

**Sculpture**  
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**Plaster stages**

1. **The liquid stage:**  
This stage occurs immediately after mixing with water. The mixture at this stage can be poured, brushed and thrown. It lasts about 15 minutes.
2. **The putty stage:**  
The plaster thickens to the consistency of toothpaste. In this stage, plaster can be applied with a putty knife or spatula, and it can be modeled like clay. It lasts about 5 minutes.
3. **The rigid stage:**  
Occurs once the mixture begins to set. The plaster becomes brittle and it can be cut with a knife or dug into with a spoon. The plaster is very fragile and should not be vibrated, dropped or have pressure on it.
4. **The set stage:**  
The plaster begins to heat up and obviously hardens. The heat that is radiated depends on the size of the mixture and the setting speed. When the plaster cools, it is a good time to remove it from the mold and trim any unwanted edges since it is still very pliable.
5. **The cure stage:**  
Lasts from the time the plaster cools until it dries completely. The mixture hardens substantially and metal tools are required for its manipulation. Because it still contains about 18% water, the tools get clogged and require cleaning quite often.
6. **The dry stage:**  
The plaster no longer contains moisture and it is at maximum strength and very brittle at this stage. It can be sanded with sandpaper or painted.