How to make a modeling clay snail

Materials: Soft non-drying clay in two colors, a board. Eyes optional.



1. Soften the clay and roll two balls

Take one piece for the body and a slightly larger piece for the shell. Save two small pieces of green for the feelers. Knead each color separately, then roll two balls between your palms.

Check: The surface is smooth and the clay bends rather than crumbles.

Fix: Knead stiff clay a little longer in your hands. Do not heat it on a stove or in a microwave.



2. Roll an even rope for the shell

Put the orange ball on your board. Roll your palm back and forth, moving from the middle toward the ends. Make a rope about as thick as a pencil.

Check: The rope is about the same thickness along its length and does not stick to your palm.

Fix: Avoid pulling the ends. Roll thick patches with short strokes; knead a very thin patch together and start again.



3. Coil the rope into a spiral

Lay the rope on the board. Curl one end into a small hook and wrap the remaining length around it. Each turn touches the previous one. Press the outer end gently against the side, keeping the spiral visible.

Check: There are no large gaps, the spiral remains visible and the disk lifts as one piece.

Fix: Nudge a loose turn against its neighbor. If the coil is flattened, unroll it and try again with less pressure.

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4. Make a broad body and raise the head

Roll the green ball into a short thick sausage. Taper one end for the tail. Keep the other end rounded and lift it slightly for the head. Press the underside gently onto the board.

Check: The body sits steadily, with room behind the head for the shell and a visible tail.

Fix: Shorten and thicken a drooping neck. If the body rocks, flatten and widen its underside gently against the board.



5. Attach the shell to the back

Stand the orange spiral upright on the broad middle of the body. Support both sides and gently press only the bottom edge into the green clay.

Check: Let go: the snail stands, the shell stays upright and the head remains visible.

Fix: Flatten the shell's bottom edge a little and widen the back. If the shell is too large, remove part of the outer turn.



6. Add short feelers and check the snail

Roll the saved green pieces into two short thick ropes. Press their bases onto the head. Add two tiny black clay dots on the head for eyes if you like. Lift the snail by its body and set it down again.

Check: The feelers stay attached, the spiral is clear and the snail stands after being moved.

Fix: Shorten drooping feelers and thicken their bases. Skip tiny eyes if they are difficult for the child: the snail is still recognizable.

Try independently: Make a second snail without the step pictures. Choose new colors and a smaller shell, and decide how broad its body needs to be. Explain why both snails stand. Then bend a short rope into a wave: how does its shape differ from a spiral?