

LEARNING RESOURCE



Mud Bricks

Building with mud is one of the oldest methods of construction in the world. Mud walls and buildings are made using mixtures of clay soils, chalk, sand, and straw.

This project shows you how to create simple mud bricks using ice cube trays as moulds. By trying out different mixtures of soil, sand, straw, or other natural materials (depending on what you have available) you can find out which combinations create stronger, firmer bricks. It is a great way to engage children in engineering and construction. I would advise you to work outside and embrace a trial and error approach, remaking and recycling any bricks that crumble and fall apart.

What will I need for this project?

Soil

Sand, stones, straw, leaves, branches or other natural fibres to try adding to your mud

Ice cube trays and a plastic container

Container of water

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Step one:

Gather your materials together and find a suitable outdoor spot.



Step three:

Pack the mud mixture into the ice cube trays, pressing the mud down firmly.



Step two:

Mix your soil in with some natural fibres/materials. You could try adding some sand and straw, or use other natural materials that you have available such as dried foliage or bark chippings. Add some water to your mixture – you are aiming for a sticky mud consistency.



Step four:

Leave your packed ice cube trays out in the sun to dry before turning them upside down and carefully releasing the mud bricks.



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Finally, start building with your bricks. What kind of wall, structure or tower can you build? Try out different ways of stacking or aligning the bricks.



Ways to develop further:

- Try creating mud bricks from different mixtures of natural materials. Which mixtures create the strongest bricks?
- Play with combining mud bricks alongside cardboard, sticks or even coloured and patterned materials to create your own miniature monument, shelter or stage set