

# Aldax Moulds

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## How to Create a Marble Effect with Plaster

By adding colour to plaster and pouring into moulds or onto a glass surface it is possible to obtain natural marble effects.

Plastercraft marble can be made with our regular Casting Plaster or for a harder finish, white Hydrocal gypsum cement may be used. No matter whether plaster or gypsum cement is used, the normal amount of water used must be decreased to provide a thicker slurry. We recommend a ratio of 70 kg of water to 100 kg for the plaster, and 40 kg of water to 100 kg of Hydrocal. If the plaster mix is too liquid the colour has a tendency to spread throughout the casting, thus making the veining characteristics of marble impossible to reproduce.

Powdered colour pigments can be used, but it is extremely difficult to mix these sufficiently smoothly in the plaster to prevent streak marks showing in the finished cast. Instead it is preferable to use liquid or paste colours.

- (1) Estimate the quantity of plaster or hydrocal required to fill the mould. Weigh the water and plaster in the correct ratio and mix together, to achieve a smooth, thick, creamy slurry. For an alternative method of mixing the plaster see our article on "How to mix plaster" in the Tech Tips section.
- (2) Now half fill a paper cup with the plaster mix and add the required amount of concentrated colour. Mix till smooth.
- (3) Pour the colour mix into the main plaster batch in three or four different positions. Gently give these colour additions two or three turns with a spatula or flat wooden panel. Do not overmix simply start the creation of colour veins in the plaster by turning the colour additions several times.
- (4) The pre-coloured plaster mix is now poured into the mould. The mould has previously been given a thin application of plaster separator or plaster mould release as it is also known. This will prevent any chance of plaster sticking to sections of the mould. Pour the colour/plaster mix in a circular or swelling motion to fill the mould. This will give the veined appearance of marble. If you wish to duplicate the marbling effect in the future, you will have to duplicate **exactly** the pouring and swirling procedure you used in the original. Marble patterns are determined by the method used to pour the plaster.
- (5) After the plaster or hydrocal has set, remove the casting from the mould and clean off any edge flashing etc. The casting may now be left to dry over the next few days in a well ventilated area. To speed up this process it can be placed in an air circulating up on at about 45°C. For a 2 cm thick piece overnight drying would be sufficient, with longer times for thicker pieces.
- (6) Seal the finish plaster casting with a solvent or water-based acrylic sealer in either a gloss or matte finish. Several coats of paste wax can then be applied to give maximum improvement to the finish.

## How to Create a Marble Effect with Plaster (Continued)

Please note. Very little colour is required to achieve the desired finished. Excess or solvent-based colours can cause soft spots and slow in setting.

### Marbling with two or more colours

Using either grey, brown or black colours, it is possible to achieve beautiful results.

- (1) Half fill two cups with premixed plaster and add the required amount of a selected colour to each cup.
- (2) Pour the contents of the first cup into the main plaster batch and mix in until you have an even colour throughout. This provides the basic colour for the marble effect.
- (3) Trickle in the second colour which is usually the darker into the main batch in three or four different position positions. Stir or knife the added colour two or three times with a spatula, as previously described.
- (4) For proceed as previously.

### Recommended applications for Plastercraft Marble

All these applications are for indoor use as plaster cannot be used for exterior use

Decorative wall panels	Table tops	Ornamental Columns
Chess Pieces	Window Sills	Fireplace Decorative Panels
Mantle Pieces	Lamp Bases	Pen Sets
Paper Weights	Art Pieces	Picture Frames

Hollow or slush casting is not possible as the rotating movement of the mould would result in a single even colour. The lower cost of the materials used for Plastercraft Marbling makes it an excellent alternative to natural marble.