

Cute Candy Necklace

Materials:

Polymer clay – white, lilac, orange, pink, brown and green
Cotton cord
Crimps, jump rings and clasp

Tools:

Rolling pin
Craft knife
Cocktail stick
Needle



Note

All the colours for the dolly mixtures were blended with white to give a more candy-coloured feel to the necklace.



Instructions:

For the round sweets:

- 1 Roll a 2cm ($\frac{3}{4}$ in) diameter ball of white polymer clay into a sausage shape with your fingers. It should be 6cm ($2\frac{3}{8}$ in) long and 8mm ($\frac{5}{16}$ in) in diameter.
- 2 Shape a 3cm ($1\frac{1}{4}$ in) diameter ball of lilac polymer clay then elongate with your fingers into a thick sausage shape. Flatten it with a rolling pin to 6mm ($\frac{1}{4}$ in) thick, then wrap it around the thin white sausage.
- 3 Join the ends of the lilac polymer clay together around the sausage, then roll gently, pulling outwards until the edges are smooth and the roll is 1cm ($\frac{2}{8}$ in) in diameter.

4 Cut slices 1cm ($\frac{3}{8}$ in) thick from the end with a craft knife, then make holes through the middle of each piece with a needle. Repeat to make pink, brown, orange and green sweets.

For the square sweets:

5 Roll a white ball and an orange ball from polymer clay, making them roughly the size of a walnut, 3cm ($1\frac{1}{4}$ in) in diameter.

6 Slightly flatten the two balls with your fingers, then press them together and roll with a rolling pin to 1cm ($\frac{3}{8}$ in) thick.

7 Cut 1cm ($\frac{3}{8}$ in) squares with a craft knife to make little cube shapes. Make a hole through the middle of each piece with a needle.

For all beads:

8 Bake to set hard then cool. Thread the beads on to cotton cord. You will need around fifty mixed beads for a necklace. Fix crimps to the ends of the cord, then add jump rings and a clasp.



Sweets for my Sweet

The Licorice Allsorts necklace is a striking and fun alternative. To make sweets with more stripes (like the black and white ones), simply add four or five flattened balls in layers, roll them together and cut into slices.

Basic techniques and tools

Work surface

Always use a clean, smooth work surface. A cutting mat with a sheet of smooth paper over the top is ideal as you can easily change the paper if necessary. Otherwise, wipe the cutting mat regularly.

Hands and nails

Long fingernails will dig into the polymer clay and create unwanted marks, so it is best to keep them short. Wipe your hands frequently with wet wipes, as dark polymer clay colours can transfer on to paler ones. Be particularly careful with white polymer clay as it easily picks up specks of dust and other colours.

Tools

You do not necessarily need to buy special tools for polymer clay modelling. Good results can be achieved with household tools and other small items like cocktails sticks or wooden stirring sticks, which are ideal for neatening edges and making holes. Sandpaper, cheese graters, sieves and sponges are all useful for adding texture. Keep a small rolling pin for polymer clay which is not used for food. You will need a small craft knife or scalpel for cutting polymer clay. Polymer clay blades sold in craft shops are the perfect way to make straight lines and clean slices, but use these with caution as they are incredibly sharp! Round-nosed pliers are the best way to make wire loops. You will also need cutting pliers for trimming chain and jewellery findings. Flat-nosed pliers are used to open and close jump rings and press crimp ends.



Cutting shapes

Small confectionary cutters are ideal for making neat shapes from polymer clay. An apple corer or pen lids make useful circle cutters.

Some shapes (such as the gingerbread man) are easier to cut out using a paper template as a guide. Place the template on to rolled-out polymer clay, then carefully cut round it with a small craft knife. For symmetrical shapes, draw half the shape on to folded paper, then cut it out.

Conditioning clay and blending

Some polymer clay can be stiff when it is first opened. Knead it before you begin modelling, or try rolling it out with a rolling pin and folding it a few times to make it easier to work with. To make small quantities of paler shades and pastel colours, knead bright polymer clay colours with white. For blending large quantities, roll the colours together with a large rolling pin or use a pasta machine (my machine has only ever been used once to make pasta). Keep rolling and folding until you have an even blend.

Baking polymer clay

Polymer clay needs to be baked at a very low oven temperature to set it permanently hard. Put your polymer clay work on to a baking tray then follow the manufacturer's instructions for precise temperatures.

Making holes in beads

Carefully push a needle through polymer clay shapes to make holes. If the beads are going to be threaded, the holes need to be wide enough for the cord to pass through without getting stuck, widen the holes with a cocktail stick if necessary. Do this before baking, and be careful not to distort the shape.

Paint and varnish

Where paint effects are required, use ordinary acrylic paints. A layer of varnish gives a glossy finishing touch to polymer clay and will also help to keep any small pieces in place. Push an eye pin or headpin into the hole (made for the jewellery finding) so the varnish can be brushed on without touching your piece of work. Leave to dry with the end of the pin pushed into a piece of unbaked polymer clay.

Jewellery findings

Mini screw eyes are ideal for polymer clay as they have a fine screw thread, which can be securely fixed into small holes once your pieces are hardened. If you can't find these, snip the end of an eye pin and glue this into the hole instead.

Clockwise from bottom left: cutting mat, metal leaf, cheese grater, sieve, sandpaper, natural sponge, polymer clay, rolling pin, polymer clay blade, wooden stirrers, pen lid, cocktail sticks, needle, craft knife, wet wipes, jewellery findings, small confectionery cutters.

