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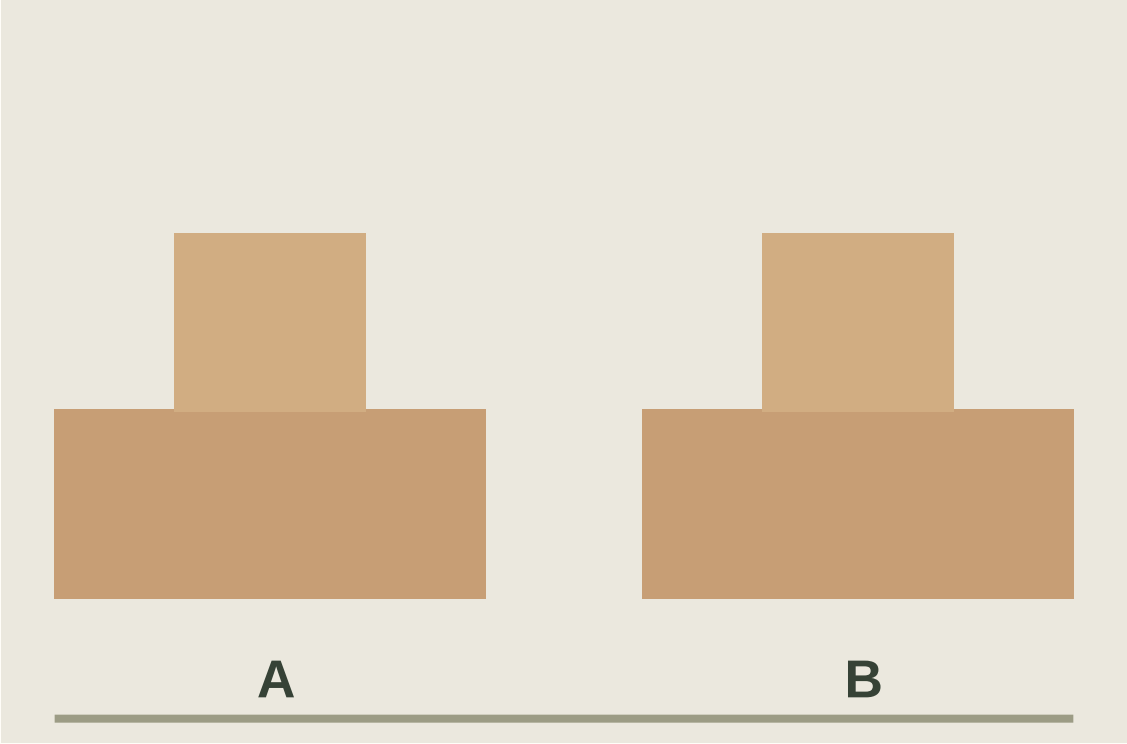
MAKE / FREE ORIGINAL DIGITAL GUIDE / F100

JOIN TWO AIR-DRY CLAY PIECES

Securely: manufacturer-specific scored join practice



TWO BASES + TWO CAPS = TWO SUPPORTED JOINTS

Original scoring, water/slip choice, seam records.

Never used as a hook, handle or tested clay bond.

Edition: Steadleaf Press original FREE adult digital MAKE guide. Independent practical/technical review verdict PASS; no physical clay joining, bond-strength, drying, printing, material or child/pet test performed. All content is a digital teaching design; no actual clay scored, joined, dried, tested for bonding, load, wash, water safety, printing or child/pet health by the publisher. The title expresses a learning goal, not a verified strength guarantee.

Four small pieces and two maker-specific joints

Join one low broad clay cap onto one low oval clay pad, twice: specimen A comprises one pad and one cap; specimen B comprises a matching pad and cap. That is four separately shaped soft clay pieces, two joined tabletop specimens. The same known manufacturer, formula, batch and relatively soft condition should be used for both. These are tiny comparison exercises, not knobs, wall hooks, plant pot handles, candle supports or certified structural connections.

