

Candle Making Basics

Contributed by Pillsbury

Candle making is quite a simple and straightforward process that can be a lot of fun.

In it's simplest form very little equipment is needed, this can be put together quite cheaply.

Basic equipment:

double boiler (a bowl over a pan of water will do)

thermometer

mould

jug

wick

mould

seal (Blutac can be used)

and of course wax.

Method:

Put the wax on to melt, so it has time to cool a little before it is poured

Thread the wick through the bottom of the mould and then tie the top end of the wick to the support over the mould, once it is tied off then pull the wick tight through the bottom of the mould and seal the hole with mould seal or Blutac.

This is a proper candle mould but many containers can be pressed into service including yoghurt pots or plastic glasses. It is important to remember when picking a mould that the bottom of the mould will be the top of the finished candle when it is removed.

Once the mould is threaded and the hole sealed it is time to pour the wax, pour into the jug first as it's far easier to pour into the mould from a jug. Check temperature before pouring, anything between 60-70c is OK but the cooler the better.

Fill the mould almost to the top and leave to cool, don't attempt to move it until a nice thick skin has formed over the top, this will prevent any accidents.

As you can see the wax has shrunk during cooling, this is one reason to pour as cool as possible, the cooler the wax the less shrinkage. If it shrinks too much just melt a little more wax and top up the mould.

After you have topped it up leave it to set again before you try and move it.

Leave the candle to set hard, preferably over night and then get ready to de mould it, remove the blutac from the bottom and then gently pull the cross support of the wick, if the candle doesn't feel like it's moving then put the whole lot in the fridge for an hour to shrink the wax more and try again.

Once de moulded you just need to trim the support from the bottom and the wick and you have made your first candle.

The wax I used for this candle was a mix of beaded paraffin wax and an old part used green candle as see in the picture.

If you want to colour or scent your candles you can use dye discs and essential oils from candle making suppliers, it is possible to use wax crayons to colour the wax but remember to use a white wax base.

If you want to use beeswax it is best to mixed with ordinary wax otherwise it can burn smokey, I would use no more than 20% beeswax.

Making your own candles if fun and rewarding. There is a never-ending range of possibilities including: Different shaped moulds (including making your own from damp sand). Scented candles; you can make your own lavender-scented wax by adding flowers to molten wax and keeping it warm for a couple of hours to extract the essential oils.

I hope this is of use to you and you have a go at this fun and useful hobby.