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Art in Metal Clay

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# How to make your own low-cost clay extruder

This clay extruder is made mostly of plumbing fittings, available at a local hardware store, typically all on the same lane. I got mine at Ace Hardware. All the parts are available online. If you want them all from one online source, check Amazon. The clay extruder fits all the discs of the commercial extruders, including the one currently sold at Michaels. It also fits most *cake decorating tips*.



## What you need

Plastic gray threaded pipe, 3" x 1/2"



1/2" fitting threaded cap



1/2" (standard) plastic coupler for cake decorating available at Michaels, Jo-Ann Fabrics, and most cooking supply stores.



Drip stopper (the smaller kind). It comes with 3 tips. One of them will fit perfectly into the pipe. Screw it onto the bottom of the thread.



## Assembling the Extruder

1. Make a hole at the top of the cap. You can use a drill bit or a diamond-plated burr mounted on a rotary tool. The hole should be just big enough for the thread of the drip stopper to pass through (without the tip).



2. Insert one or two rubber washers (O rings) inside the coupler (depending on its depth).



3. To prevent clay from sticking to the tip, cover it with a plastic or rubber disk. I filled it with polymer clay, baked it, and glued it on using epoxy.



4. Insert the drip stopper in the pipe.  
Remove the handle and insert the top through the hole in the cup.



5. Screw the cup to the top of the pipe.  
Put the handle back. Screw the coupler to the bottom of the pipe. Now it's all assembled.



6. The handle may tend to fall out. To prevent this, just wrap each end of the handle with a rubber band.

7. To make a tube, insert the tube adapter into the coupler. Turn the handle counter-clockwise to make room for the clay. Fill the pipe with clay, starting from the bottom of the pipe, and screw the coupler back on.



8. Turning the handle clockwise will make a long seamless tube.



There are several advantages to this self-made clay extruder – first of all, its low cost. Also, each part is easily and cheaply replaceable. Anything that touches the clay is made out of plastic, so there will be no unwanted chemical reaction with the clay. And last, since a coupler is used, all icing tips can be used as well, which opens up a whole range of decorating possibilities.