

10 WAYS TO MAKE SURE YOUR NEXT RESIN CASTING IS A DISASTER

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Resin casting is a lot of fun. I love the versatility of embedding objects in the resin along with making it any color I want. Unfortunately, it isn't always as easy as it looks and can cause frustration for even the most experienced crafter. A little bit of planning is all it takes to make sure you have resin casting success. Otherwise, here are 10 ways to mess up your next resin casting project:

1. Measure your resin and hardener haphazardly. I cannot tell you how important accurate measurements are to making sure your resin cures. And when I say accurate, I mean using something to measure your resin that can give you accurate measurements. I like to use mixing cups with graduated lines, but I know others like to use kitchen measuring cups and spoons. I cannot stress enough that pouring some resin into the container lid or marking lines on the side of a cup is asking for a problem. I'm sure it works — at least sometimes — for getting the right amount measured. If you are going to invest in using a resin, use good tools to make sure you can measure things properly. Resin is not very forgiving of failing to mix the proper amounts of resin and hardener together.

2. Mix your resin and hardener — eh *good enough* — together Mixing and measuring (see number 1) are 75 percent of the success when it comes to resin casting. You need to mix carefully and thoroughly, making sure you scrape the sides of your cup and mixing utensil several times during the process. As particular as I am about measuring, I am just as fussy about mixing. Even when you think you have it mixed together, you need to mix more. My personal rule is that I mix the resin and hardener together for 10 percent of the pot time. For example, with the Resin Obsession super clear resin, pot time is approximately 25 minutes. That means I will mix the resin and hardener together for 2 1/2 minutes, all while scraping the sides of my cup and mixing utensil at least 3 times during the process.

3. Fail to learn the details about the resin you are using. At a minimum, you need to know minimum and maximum mixing amounts for the resin, pot time, intended uses and limitations specific to that resin. You cannot assume all resins are the same! While experience working with one resin is incredibly useful to enhancing your skills, it doesn't always transfer to working with a new resin. Start by reading the instructions of the resin you

want to use and learn all you can. Ask the retailer or review the manufacturer's website to look for additional information like frequently asked questions and troubleshooting advice.



4. Give yourself too little time to work on a project. Guilty as charged on this one. Nothing says 'let's tempt Murphy's Law' more than rushing through a resin casting. It is incredibly tempting when you have 30 minutes and think to yourself that you have plenty of time to prep a mold, mix resin, color it, get glitter together, pour it, get out bubbles and clean up. Yeah, once I write it down, I don't have that much time! I find myself rushing at the end and invariably make a mess or rush through an important step. My new personal resin studio rule is that if I don't have *at least an hour*, I don't cast resin. Instead, I might work on other things to help me get ready for the next resin casting like sealing papers or prepping molds with mold release, but I don't break open the resin bottles until I have 60 minutes or more.

5. Don't get everything you need together until after mixing the resin. Now where is my glitter? Oh yeah, I wanted to put those seashells from my beach trip in these molds. Meanwhile, you have mixed your resin and the clock is ticking on the pot time. By the time you find the seashells, your resin is starting to gel and you have to start over. Ugh. By the way, I also find myself in this trap when I have a little bit of leftover resin for a project. I rush around trying to find a way to use those last two drops because

heaven forbid I waste the stuff! I like to have some 'experiments' ready to go for when I do have leftover resin. It's a way to put the extra to good use.

6. Pick an (important) project that is over your skill level. In order to get good at resin, I recommend you start small and work your way towards more difficult projects. Get a good feeling for the resin first, then develop your skills with more complicated projects all the while knowing you are going to make mistakes. It has been my experience that the mistakes are just as important as the successes when it comes to improving your resin casting skills. Where I see disasters happen is when helping other aspiring resin crafters with a project when they have no resin experience and the added pressure of 'this is going to be a gift'. I hate that kind of pressure and I'm not new to resin! While I don't want to discourage crafters new to resin, I want those people to have the expectation that perhaps there are too many factors at play here and something might go wrong. Let's step back and see how we can take a smaller bite out of this project and make sure there is resin casting success.

7. Overlook other areas that can impact your resin casting. You have done the most awesome job of measuring and mixing your resin. You poured it into your bezel immediately and everything looks great. Oh wait, now you see a bubble...and here comes your studio kitty...and your family is wondering where you will eat dinner in an hour because you are using the table for your resin casting. While the resin is a very important part of the resin casting process, there are other factors that can impact your success just as much as the resin.

8. Choose the wrong resin for your project. Just because a resin is giving you fabulous results in your bezels, doesn't mean you can use it for your molds. Use a resin that worked great for a table top coating? Would you use it for coating your polymer clay charms? Asking the retailer or the manufacturer about whether or not the resin you are considering is appropriate for your project can avoid the heartache of a resin casting disaster later.

9. Add anything to the resin and assume it will cure. Resin is very specific (some more so than others) about what you can and cannot add to it and have it still cure. You cannot assume that any colorant or additive will not impact the final casting.

10. Blame problems on everything but the person mixing the resin. In my plethora of resin casting failures, I have never found that the product was to blame. The resin will do what it is supposed to do, provided you do your job properly. If you need help, we have several blog posts on resin troubleshooting in addition to our resin forum for advice.