

# PLASTERING YOUR HOUSE



**HOAP**

HOME OWNERS' ADVICE PAMPHLETS





## WHAT IS PLASTERING

- Plaster is a layer of cement and sand mix applied and smoothed onto block and brick walls.
- It is important to plaster because it protects the walls from the weather by keeping the rain out of the blocks.
- Plastering is not easy, so it is best to let a trained person do it. If you are fit, have the right tools and follow advice carefully, you can learn to do it yourself.

## WHAT YOU WILL NEED

### MATERIALS

- Portland cement (with SABS mark)
- Clean plaster sand (that passes through a 3mm mesh sieve)
- Clean water
- Lime

### TOOLS AND EQUIPMENT

- Chisel
- Large block brush
- Large sponges
- Sieve (mesh with 2-3mm holes)
- Wheelbarrow
- 20 litre buckets (drums)
- Spades
- Trowel
- Boards to pile plaster near work area
- Plastering board (hawk)
- Straight Edge
- Spirit Level
- Wood float
- Steel float



## HOW TO PREPARE THE WALL

- Clean all dust, dirt, grit or grease from the wall. This will ensure that the plaster sticks properly.
- The day before you plaster, wet the wall evenly (with a hose, or the block brush) so that it will not suck the moisture out of the plaster too quickly.  
The wall must be dry when the plaster is applied.
- If the wall is very smooth or already painted, make a 'key' for plaster to stick to. Chip dents in the wall with a chisel, or apply a spatterdash coating (a rough lumpy plaster layer). The coating is made by mixing a thick cement and sand slurry (one bucket of cement mixed with two buckets of sand and a bucket of water). Apply with a block brush.

# THE MOST IMPORTANT ADVICE IS

## TIPS:

- Too much water or sand in your mix will weaken your plaster. Rather use too little than too much.
- Only mix small batches that you can use up in an hour.
- Keep the plaster covered while you are plastering so that it does not dry out and lose its strength.
- Cure the plaster properly.

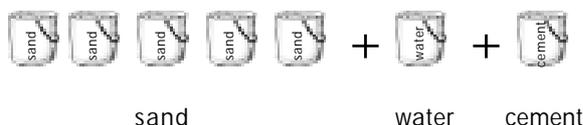
- PREPARE THE WALL SURFACE PROPERLY BEFORE YOU APPLY THE PLASTER.
- USE GOOD QUALITY SAND AND CEMENT, AND MIX PROPERLY WITH WATER IN THE CORRECT MIX
- NEVER USE TOO MUCH WATER
- KEEP PLASTER MOIST TO ALLOW IT TIME TO 'CURE' – TO SET STRONGLY.



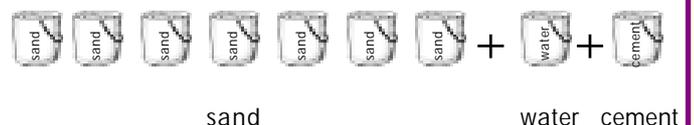
## HOW TO MIX THE PLASTER

- Sieve the sand to remove lumps or stones. Measure the required amount of sand onto a hard clean surface. Spread the sand into a layer about 100mm thick. Measure the cement out on top of the sand. Mix the dry sand and cement together until the colour is an even grey. Add clean water while mixing it all the time until it is a thick paste.
- External (outside) plaster needs to be stronger than internal (inside) plaster.
- Mix 1 bucket of cement to 5 buckets of sand (1:5) and 1 bucket of water to plaster 10 square metres of an exterior wall.
- For internal plaster use one bucket of cement, seven buckets of sand and 1 bucket of water (1:7).
- The plaster should never be runny. It must be able to stick to the damp wall.
- If you can afford it, add lime to the plaster to make it easier to work with.

### EXTERNAL PLASTER



### INTERNAL PLASTER



## HOW TO APPLY THE PLASTER



- Plaster is normally applied onto walls in a 10-15mm thick layer. Apply the plaster onto small areas of the wall at a time. A wall must be plastered and finished in the same day.
- Put some mixed plaster onto the plastering board (hawk), and then scoop a trowel full of plaster from the hawk onto the wall in a smooth upward movement.
- Always put even pressure onto the trowel.
- Level the plaster by pulling a wooden straight edge over the rough plastered area with "back and forward" movements.
- Sprinkle water on the levelled plaster with a block brush, and use the wood float and sponge to make a smooth finish. You can use the steel float if you want a smoother finish indoors.
- Do not work with the plaster for too long because this will bring the water to the surface and cause it to crack when it dries. You should not smooth the same plaster (with the float) for more than about 10 or 15 minutes.
- If you want to level plaster on an uneven surface, you need to apply thick plaster in two layers. Scratch the first layer with the trowel to provide a key for the topcoat. Apply the second coat of plaster when the first coat is still a little damp.
- You can have a rough textured finish by using a block brush or by applying a spatterdash finish.

## HOW TO CURE THE PLASTER



- Make sure the plaster does not dry too quickly to prevent cracks. This is called curing.
- Hot sun and strong winds dry out the plaster too quickly, causing it to be weak and crack.
- It is important to wet the plaster lightly and to keep it damp for about three days to help it to cure properly.
- If you can, cover the plaster with plastic or damp sacks to keep the moisture in.
- The plaster must be dry and properly cured before you apply any paint.



## ALSO SEE OTHER PAMPHLETS ABOUT:

- Painting your house
- Preventing cracks and damp in your house



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