To attach pieces of soft clay, the contact on BOTH sides matters. Lightly roughen the BASE TOP where the cap will rest and the CAP UNDERSIDE where it meets the base. This is called scoring. Then join while the material is still workable with only the manufacturer-approved amount of contact moisture. Crayola supports water to join its Air-Dry Clay and its educational material explains score-and-slip. Sculpd instructs scoring and light wetting, but specifically says that conventional slip is not used with its air-dry product. Do not recommend slip for an unspecified brand. If the actual manufacturer’s label does not support a slip comparison, repeat the first approved method for specimen B and record that B was NOT a slip trial. If neither damp scoring nor a manufacturer-supported medium is established, do not guess.

Trial | Both opposing contact faces | Moisture/contact medium | Record

A - score and slight damp | Base TOP and cap UNDERSIDE both shallow-crosshatched | Barely damp only if that clay maker permits wet joining | A: maker-approved score + damp

B - score and approved slip | Base TOP and cap UNDERSIDE both shallow-crosshatched | A thin film of clay-and-water slip only if explicitly supported for this exact brand | B: approved score + slip

B alternative | Score both faces identically | Repeat A’s permitted slight damp, WITHOUT slip | B: repeat A, NOT a comparison of slip

Not authorised | Any unsuitable clay, rigid/dry parts, unknown instructions | No trial performed | B not attempted or both stopped

A low broad cap makes the comparison easier to observe because a tall thin tower would be likely to topple or invite handling. It does not prove a stronger bond. Both samples stay fully supported on a flat work board and are inspected visually, never pulled by the cap. No load test or fall test is part of this project.

Shape planning and manufacturer thickness rules

The original teaching plan uses, only where the product maker’s thickness limits allow, two small rounded oval pads each about 5 by 4 cm in top view and about 1.5 cm thick, and two low flat-bottomed cap buttons each roughly 2 by 2 cm across and 1.5 cm thick. A maker may recommend thicker clay, so those are illustrative, not a compulsory mould or finished dimensions. For example, Crayola warns about thin pieces below its own 1/4-inch minimum; Sculpd offers a thicker recommended minimum for its own clay. The actual maker’s limits override these numbers. No exact mass, print scale or repeatable holding strength is claimed.

On a DRY paper sketch, draw two base outlines A/B and the smaller central contact footprint for each. Indicate the top contact zone on the base and underside contact zone on the cap; arrows show the two shallow-textured surfaces meeting face to face. Do not score across the whole outside of the pad or gouge a sharp trench at its thin edge. A few light crossing lines made with a rounded plastic scoring tool give a simple beginner demonstration. A printed PDF illustration is not a calibrated full-size measuring template; use a real ruler and the actual material instructions.

Work surface, tools, moisture and safety

Choose a single correctly labelled AIR-DRY clay brand/batch still soft enough to shape. Keep spare clay pieces wrapped so their joining faces do not crust over. Use one stable washable craft-only board, dry paper, pencil, real ruler, blunt rounded plastic scoring tool, dedicated small brush or clean fingertip, maker-compatible nonstick support, dry A/B labels and a cloth. For a manufacturer-supported slip trial only, use a craft-only palette and a tiny amount of soft clay from that same packet mixed with the small amount of water its specific instructions permit. No universal slip recipe, spoonful dosage or clay-to-water ratio is recommended.

No sharp craft pin, knife, razor, saw, powered mixer, glue gun, added glue, rigid supporting wire, kiln, oven or forced heater is necessary. Never press a sharp scoring tool through the cap or pad. Work over a stable table away from small children, pets, open flames and food; wash hands and follow actual material hazard warnings. Clean dust using maker-compatible damp wiping rather than dry sanding or blowing particles, and keep heavy clay sludge out of drains.

Do not soak already hard clay to fake a soft joint. This is wet-to-wet joining while both pieces are still mouldable. Fully hardened pieces and their adhesive repairs require different instructions. If the clay is crumbly, rigid, dusty or incompatible with the maker’s documented method, stop and obtain suitable material rather than adding large amounts of water.

