#).

Creating polymer jewelry: which brand to choose?

For successful [polymer clay jewelry](#), three criteria count above all: the hold of fine details, strength after firing and the variety of finishes available.

Our recommendation:

- Beginners: Sculpey III or Fimo Soft.
- Fine, detailed jewelry: Sculpey Premo.
- Special effects (pearlescent, translucent, metallic): Fimo Effect.
- Professional level: Cernit, Fimo Professional or Kato Polyclay.



Firing, conservation and finishing

Successful firing

Each brand has its own recommendations, but here are the universal rules to follow:

- Always preheat the oven 15 minutes before placing in the oven.
- Target temperature: between 110 and 130°C (150°C for Kato).
- Time: 15 to 30 minutes, allowing about 1 minute per millimeter of thickness.
- Use parchment paper to protect the surface of your pieces.
- Prefer a glass or ceramic plate, as aluminum can alter colors.
- Leave to cool in the switched-off oven for at least 15 minutes to avoid cracking.

Preserving unfired material

The good news is that, unlike clay, it doesn't air-dry. But a few precautions should be taken:

- Store it in its original packaging or in crystal paper (never in plastic film).
- Ideal storage temperature: between 15 and 25°C, away from light.
- If it has hardened, a few minutes kneading in your hands is enough to soften it.

Some brands can be stored for several years in good conditions.

Finishes that make all the difference

After firing, progressive sanding followed by varnishing protects your creation and gives it a professional look. For even more sophisticated jewelry:

- Metallic powders for a gold or silver effect.
- Metallic transfer foils.

• Strass or sequins for a decorative touch.

See our tutorials and inspirations in the [polymer creative ideas](#) section.

Result

