

Making a Coil Pot

According to archaeologists, Native Americans were making ceramic coil pots over 1,000 years ago. The technique is still a winner today, because it's easy to roll out the coils and make beautiful, sturdy bowls and vases. Plus, it gives little fingers a fine-motor workout, which will help with writing skills later on.

What You Need:

- A big lump of clay if you have access to a kiln, or a batch of bakeable playdough if you don't
- Water
- A bowl
- A kiln or oven



What You Do:

1. Put $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of water in a bowl with a small chunk of clay and stir until liquefied. This is called "slip." Follow instructions for bakeable playdough if you don't.)
2. Help your child knead the clay like bread dough to get all the air bubbles out. Don't overknead; if it starts to crack or feel dry, you overdid it.
3. Break off a chunk and pat it in your hands to form a round disc like a pancake. This is the base of your bowl, so make it the right size for the project you have in mind.
4. Now show your child how to break off a smaller chunk and it roll between your hands or against the tabletop to form a cylinder, or "snake". Continue smoothing until the cylinder is even and uniform.
5. Curl the cylinder, starting at one end, around the diameter of the disc. Repeat.
6. As you build up the walls of your pot, show your child how to smooth the inside of the pot with your hands. You can leave the outside coils showing if you like, or smooth them also. Build the pot as high as you like.
7. Gently push the bottom coil against the base, making sure they are firmly attached.
8. Even out the sides with your hands, so the bowl is symmetrical.
9. Dip your fingers in the slip and gently smooth the inside walls and the outer base with the mixture.
10. Fire or bake as directed by recipe.