Three original skill patterns

Pattern A - texture both facing surfaces

While the rounded pad remains flat on the board, identify a cap-sized central patch on its TOP. With a smooth blunt scoring tip, gently drag three or four shallow lines in one direction, then cross them with a few more light lines, staying within that patch. Support the cap separately and put the same gentle crosshatch on its UNDERSIDE. The strokes may be visible but must not make a deep cut, remove thick shavings or split either soft

body. Keep a safe material thickness beneath both scratched faces.

Pattern B - choose A damp or B maker-authorised slip

For A, only if its manufacturer recommends lightly wetting scored soft-clay joints, touch the small scored zone with a barely damp craft brush or fingertip, not a stream of water. Press the contact faces together before either dries. For B, if AND ONLY IF this particular maker explicitly supports clay slip, use a thin maker-approved amount on the scored contact surfaces and join as directed. Crayola’s educational slip material is not a universal instruction for Sculpd or other formulas. If slip is not maker-authorised but A’s slight water method is, use the A method again and write B-repeat/no-slip-comparison. No pooling or excess slurry is permitted: additional water can itself cause cracking.

Pattern C - seat, blend lightly, dry and observe

Place each cap centrally on its own scored pad, with both prepared faces aligned and the pad resting fully supported. Use gentle even finger pressure and lightly blend a tiny amount of existing still-soft cap edge into the pad at the seam to make an even transition. Do not crush the base, pull the cap, add a bulky separate coil or hide an open gap under wet slurry. Dry both specimens side by side on the same level product-approved board following the actual brand’s COMPLETE room-temperature drying instructions, not guessed hours or touch-dry appearance. Observe whether the seam visibly opens, the cap tilts or a crack develops; do not lift by the cap or bend the joint to see whether it holds.

Step-by-step instructions

1. Choose the exact manufacturer-supported method

Read the actual AIR-DRY clay product’s scoring, minimal moisture, optional slip, thickness and drying directions. Stop if the joining medium is unknown or prohibited; there is no universal clay slip recipe here. Your goal is visually controlled practice, not a rated secure bond.

2. Mark A and B treatment cards honestly

Write A = scored surfaces + minimal maker-permitted damp. Write B = scored surfaces + explicitly manufacturer-approved slip only if allowed. Otherwise write B = same damp procedure repeated, NOT slip comparison, or B = not attempted if no approved route. Keep those labels dry beside the board.

3. Prepare a protected nonfood craft workspace

Place a stable craft mat and manufacturer-compatible drying support on a level table. Set out a physical ruler, blunt rounded scoring tool, tiny maker-permitted brush, paper labels and a damp cleaning cloth. Avoid sharp gouges, sandpaper, fans, heat, food, kids and pets.

4. Form four similarly sized soft clay parts

Use one known soft batch to shape two small oval pads plus two short low cap buttons. An example only is each pad 5 by 4 cm and 1.5 cm thick, each cap about 2 by 2 cm and 1.5 cm high, subject to the maker’s minimum thickness. Keep unused pieces wrapped, and do not force a printed diagram as a mould.

5. Mark each cap’s real contact footprint

On a paper diagram label base A top, cap A underside, base B top and cap B underside. Place the corresponding cap near the centre of its base without joining yet; observe where the two actually touch. The small contact patches should be comparable and away from thin outer edges.

6. Score the TWO opposing faces of sample A

Rest A pad on the board and shallow-crosshatch only the cap footprint on its TOP, using three or four soft lines in two directions. Hold A cap supported and make similar shallow lines on its UNDERSIDE. No sharp stylus, deep groove or puncture is needed. Record whether both were scored.

7. Apply maker-permitted tiny damp contact on A

If the exact product explicitly permits damp scoring, touch the scored area lightly with a barely damp brush or fingertip. Keep the contact soft but not watery; no pools or poured water. If the clay product does NOT permit this, stop A rather than claiming unapproved dry pressing will produce a secure result.

8. Seat A cap with the base fully supported

Align both A contact faces and press very gently and evenly while the base stays on its board. Smooth only a narrow band of existing soft cap material into the base around the join without making a thin pinched neck. Record any wet gap, tearing or slump. Do NOT pick A up by the cap.

