

**simply**

# Plastering with Plaster

Sand-cement plaster is used extensively in building work as a decorative or protective coating for concrete, masonry walls and concrete ceilings. The aim of this leaflet is to provide the information needed for successful plastering. It is intended for small building contractors and DIY homebuilders.

**TOOLS REQUIRED**

Plaster Hawk  
Plaster Trowel  
Wooden Straight Edge  
Water Bucket  
Bristle Brush

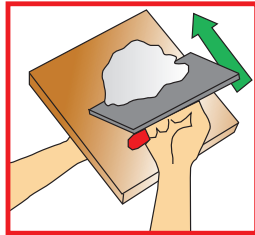
# Building made simple!

## simply Plastering with Plaster

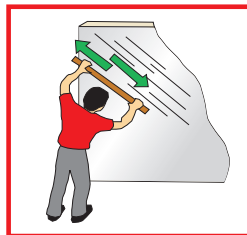
### HOW DO I MIX PLASTER?

1. Remove any lumps, stones or foreign objects from the sand.
2. Measure out sand and place in a long, thin heap on a flat, clean, hard surface (or mix in a wheelbarrow if making a small batch).
3. Pour out cement on top of sand.
4. Mix cement and sand together until uniform in colour.
5. Create a hollow in the centre and slowly add clean water while mixing. The mix is correct when it is like a thick paste, able to stand by itself without collapsing, yet wet enough to be spread easily with a trowel, like margarine.

### HOW DO I PLASTER?



1. Try to avoid working in the direct sun or in drying winds, as plaster needs to retain its moisture as long as possible.
2. Load your hawk with plaster mix and scoop onto the steel trowel. Apply to the wall with pressure.
3. Plaster small areas at a time. A whole wall should be completed in one operation.



4. Once the plaster starts to stiffen, level the surface by pulling a wooden straight edge tool over the plaster with a swaying motion.



5. Wet the levelled plaster with water (flicked off a brush), then use a wood float to smooth the surface.
6. Cover the plastered area with plastic or a fine spray of water to keep it damp for as long as possible. (ie. up to 7 days).

### IMPORTANT

Mix only as much plaster as you can use in 2 hours. Should your mix stiffen slightly in this period, some water may be added to regain workability. After 2 hours the unused plaster should be discarded.

Never try to retemper by mixing in additional water, as this reduces the resultant strength of the mix.

### COMMON PROBLEMS WHEN PLASTERING

Name	Description	Cause	Solution
Grinning	Positions of the mortar and the joints are clearly visible through the plaster.	Different rates of suction between the mortar and the bricks.	Apply plaster undercoat before plastering.
Crazing	Network of closely spaced, fine cracks.	Over-trowelling a rich mix, or a sand that contains too many fines.	Use a better plaster sand Do not over-trowel.
Cracking	Larger cracks randomly spaced	Movement of the wall or shrinkage of the plaster which is caused by excessive loss of water from the plaster. Using a badly graded sand that lacks fine material. Excessive suction by the bricks or blocks. Exposure to direct sun or wind.	Do not use very rich mixes (too much cement). Use good quality sands. Limit plaster thickness to a maximum of 15mm per coat.
Lack of Hardness	Plaster that is easily chipped away or is easily scraped off after hardening.	Plastering in full sun and wind. Not wetting absorbent bricks. Addition of extra water after first mixing. Using a very lean mix (too little cement).	Avoid causes listed.
Debonding	Plaster not staying on the wall after hardening.	Dust on the wall when plastering. Over-rich mixes. Very thick layers of plaster. (>15mm).	Prepare surface properly before plastering. Limit plaster thickness to a maximum of 15mm. Do not use very rich mixes.

**SHOULD YOU HAVE ANY FURTHER QUESTIONS, PLEASE DO NOT HESITATE TO CONTACT YOUR LOCAL BUILD IT STORE.**

### REGIONAL OFFICES

**KWAZULU NATAL** 031 508 5000 **EASTERN CAPE** 041 404 5000 **WESTERN CAPE** 021 550 7300 **N A M I B I A** 09264 61 214201  
**SWAZILAND** 031 753 6800 **SOUTH RAND** 011 821 4000 **NORTH RAND** 011 203 5300 **LOWVELD** 013 753 6800

© 2006 BUILD IT

E & O. E.