



What a Character[®]
Mold F4

*A 3 inch jolly male face (with Optional Ears)
designed by Maureen Carlson*



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What a Character[®] Flexible Push Mold F4

PREPARING THE MOLD

This mold is intended for use with both polymer and air-drying clays or modeling compounds. A release agent is usually not necessary, but if your clay is especially soft or sticky, you may need to brush the mold prior to each use with water or with a very light dusting of cornstarch or baby powder. Be sure and brush out any visible powder before using.



TOOLS: Pictured are the tools that Maureen used when creating the F4 samples. Notice the two rounded tools in the top left corner. They are used for making smooth holes and for tamping clay into the mold. Maureen made them from polymer clay, making each to fit its intended purpose plus to be comfortable in her hand.

USING THE MOLD



From conditioned clay, roll a 2 1/8-inch ball. Roll ball into a short cone shape.

NOTE: Of course you could also use LESS clay and pull just a portion of the total face from the mold. Your choice ...



Flatten cone, pressing thumbs into center of cone as you do so in order to create a slightly hollow cone. Be sure and keep pointed center, as this will become the nose. Flatten until cone walls are approximately 1/2 inch thick.



Press clay into mold, being sure that point fits into nose.
 Note: The finished face will be hollow in the back for 3 reasons:

1. Dries or bakes more evenly
2. Uses less clay
3. Easier to manipulate



Gently press edges of clay to fit sides of mold. Use thumbs to press clay **FIRMLY** into mold to fill all crevices. Pay special attention to chin and nose area. Some clay may come outside of mold, which is fine. **Be careful that you don't get the walls too thin. They should be at least 1/4-inch thick in order to give support to the face.**



Alternate Method: Use a smooth, rounded tool to tamp clay into mold, then use thumbs to do final pressing.



Carefully lift clay face straight out of mold, using both hands.



Trim edges of clay face, using scissors.



Use face as it is, or add extra details. Note, the face at this point is very flexible and may have shifted or become lop-sided. So, if you are finished with the face, gently reposition sides of face before baking or drying.



ALTERING The FACE

To add character, deepen lines by pressing the pointed end of a needle against lines that already exist. Press, don't cut or drag! Wrinkles are soft.



To create nostrils, press a blunt needle tool, such as a knitting needle, into nostril, then GENTLY push up and out. NOTE: You can also enlarge nose from the inside by pressing needle up into nose creating a cavity.



Use small paint brush to brush curl of nostril towards center of nose. To smooth clay, dip brush into clay softener or 91% Isopropyl Alcohol, then move clay using painting motion.



Would you like an open mouth? If so, use a pointed blade, such as that of a paring knife, and cut FROM ONE CORNER into CENTER, and then repeat on the other side, from corner to center. Gently lift lip. Use brush to smooth interior edges.



To alter shape of face, try pressing sides of face together, to create a narrow face.

For a shorter face, press top of head and chin towards each other.



There are many ways to finish the eyes, including painting, pressing in beads for eyes and adding colored clay. An easy way is to indent a circle for the iris and then poke the center of the circle with a sharp needle tool to create the pupil. For a simple character, you could leave as is and not paint, or you can add paint.

Pictured is a metal tool with a hole in the middle of it. When pressed into the eye it leaves a ring shape which appears to be the edge of the iris.

This particular tool is a re-purposed knitting needle that was part of a circular set. You also might use a metal ball point pen minus the ink cartridge. Be creative. Search through your office drawer and see what you might find.



To make pupil, press sharp needle tool into exact center of circle.



To give the face extra support, or if you wish to create a full head, make a foil armature for it. This foil armature is also useful if you intend to alter the face, as the foil keeps the face from shifting out of shape too quickly.

NOTE: In the sample, a wood dowel was added to the foil egg to create a stand. A sharp needle was used to create a hole just behind the pointed part of the egg. Then the hole was enlarged with the knitting needle. The pointed part of the foil egg creates support for the chin, leaving the back of the head rounded, more like a half ball.



To make foil egg, begin with a 2 ½-foot long piece of regular weight 12-inch wide foil. Crumple foil into a loose egg shape.



Roll foil firmly against work surface to sculpt it into a tight, symmetrical egg shape. **NOTE:** If your end result is to be a hollow clay face mask, flatten egg on the back side so that it lays flat on the work surface. Before adding clay face, lay a doubled sheet of foil over the foil egg. Press only the center of foil to egg shape, leaving edges of foil flat so that the finished clay mask will be easier to remove.



How big should the egg be? This depends on how thick the clay walls of your face are, but in general, the foil egg should be big enough so that, when placed in the mold, you'll have ¼ inch of space all around the edges. Of course, if the walls are thicker, you'll need a smaller egg.



Place face over foil egg, pressing gently to fit. It's OK to leave some air space behind the face. This may be especially important if the foil doesn't quite match the inside shape of the face. Don't try to force the clay to match the foil or you'll deform the face.



To Make Ears:

For a half head, to add ear, first, between top of eye and bottom of nose, press in an indentation. Use rounded tool to create hole where ear hole will be. Add ear over this indentation.



For a complete head, add clay over back of head BEFORE adding ear. Maureen finds this easier to do if she first BAKES or HARDENS the face. It's so easy to forget about a soft face and accidentally smash it while you're concentrating on another part.

To cover back of head, begin with a 1 1/2-inch ball of clay, then flatten to 1/4" thick. Press over back of head. Trim away excess clay. Press edges of raw clay over edge of hardened clay. Use a blunt needle tool to distress or "stitch" the raw edge. Scrape across raw clay with needle tool to feather edge. Then do final smoothing with 91% Isopropyl Alcohol or Clay Softener. Make indentation and hole for ear.



Start each ear with a 1/2" ball of clay. Roll into a teardrop, then flatten slightly.



Press flattened teardrop into ear cavity in mold. Press all clay away from edges of mold and into center. If there's too much clay, remove ear. Cut away clay, and, yes, start over!



Press ear over indentation in side of head. Press rounded tool into center of ear to sink it into the head. Use blunt needle tool to blend front edge of ear.

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