

Barbara Barnes of Emerald Falls Pottery

Pottery Review – Always remember, clay responds to a controlled and gentle touch. These directions should be mastered and will result in going to the next step for a bowl, vase or mug etc.

1. **WEDGING** your clay on a wedging board in a spiral or bread dough fashion will push the air bubbles out. Wedge approximately 50 times.
2. **FORM** the clay lump into a round ball shape either by throwing the clay on to a wedging board or any hard surface or using your hands to warm the clay.
3. **THROW** the prepared ball of clay onto the center of the wheelhead of the potter's wheel and begin centering by 'tapping on' with your hands while the wheel is off and your hands dry.
4. **CENTER** your clay using a generous amount of water on your hands and adhering the clay to the wheelhead. Centering clay is the most important step in forming a vessel.
5. **HUG** your clay with your hands using equal pressure keeping your thumbs flat on top of the clay – push the clay into a cone shape. Push the cone back down with the palm of your hands and using your '**comfort hand**' apply equal pressure to flatten the top of the cone. Do this at least 3 times until the clay is centered.
6. **DIVE** into the center of the clay using your thumbs – pushing straight down – leaving ¼” to ½” on the bottom. Test with the needle tool.
7. **COMPRESS** your rim – sides – using your fingers or sponge.
8. **OPEN** your clay with your '**comfort hand**' beside the clay and using 2 fingers pull the clay towards your belly.
9. **COMPRESS** your rim, bottom of the vessel, using your fingers or sponge. The rib is a good tool for compressing.
10. **PULLING UP THE SIDES** – Using both sets of fingers with equal pressure and the clay in between, start coaxing your clay to move upward. Continue, keeping your hands moist with water. Do this 3 or 4 times until the sides are of the desired thickness for your vessel. Compress your rim and the bottom of the cylinder every time you move the clay upward.
11. **COLLAR** the rim in to bring the vessel back into center, forming your hands in a ring around the top will accomplish this.
12. **THE CYLINDER** is ready to be shaped into the vessel of your choice.
13. **PRACTICE, PRACTICE** – see you in class!