



AMERICAN CLAY

Naturally Beautiful Walls

Dos Manos Classic American Clay Application Instructions

These instructions are for contractors who have experience with American Clay plasters and those who have attended a class covering the Dos Manos system. Handy homeowners and first-time applicators should use **Traditional American Clay Application Instructions**.

Dos Manos plasters contain Mud Glue™ or Add-Mix. Differences between the two are summarized below, followed by condensed instructions for both Mud Glue™ and Add-Mix Dos Manos.

Advantages of Mud Glue™ compared to Add-Mix:

- Costs less
- Is completely natural (Add-Mix contains acrylic)
- Retains most of the benefits of the clay (more so than Add-Mix)
- Is highly mold-resistant when applied to a wall (more so than Add-Mix)
- Is easily re-wet and reworked, even after it is dry
- Is easier to repair

Advantages of Add-Mix compared to Mud Glue™:

- Keeps a good working consistency (Mud Glue™ turns a bit gummy if not used the first day)
- Can be stored for 60 days without going bad (Mud Glue™ must be dried out after 5 days)
- Is less likely to delaminate due to dust on the substrate
- Thickness of the first coat is less critical

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

Condensed Instructions For Dos Manos Classic with Mud Glue™ American Clay Applications

(For condensed **Dos Manos with Add-Mix Instructions**, see page 5 of this document.)

Overview

All surfaces require 4 major steps to complete the plastering:

- Substrate preparation
- First coat application
- Second coat application
- Compression

Substrate Preparation

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 surfaces, sealed surfaces, slick cement finishes and gypsum plasters. (Although the need for Sanded Primer Elite is greatly reduced in the Dos Manos System, some substrates still require different amounts of it.)

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 wallboard and joint compound application & preparation at [Dos Manos Substrates Preparation](#).

Other substrates (brick, cement block, adobe, and all other substrates not mentioned above) have different preparation requirements. Check [Dos Manos Substrates Preparation](#) for information on prepping your particular substrate.

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.

5. Remove any dust with a vacuum or wash with a sponge mop and 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 delamination or possible color variations caused by different back-suction rates.

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 plaster does not develop a ragged edge when the tape is pulled.

Sanded Primer Elite Application

The need for Sanded Primer Elite is greatly reduced in the Dos Manos system, however, some substrates still require different amounts of it.

Painted surfaces, sealed surfaces, slick cement finishes, new wallboard and joint compound require two coats of Sanded Primer Elite on protruding corners and other vulnerable areas. The rest of the surface does not need Sanded Primer Elite.

Unsealed or unpainted gypsum plasters (e.g. Structolite®, Gypsolite, Imperial®, Diamond®, Red Top®, Kal Kote® etc...) must be primed with American Clay Sanded Primer Elite or primed with a zero VOC paint primer. Apply a total of two coats of Sanded Primer Elite to protruding corners and other vulnerable areas.

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 strengthens the plaster's to bond to the wall. When double coating protruding corners, allow first coat to dry, then apply second coat.

First Coat Mixing

The first coat of plaster is always Loma, and it contains Mud Glue™ .

Wear protective clothing, dust mask and goggles when mixing Mud Glue: it is highly alkaline. Once the plaster is added, alkalinity drops back down to an acceptable level.

1. Add 1 gallon (4 L) clean, cool water to a 5-gallon (20 L) bucket.
2. While agitating the water, empty one bag of Mud Glue™ into the water.
3. Continue mixing for two minutes.
4. Add about 1/8 to 1/4 of one bag of plaster to the Mud Glue™ solution and mix briefly.
5. Add dry pigment and mix until color is evenly distributed. To minimize starring, pre-mix pigments in water.
6. Add remaining plaster and more water as needed to bring plaster to a soft-serve ice cream consistency. Total water content will vary between 1½ to 2½ gallons (6-10 L), depending on humidity level. Scrape sides and continue mixing until all lumps disappear. Add the last water slowly, as plaster can quickly become soupy.

Please note: Hot water will ruin Mud Glue™. Do not use water from a hose sitting in the sun without checking the temperature first.

Plaster with Mud Glue™ is best used the same day it is mixed. It is strongest on the day it is mixed. When it sits, it will tend to get gummy and harder to work. Remixing is often all that is needed to return plaster to a workable consistency. Always remix and recheck consistency before adding more water.

Store in a cool place with a loose lid until used. Dehydrate any remaining Dos Manos plaster as soon as the first coat is complete, and within 5 days of initial mixing.

First Coat Application

The first coat is always Loma.

Apply plaster as thin as a credit card.

