



Ceramics 1 Wheel Throwing Basics

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Before you begin >

> **Select the proper wheel – (rotation & height) *Right handed – Counter-Clockwise. Left handed– Clockwise.***

- If you are short, use a wheel that is lower to the ground, if you are tall use one that is raised higher up.
- Be sure the splash pan is installed properly, and the wheel is clean before you begin.

> **Wedge 6-10 balls of clay using the “spiral or bull-head” wedging technique.**

- Scrape & clean the wedging station, remove empty plastic bags, store below the table.
- Each ball of clay should weigh 1 ¼ – 1 ½ pounds.
- Cover the prepared clay with plastic so it does not dry out.
- All tools should be at your wheel (metal rib, wood rib, needle tool, wooden knife & wire tool.)
- Fill a small / 1 gallon bucket with water - ¾ full.

Centering the clay >

> Put a clean bat on the wheel-head, aligned with the bat pins. Make sure the bat fits tightly.

> Dampen the bat with a sponge / water.

> Sit close to the wheel & support yourself. Rest your forearms on your thighs, feet under your knees, elbows at your side.

> Your nose should be over the center of the wheel.

> Touch your clay **ONLY** when the wheel is moving – use water to lubricate the clay.

> Place the ball of clay on the bat; pressing downward on a 45° angle to ensure the clay is firmly attached to the bat.

> Bring the wheel up to a medium speed. ***DO NOT go too fast, or too slow.**

> Apply pressure evenly with both hands, squeezing lightly until the clay rises up to form a cone.

- ***SEE HANDOUTS** for images and step by step illustrations / instructions on how to proceed:
- Centering, opening the ball, establishing the bottom of the vessel, pulling up / gaining height...

A REVIEW



After centering, the clay is opened by placing the fingers of the right hand over the left thumb and pushing down. Note the slope of the interior wall at this stage.



At the top of the first pull, the fingers are directly opposite one another, and the pressure is eased before they're released from the clay. Note that the rim of the cylinder is thicker than its wall.



The bottom is then expanded and flattened by using the fingers of both hands to open the clay by pressing it outward.



The rim is reset in order to even it out and recenter it.



After sponging the bottom and resetting the rim, the first pull is started. The middle finger of the left hand pushes outward as the middle finger of the right hand pushes inward. Remember to start the groove with both fingers positioned as far down as possible.



The cylinder wall is gradually thinned as the clay is pulled up again.



As the fingers reach the middle of the first pull, they're almost aligned on the same horizontal plane.



The final pull establishes the final height of the form. Note the taper of the wall thickness.