

USING THE PUGMILL

1. Clean up pugmill area; take your wire, plastic bags, and clay to the machine. You can pug clay that is at a workable consistency or you can pug together soft clay with slightly stiff clay to achieve a workable consistency. You **must not** pug hard clay which will damage the machine.
2. Ask for the key and gauge in the office.
3. Unlock pugmill and immediately return key to office. Be sure gauge is in a safe location; it is fragile and the machine will not work without it.
4. Remove **all** plastic from pugmill. Remember to remove plastic from inside the pugging chamber. Remove any dried clay from chambers. Save plastic to reseal the machine.
5. Carefully clean the rubber seal of the gauge and the top edge of the vacuum chamber.
6. Be sure the vacuum release valve is closed.
7. Place gauge on top of vacuum chamber.
8. Turn on **two** switches (one on pugmill, one on compressor). I usually do this simultaneously.
9. Watch for pressure buildup on gauge. If pressure does not rise, slightly move gauge to try to find better seal. If it still does not rise, turn off both switches, check both surfaces for debris, then try again.
10. Once pressure begins to rise, start feeding clay into the pugging chamber, using the lever to compress clay into the machine. **Never** insert fingers or implements into the pugging chamber while the machine is on.
13. During pugging, feed clay into the machine at a steady rate. Do not walk away or take long pauses which can lead to loss of compression resulting in air bubbles in your clay. If you are pugging together a soft/stiff clay mixture, feed small amounts of each alternately.
14. As your pugged clay "log" emerges from the machine, it will bend and touch the table. Place a piece of plastic where it falls to prevent it from dragging on the table.
15. Use your wire to cut the log at intervals of about one foot, stacking the logs at the end of the table until you are finished pugging.
16. Turn off both switches about 30 seconds after you have fed in the last of your clay. Cut clay off even with the mouth of the machine.
17. Store pugged clay in doubled plastic bags. Note that a bag of pugged clay will dry more rapidly than a bag of unpugged clay because more surface area is exposed.
18. Once the pressure is at zero, remove gauge and return it to office.
19. Replace plastic: inside and outside the pugging chamber, inside the vacuum chamber, over the mouth of the machine.
20. Lock the machine closed.

USING PUGGED CLAY: As tempting as it might be, you cannot cut cylinders of clay off of your log and place them directly on the wheelhead for throwing. This will result in a much greater probability of difficult centering and cracking in your pieces. Reason: the pugmill homogenizes and de-airs your clay, but it does not encourage the clay particles to find their natural alignment which promotes workability and stability. It is best to slightly wedge pieces, then round them into balls for use.