How to make a modeling clay apple

Materials: Ordinary non-drying modeling clay: red, brown, green; a board. No frame or glue.



1. Reserve three colors

Knead each color separately. Roll one large red ball and two much smaller balls, brown for the stem and green for the leaf.

Check: Three soft separate balls; red is much larger.

Fix: Warm firm clay in your palms and knead it before rolling.



2. Make a stable body

Roll the red ball between your palms. Set it on the board and press down very lightly to make a small flat patch underneath. Keep the sides round.

Check: The body stands on the board and is still nearly round.

Fix: If it becomes a pancake, gather it into a ball and press less.



3. Press a shallow dimple

Support the red body in your palm. Press one fingertip gently into the top center, making a wide shallow dip. Stop before the sides bulge.

Check: The top has a visible dip; the apple has no hole through it.

Fix: Smooth a deep hole closed with red clay and press again more lightly.

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4. Seat the short stem

Roll the brown ball into a short thick cylinder. Press its lower end into the dimple. Smooth a little red clay toward its base while supporting the apple.

Check: The stem stays upright and its base does not lift when touched lightly.

Fix: Shorten a bending stem by pressing its ends together; reseat its broad base.



5. Shape a thick leaf

Roll the green ball into a teardrop by rolling one end more lightly between your fingers. Flatten it gently on the board. Keep a rounded broad base, pointed tip and thick edge.

Check: One small leaf is separate beside the stemmed apple; its edges do not tear.

Fix: Gather a torn thin leaf into a ball and flatten the next teardrop less.



6. Join the leaf and check

Rest the leaf on the upper red shoulder beside the stem, tip pointing out. Press its broad end onto red clay and smooth the join edge. Lift the model from underneath, then set it down.

Check: The apple stands, the stem stays seated and the leaf join remains closed.

Fix: Remove a loose leaf, knead its base and the joining patch, then press them together again.

Try independently: Without the pictures, make a yellow or green apple. Choose a smaller leaf and decide how much to flatten the bottom. Check that it stands and both joins hold. What changed when you pressed more gently?