9. Score both B surfaces identically

When an authorised B method exists, score B base TOP and B cap UNDERSIDE within their meeting footprint. Keep the clay fresh and shape low and broad as for A. Do not let B dry out while A is assembled, gouge deeper than A or switch brands to force an attractive comparison.

10. Apply approved slip OR document B-repeat

Only with explicit maker guidance for slip, prepare the smallest usable amount of SAME-brand soft clay and water by the maker’s instructions and spread a thin film on B’s scored contact region. Otherwise repeat A’s

minimally damp method and label B as A-method repeat; never compare it as though it used slip. If neither route is approved, label B NOT ATTEMPTED.

11. Seat B cap and settle both low seams

Set B cap on its supported base, align the two contact faces, press lightly, then blend a tiny edge of existing clay into the seam. Compare wet visual gaps and whether either cap slopes. Do not apply glue, a rigid pin, excessive water or unsupported pressure to make an apparent difference.

12. Dry both on one maker-compatible board

Keep the two specimens separate but in similar safe room conditions. Follow the chosen clay maker’s COMPLETE dry guidance, not a universal 24-hour guess; a piece may be touch dry but not fully dry inside. No heater, hot sun or fan blast; do not move wet joints merely to expose the bottom.

13. Inspect complete-dry seams without testing strength

After manufacturer-directed complete drying, look closely for A/B cracks, visible separation, lifted cap corners or warped base. Write PENDING if full drying is uncertain. Do not pull, pry, twist, bend, drop, soak or lift either specimen by the cap: appearance cannot prove shear or tensile strength.

14. Complete both maker records and clean safely

Record actual brand, contact preparation, whether B truly used slip, dimensions, wet seam changes, full-dry status, gaps and surface cracks. Store the examples flat as adult teaching specimens, out of reach of kids/pets and separate from food. Collect solids, damp-wipe as manufacturer recommends and wash hands. No verified functional use follows from a neat-looking seam.

Fix, care and preserve

A wet cap slides over the base

Too much contact moisture or a very smooth unprepared surface may be involved. Stop adding water; if material remains fresh and manufacturer-permitted, separate and restart with light scoring and only a barely damp contact. Do not force a tall cap to stand by pressing harder.

B has no authorised slip product guidance

Write B as the repeated approved A method, not a slip comparison. If the brand rejects water, omit B. Do not borrow a clay-and-water recipe from Crayola and apply it automatically to Sculpd or other unrelated products.

The scoring tool cuts deeply or a crack appears

The scoring tip may be too pointed or a pad may be too thin. Use a smoother blunt tool, fewer shallow lines and maker-compatible thicker pieces. Discard torn or rigid contact parts rather than hiding a dangerous thin joint with a slurry layer.

A watery film or slip leaks out around the join

Excess water can cause softening and later cracks in some formulas. Stop, record the over-wet result and remake using only approved minimal moisture if the actual brand permits. Do not claim that greater wetness implies greater bond strength.

A seam opens while the sample dries

Note A or B, the time observed, whether the cap tilted, and if the pieces dried evenly. The clay formula, different thicknesses, uneven drying, material dryness and contact medium may all contribute. This small observation is not a validated strength test or universal judgement on scoring or slip.

A dry-looking specimen may still be wet inside

Keep drying according to maker guidance. Do not snap, drill or pull a cap to prove curing or bonding. Label the observation PENDING; fully dried joins may still be weak under force.

Dry residue and storage

Avoid sanding, blowing or dry-brushing powder into the air. Damp-clean as approved by the maker, contain dry fragments and keep clay away from food, children and pets. This is a practice swatch, not safe tabletop hardware, outdoor fixture, hook, handle or washable vessel.

Pattern 1 - Score the base TOP and cap UNDERSIDE

Draw a 5 by 4 cm low oval pad on dry paper and a 2 by 2 cm low cap above it. Show two opposite arrows bringing base TOP and cap UNDERSIDE together. Place a small crosshatch ONLY within the mating area on EACH face, and indicate one supported level board under the base. Example thickness of both pad and cap is about 1.5 cm ONLY when the clay manufacturer permits it. No real printed mould or scratch depth is established by the schematic. All pieces must be similarly soft and not a rigid dried fragment.

