How to make an air-dry clay pinch pot

Materials: Soft air-dry clay, a board and a cloth.



1. Roll a soft ball

Knead a small piece and roll it between your palms in circular movements. It should fit comfortably in a palm. Seal unused clay so it does not dry out.

Check: The surface has no deep cracks and yields to your fingers.

Fix: Knead firm patches again. Add water only as the manufacturer directs; wet clay can lose its shape.



2. Press a thumb hollow

Support the ball in one palm. Gradually press the other thumb into the center. Stop before your thumb reaches the supporting palm: leave a thick, intact base.

Check: The hollow is roughly centered and there is no hole through the bottom.

Fix: While the clay is soft, bring the edges of a tiny hole together and smooth both sides. For a large tear, knead the piece back into a ball.



3. Pinch and turn the walls

Place your thumb inside and index finger outside a wall. Make one gentle short pinch, then turn the bowl a little. Repeat around the opening to widen it gradually. Do not pull the rim upward.

Check: The bowl stays low, the walls feel similar in thickness and the rim does not droop.

Fix: Pinch a thick patch separately. Stop stretching thin patches; lower their soft edge slightly and smooth it. About 6–8 mm is a thickness guide unless the package specifies otherwise.

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4. Set it on a flat base

Set the bowl gently on the board, supporting its side. If the base is rounded, press very lightly from inside while supporting the outside wall. Remove your hands.

Check: It does not rock, the walls keep their height and the bottom is not pierced.

Fix: Flatten only the raised part of the base. Do not press the whole bowl down from above: the walls could fold.



5. Smooth the uneven rim

Support the outside wall and gently run a finger over rough places on the rim. Slightly dampen the finger only if the instructions allow water. Keep a thick rounded edge.

Check: There are no sharp projections or deep cracks, and the bowl stays upright.

Fix: Move soft clay across a tiny crack and smooth it. Do not pour water into the bowl or stretch a dry patch.



6. Check the shape and let it dry

Check stability and the intact base. Move the piece together with its board and dry in the conditions stated on the package. Time varies with brand and thickness; do not load the bowl before it is fully dry.

Check: Before drying, the bowl stands, its walls do not collapse and its base is intact.

Fix: While soft, return to evening the walls or base. Do not bend dried clay. Do not speed drying in an oven or on a radiator.

Try independently: Use a second equal-sized ball to make a wider, lower bowl without the step pictures. Decide where to use less pressure. Compare the stability and wall thickness of both shapes. Explain how turning helped you avoid a thin patch.