

Silver clay basic:

Below is a brief guide to get you started with the basic package.

If you have never worked with silver clay, it is useful to know that silver clay dries in the air.

By placing wet wipes (baby wipes) over the clay you prevent it that the clay dries out, if you do not work with the clay for a while. The clay that is cut off you want to keep soft so this must be kept in a humid environment. An empty cream jar is very suitable for this.

Use Baby lotion wipes to keep the clay moist and keep it between plastic cling film to cover your clay to keep it soft while working. Use distilled water on your clay during work to prevent drying, it will keep the clay soft and pliable. But be gentle do not use to much because the it will become paste and very sticky.

You will also find various manuals on our website www.zilverklei.nl to get great ideas.

Preparation:

Fold a piece of household foil 2x twice, here you put the silver clay between during use. Place a damp lotion cloth on this foil. This is your clay container, make sure all the pieces of silver clay you have cut off quickly put it in your container because it will dry out.

Make sure you do not have dry hands, because otherwise you will quickly lose valuable moisture from the clay, fat them with some olive oil or special balm.

You can also lightly grease the materials if the clay sticks to your roller or mat sparingly with release agents because too much of this makes the silver clay less effective.

To practise:

If you like to practice then I advise you to use paper clay because it also dries by air. By practicing you also benefit because you will know which materials you need for this task and you can already see the design in clay. So you find out if what you have in mind is also feasible.

Note that this clay is more difficult to stick together and is fibrous in relation to the silver clay. Cutting with a needle is more difficult in this clay and gives fringes. Make sure all materials and your work surface are clean well and throw away all leftovers so that no paper clay can get into your silver clay.

Rolling out the silver clay:

Use the 1.5mm (white) strips to make a ring or thicker designs, also if you want to use a stamp, it is best to work thicker. You can use the 1mm (transparent) strips for pendants and earrings. The slats do not have to lie against the clay because they only serve to roll out the clay to a certain thickness. Make sure the clay is not wet if you are going to roll it out because the clay then sticks to everything.

Note: If the silver clay shows cracks or crackle, the silver clay is too dry, knead it first well with 1 or 2 drops of water between a piece of household foil, by pushing the clay flat and folding it in half from the center to the edges make sure that no air gets trapped in the clay (which can cause bubbles during firing).

Add structure:

First roll out the silver clay with the 1.5mm strips on a piece of Teflon or firing paper. Place the 1mm strips on the greased stamp mat and carefully roll the clay between them.

Roll from the center to the edges and make sure the clay stays in place.



Shaping the silver clay:

There are many ways to shape the clay, just with your hands, with the plastic strips, through a mold, and as the clay is dried with a file, with engraving tools, a knife, etc.

You can use a needle tool to easily “cut out” the clay. Keep the needle upright as much as possible and "cut out" the clay along the edge. This can be done by using a template or wit cut out paper. (soak the paper with olive oil so that it can easily be removed from the clay).

Furthermore, the cut clay can be dried on a mold to give more dimension to your workpiece. Of course we also do this with a ring on a wooden ring mandrel. This keeps the clay its shape once it is dry. Look what you have to use eg straws, glasses, spoons, marbles, lamps, etc.



Drying the silver clay:

It is very important that the silver clay is properly dried, as moisture expands on heating and can damage your workpiece when firing. You can let the clay dry by at least:

20 minutes to blow-dry

10 minutes at 100 ° C in a household kiln or hot plate

24 hours in the air

You can use a firing grid to place your workpiece in your kiln or under the hair dryer.

Finishing the clay:

Smoot the dried clay with a file, sanding pad or even a wet baby wipe to make clay nice and smooth.

Carefully rub the surface with a baby wipe to remove scratches and unevenness way that you would otherwise see in your fired silver.

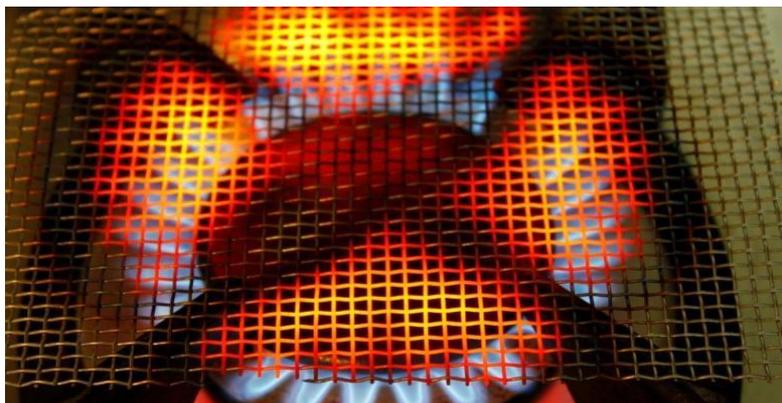
Note: Do dry your work again if it has been moistened again. Make sure that any used zirconias are clean and that you have all added any eyes etc.

Firing the silver clay:

Make sure your clay is completely dry. If necessary, test this with a mirror by applying the warm clay directly on the mirror. If water vapor appears below or next to the part, it is not yet dry.

Use the firing grid by placing it on the supports of your gas burner. Ignite the gas and wait until you see a red / orange ring appear where the fire touches the rid. (see picture)

Turn off the flame and place your silver clay where the grid was the hottest and put the gas back on.



Firing is a careful job. First comes a flame from the binder that burns. Wait until you see the silver start to glow orange. If necessary, close the curtains and turn off the light so that you can see this sintering process well.

Fire the silver long enough (at least 15 minutes per 10 grams of clay, 1 mm thick, thicker and larger should therefore be longer) firing longer is no problem. Turn off the flame and leave your workpiece to cool by air. Cooling in cold water is also possible, but not if it contains zirconias or glass.

You can fire with a solder burner by placing the clay on a refractory surface. Move the flame in circles on and off the piece of silver clay so that it starts to glow orange (at least 5 minutes) make sure that your silver does not get too hot because it will melt otherwise. View the video on the website

Firing in a hobby / enamel kiln is possible from 650 ° C for 30 minutes, but my preference goes out to 820 ° C for a minimum of 10 minutes, a maximum of 900 ° C. The silver clay can immediately be placed in the hot kiln. Wait until the temperature reaches the kiln is back at 820 ° C. after 2 hours at 900 the max shrinkage is reached, it needs no longer firing.

Finishing the silver clay:

Brush your fine silver jewelry with a fine wire brush to give the silver a nice matte look.

Use the various sanding pads, agate pen or polishing needle for a smoother finish.