Pattern 2 - Maker-approved two-route join chart

A: score BOTH soft contact faces, touch lightly damp ONLY if product label permits, join promptly, gently blend a little existing soft seam, dry supported. B: score BOTH comparable faces and use a maker-approved THIN slip ONLY with explicit product instructions; OTHERWISE repeat A's approved method and label NOT A SLIP COMPARISON, or omit B if no authorised route. Inspect wet seam and full-dry visual result separately. No test for actual adhesion, force resistance, waterproofness or long-term durability.

Record 1 - Preparation and wet-contact observations

Feature | Trial A | Trial B

Clay brand/batch (same) | _____ | _____

Base and cap still soft? | yes [ ] no [ ] | yes [ ] no [ ]

Base pad outline and thickness | _____ | _____

Cap shape and thickness | _____ | _____

Both opposing faces scored? | yes [ ] no [ ] | yes [ ] no [ ]

Maker-approved medium | slight damp [ ] prohibited [ ] | approved slip [ ] A repeat [ ] not attempted [ ]

Wet seam gap, slumping, cracking | _____ | _____

B actually received slip? | not applicable | yes [ ] no [ ]

More moisture than maker permits? | yes [ ] no [ ] | yes [ ] no [ ]

For B slip only: manufacturer instruction authorising slip: _____

Product-specific minimum thickness guidance: _____

Any change of brand, contact pressure, pad size or drying position? _____

Record 2 - Drying, visual seam and safe-use checklist

[ ] One known maker/batch of soft air-dry clay; relevant label read.

[ ] Pad TOP and cap UNDERSIDE each scored with blunt shallow marks.

[ ] No sharp gouge, cut-through, hard piece or thin base.

[ ] A slight moisture contact used only with manufacturer approval.

[ ] B marked correctly as approved slip, A-method repeat or not attempted.

[ ] Slip (if used) made only as the exact maker permits.

[ ] No puddled water, heavy glue, rigid armature or forced pressure.

[ ] Samples remained on one supported safe drying board.

[ ] Manufacturer’s FULL dry instructions followed; or marked PENDING.

[ ] A seam appearance: intact [ ] hairline [ ] open [ ] pending [ ].

[ ] B seam appearance: intact [ ] hairline [ ] open [ ] not made [ ].

[ ] No bending, lifting by caps, pulling, falling, washing or force tests.

[ ] Clay scraps contained, dust damp-wiped and hands washed.

[ ] Small pieces safely stored away from children, pets and food.

Started drying: _____ Maker full-dry/pending: _____

Observed crack or gap timing: _____ Warping: _____

What was comparable? _____ What differed? _____

One change for a future practice join: _____

Technical background, source attribution and real testing limits

The two small pad-and-cap comparisons, both-face crosshatching diagram, brand-authorised damp versus optional slip routes and separate wet/dried maker records are original Steadleaf Press educational content. The technique facts below were checked against original manufacturer literature; no source illustration, photographs, copyrighted pattern chart or tutorial passage has been copied.

- Crayola, Why has my Air-Dry Clay piece cracked?: https://www.crayola.com/products/brands/scribble-scrubbie/faqs/why-has-my-air-dry-clay-piece-cracked-faq

- Crayola Canada, Air-Dry Clay White: https://www.crayola.com/en-ca/products/clay-and-modeling-compounds/crayola-air-dry-clay-white-575050

- Crayola Education, Score and Slip: https://www.crayola.com/docs/default-source/canada/project-plans/famouscanadiansprairies_compressed.pdf

- Sculpd, How durable are the finished pieces?:
https://help.sculpd.com/en-US/how-durable-are-the-finished-pieces-1777937

- Sculpd, Common Sculpting Terms (the maker does not use slip for its own air-dry clay):
https://help.sculpd.com/en-US/common-sculpting-terms-1811496

