

10. Pour from one spot, and then tip the mold to even out the resin. It should cover the pen blanks. If you are doing more than one mold, Lauren uses toothpicks to separate the molds. They can be turned off later.

11. Tap the mold to eliminate more bubbles caused by pouring. Place the mold(s) on a platform in the pot (you can turn one), fasten the lid (properly), and slowly build up the pressure. Different resins have different setting times. As you start experimenting, you may wish to use resins with longer times. As a rule of thumb, 30 to 50 min. is 'normal', but the molds can be left in the pot overnight. There will be a 5 to 10% shrinkage, and the blanks should come out of the mold(s) easily, if not left in too long.

12. Lauren recommends putting the block of resin and blanks back into the toaster oven at 150 degrees for about 30 min. to 'sure' set the resin.

13. The blanks are then cut apart on the band saw.

14. The amount of resin in each blank costs about \$2.50, not counting the colorant or powder.

More notes: LEGO building blocks can be used to make molds. I would cover them with Saran Wrap or such to protect the LEGO's. If you are casting unusual objects, these will make a variety of shapes. (It may ruin the blocks, so don't borrow them from your kids...).

You can use styrene plastic under your molds. "For Sale" signs from the hardware store are good for this. These are good if your paint pot has a curved bottom. A small baking pan will also work upside down as a platform with some bending.

If your paint pot is large, you can fill some of the volume up with sand in a cloth bag. This will help ease the work your compressor will have to do.

Some resins have a 'pot' time of only 3 min. (after mixing), so you have to move quickly if you want to force out the air bubbles. After 10 min, you may not be able to. Check the label. In some cases, the label has times for larger pieces. Take notes. Experiment. Take notes.

You can use rubber bands to hold the pen blanks down, so that they don't float. Put the toothpicks under the rubber bands.

If the resin isn't 'cured' when you slowly release the pressure, some of the bubbles may expand as you go back to room pressure.

Check the "shelf life" of your resin. Some of them must be used within 6 months. Some clear resins turn yellow when they get old.

If you are truly intending to do lots of moulding, you may want to build a jig or fixture with a handle that lets you lower the mold(s) into the pot in one smooth move. This can save time and spills.

If you buy a used pressure cooker (not recommended), you can make a new seal from hardware store gasket material, or pour RTV sealer poured into the lip. This is tricky.

We would love to see your results. Perhaps we can share info on our triumphs and failures.

\* Punky wood is partially rotted, and needs to be stabilized before turning. This process should stabilize it. You may want to stabilize it before trying to drill it.

\*\* Inert metal powder does not cause a reaction in the resin. It should not contain any chemicals.