- Do not try to stretch plaster so thin you see individual sand grains. Thin applications may delaminate during compression.
- Do not apply the plaster much thicker than a credit card. At two credit cards (1/16" or 1.5 mm) the plaster will tend to crack and delaminate.

Let first coat dry completely (this helps prevent delamination during compression).

Second Coat Mixing

The second coat of plaster can be Loma, Porcelina or Marittimo. It contains no Mud Glue™.

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. 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 prevent starring.
4. Add pigment (wet or dry) to plaster in 5-gallon (20 L) 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 1½ to 2½ gallons (6-10 L), possibly more, depending on humidity level. Scrape sides and continue mixing until all lumps disappear.
6. 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. (This is different than the first coat plaster with Mud Glue™, which is strongest when used immediately and must be dehydrated after 5 days).

Second Coat Application

Apply:

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

If you mist the wall prior to second coat application (to increase the amount of time you are able to work the plaster) **mist lightly. Dos Manos prefers drier conditions.**

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 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. Hard troweling while the plaster is leather hard (still damp, but no longer tacky) will prevent this. (Compression will also remove this).

Adjust the texture: When wall is leather hard you may choose to smooth the wall by 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 also makes the finished 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 surface, 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 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.

Storing Plaster

Plaster with Mud Glue™: To prevent spoiling, plaster with Mud Glue should be stored in a cool place with a loose lid. After 2-5 days it should be dried out on a sheet of plastic. It may be re-hydrated with a Mud Glue™ solution—see [Maintenance Manual](#)—and used for repairs.

Plaster without Mud Glue™: Plaster that has no Mud Glue™ in it is less prone to spoiling. 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.

Condensed Instructions For Dos Manos Classic with Add-Mix American Clay Applications

Overview

All surfaces require 4 major steps to complete the plastering:
Substrate preparation
First coat application
Second coat application
Compression

Substrate Preparation

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 surfaces, sealed surfaces, slick cement finishes, and gypsum plasters. (Although the need for Sanded Primer Elite is greatly reduced in the Dos Manos System, some substrates still require different amounts of it.)
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 & preparation at [Substrates Preparation](#).
Other substrates have different preparation requirements. Check [Substrates Preparation](#) for information on prepping your particular substrate (i.e. the wall surface you will plaster over).

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.

5. Remove any dust with a vacuum or wash with a sponge mop and a 10% Penetrating Sealer / 90% water solution.
6. Wash sooty or greasy surfaces with a TSP substitute cleaner of your choice. Let dry.
7. After any joint compound is dries, prime it with a conventional zero VOC paint primer or spray it with American Clay Penetrating Sealer (diluted 1:1 with water) to avoid possible delamination or color variations or caused by different back-suction rates.

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 plaster does not develop a ragged edge when the tape is pulled.

Sanded Primer Elite Application

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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 strengthens the plaster's to bond to the wall. When double coating protruding corners, allow first coat to dry, then apply second coat.

First Coat Mixing

The first coat of plaster is always Loma, and it contains Add-Mix.

1. Add 1 gallon (4 L) Add-Mix and 1 gallon (4 L) water into a 5 gallon (20 L) or larger 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. **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, and is especially important when using Add-Mix.
4. Add pigment (wet or dry) to plaster in 5-gallon bucket and mix.
5. Add remaining plaster and more water as needed to bring plaster to a soft serve ice cream consistency. Total water content will vary between 1½ to 2½ gallons (6-10 L), depending on humidity level. Scrape sides and continue mixing until all lumps disappear. Add the last water slowly, as plaster can quickly become soupy.

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.

Store in a cool place with a tight fitting lid until used.

First Coat Application

The first coat is always Loma.

Apply plaster as thin as a credit card.

Let first coat dry thoroughly (this helps prevent delamination during compression).

Second Coat Mixing

The second coat of plaster can be Loma, Porcelina or Marittimo. It contains no Add-Mix.

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.
*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 prevent starring.
4. Add pigment (wet or dry) to plaster in 5-gallon (20 L) bucket and mix.
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Porcelina as thin as a BUSINESS card

Marittimo as thin as 1 ½ CREDIT cards.

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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 clean-up can happen with water. Plaster can be cleaned up with water after it is dry, but primer must be cleaned when still wet.

Light colored plasters that have dripped onto adjacent surfaces can be cleaned up with a damp sponge. 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

Plaster with Add-Mix should be left in a bucket wet and sealed with a tight lid. Add-Mix plasters may begin to change color after 60 days, so do not use for patching a finish coat. Do not dry out plaster with Add-Mix; it cannot be rehydrated.

Plaster without Add-Mix: After a job is over, excess plaster should be dried out on a sheet of plastic and may be rehydrated 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.

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.