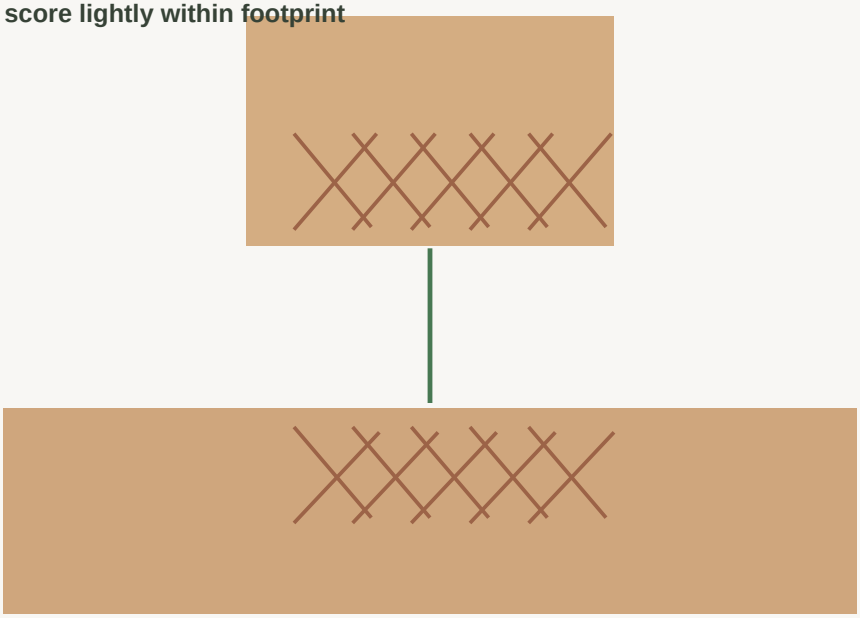
- Sculpd, Cracks in the Clay: https://help.sculpd.com/en-US/cracks-in-the-clay-1811503

Limits: No actual soft clay contact, scoring, slip dosing, drying, measured crack outcomes, pull/shear tests, strength, durability, food safety, wet/weather, printed-to-scale or material health tests. This original digital adult craft guide cannot certify a secure load-bearing clay bond.

Score BOTH opposing contact faces

A low cap meets a broad base. Soft clay only.

CAP UNDERSIDE: score lightly within footprint



BASE TOP: score lightly within footprint

Never score through the pad, only shallow hatch lines.

Maker-dependent example: pad 5x4cm; cap 2x2cm.

Low broad soft join, no tall knob or load connection.

Drawing only. No full-size paper template or tested strength.

A damp / B approved slip or repeat

A / SCORE + PERMITTED DAMP

Score BOTH opposing soft contact faces.

Barely damp ONLY when actual maker permits.

Seat gently; blend a little existing clay.

B / SCORE + MAKER-APPROVED SLIP

Slip ONLY when specifically approved for this formula.

Otherwise repeat A; label NOT slip comparison.

Or mark B NOT ATTEMPTED if no valid method.

Product-specific: Sculpd does NOT use conventional slip.

Do not borrow Crayola slip method for every air-dry formula.

Wet joint preparation: A and B

Clay maker/batch: _____ Date: _____

CHECK	A	B
Both pieces soft	_____	_____
Pad TOP scored	_____	_____
Cap underside scored	_____	_____
Maker-approved medium	_____	_____
Wet seam gapping	_____	_____
Wet cap slump	_____	_____
Slip really used	_____	_____

B method: approved slip [ ] A repeat [ ] NOT made [ ]

Dry seam appearance and safe cleanup

- [ ] Read exact clay manufacturer joining instructions
- [ ] Single brand/batch, FOUR similarly SOFT parts
- [ ] Both mating faces shallow-scored with blunt tool
- [ ] A moisture used only when maker permits
- [ ] B slip made only where maker explicitly supports it
- [ ] B repeat or not attempted labelled honestly
- [ ] Both low joined samples supported flat to dry
- [ ] Full maker drying / pending observation recorded
- [ ] A seam: intact [ ] hairline [ ] open [ ] pending [ ]
- [ ] B seam: intact [ ] hairline [ ] open [ ] not made [ ]
- [ ] No lift-by-cap, pull, bend, soak or shear tests
- [ ] Damp cleanup, craft-only tools, kids/pets protected

Visual observation ONLY. No tested adhesive/bond strength.