

BONUS

**SLAB-
BUILDING
MISTAKES
TO AVOID**

**+ TEXTURE
IDEAS**

ARTABYS

Slab-Building Mistakes to Avoid + Texture Ideas

By Ed Shears, [Artabys.com](https://artabys.com)

From Ed

Hey folks Ed here.

Slab building's one of my favorite ways to shape clay, but I've messed up more than a few slabs learning the ropes. So I put together this cheat sheet with the biggest mistakes I've made (and fixed), plus some texture tricks I use in the studio. Print it, slap it on the wall, and let it save you some future clay heartache.

Top Slab-Building Mistakes to Avoid

1. Rolling Uneven Slabs

✓ Use guide sticks. Don't eyeball it, even-looking clay still warps.

2. Skipping Clay Compression

✓ Use a rib or even your hand to compress *both* sides of your slab. Cuts down on cracks later.

3. Flipping Too Soon

✓ Let the slabs set up a bit before flipping. If they're too soft, they stretch or warp when lifted.

4. Not Scoring Enough

✓ When joining pieces, don't just scratch the surface. Score well and use decent slip.

5. Joining Wet to Dry

✓ Moisture levels matter. Joining bone-dry to fresh clay? Say goodbye to that seam.



Ed's Favorite Texture Ideas

"I don't get fancy, just creative."

- **Canvas or Burlap:** Built-in texture from your work surface
- **Lace or Doilies:** Lay 'em on and roll over for a soft vintage look
- **Mesh or Netting:** Clean, gridded pattern great for trays or tiles
- **Stamps or Buttons:** Carve wood stamps or press in found objects
- **Natural Items:** Leaves, bark, pine needles, shells, rocks
- **Old Credit Card:** Cut notches in the edge and drag across clay

Try combos. Make a test slab. Go wild.



Quick Tips + Resources

Ideal Slab Thickness:

- Tiles: 3/8"
 - Boxes: 1/4"
 - Sculptural builds: Varies based on design
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Bonus Tip from Ed:

"Tools matter, but so does patience. Give your slabs a little time, a little love, and they'll behave. Usually."

Happy Building!

- Ed