

These pages are actual text from CLAYtherapy pages 59-62

(Paul suggests that you copy these pages of Snail, practice making a few, on your own and then take the pages into session. Talk about what we are going to make and have fun coloring the line drawings with the child before opening the can of Play-Doh.)

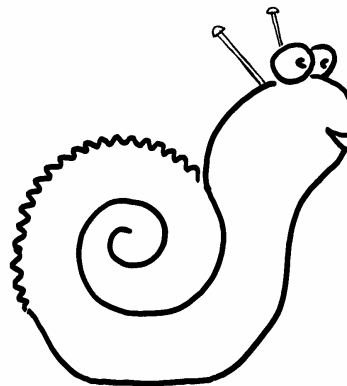
SNAIL

The Snail is the second project children make for themselves. Snails are easy, fun, and fast and, most importantly, successful. Their construction incorporates many of the beginning elements of CLAYtherapy. The snail initiates trust and communication of the therapeutic relationship. It's OK to move slowly as a snail toward your goals as long as you move. With the snail there is a continuation of joint problem solving, sitting close, contrasting soft vs. hard clay, the secrets of making a ball with no cracks, the use of those interesting tools and many other of the technical and treatment elements necessary for future success.

The completion of the snail can demonstrate to children that they can duplicate the blue, green and gray snails they see in your office, and maybe the other wonderful things on your shelf. It is used to establish the self-esteem and self-confidence children need in making what their eyes see. The Snail is a perfect place to begin dialogue about the four elements of decision-making or the benefits and responsibilities of choice. With a completed snail the child will be eager to take on other projects with less hesitation.

TOOLS

Cassette tape box
Seashell
Paint brush (small)
Quilting pins (2)
Playing card
Nail (drywall)
Cardboard square 1x1 1/2"
Crayon: Rounded



STEP ONE: MAKE A BALL

There are no pie-portions in making the snail. Mr. Snail begins with a half tablespoon of clay. The color is the choice of the builder. Having the child choose the color of their snail can sometimes communicate their mood or reflect the therapist's empowerment of the child. Remember **SAC**: keep the

clay **soft**, select the right **amount** and roll out the **cracks**. Use the clay ball in its full half-tablespoon size. I will give directions as if my reader is right-handed. Left-handed folks will do what they have always done, compensate and translate.

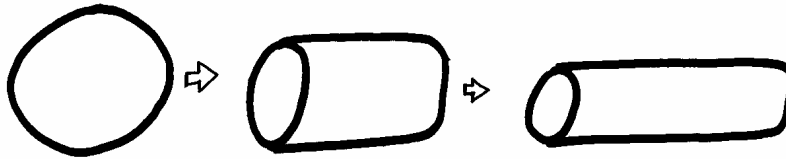
**If the builder is having difficulty making a soft, smooth ball,
Consider these troubleshooting points!**

1. Make sure the clay is soft. I suggest adding 1\2 tablespoon of water to a brand new can of clay. Knead the water completely into the clay with repeated folding and squishing motions.
2. Select only the half tablespoon to roll and make soft. Return the extra clay to the can and close the lid. Roll that amount between the palms of your hands warming, homogenizing and rounding the ball. Keep fingers out of the way.
3. When rolling, confine the ball to the palms and not the fingers. Keep one hand still while rotating the other. Roll and squish the clay at the same time, using as much pressure as possible while maintaining control of the ball. As the ball becomes soft and smooth gradually let up on the pressure, not all at once but in three to five rotations. In time you'll be able to feel the smooth.
4. If rolling between palms fails to produce a smooth no-cracks ball then roll the ball between palm and tabletop. Press down as hard as you can while still maintaining rotation of the squished ball. On the last few turns, gradually lighten up until there is no pressure at all.
5. If still unsuccessful, add a few drops of water to your ball and try again. If Unsuccessful add another few drops and try again and so on.
6. When all else fails, halve the ball and keep doing the above. By reducing the Ball, all factors against you are reduced by half and success is just moments away. Once able to make a smooth, no-cracks small ball, advance to a larger and larger ball until you are able to make a full tablespoon of clay round and smooth.

STEP TWO: BALL-TO-PART CONSTRUCTION

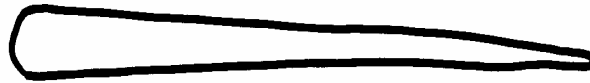
Ball-to-part construction is basically what it seems. I have discovered that all parts of any freeform are first a ball then that ball is formed into a shape and then a part. Then those parts are brought together to form a project. Snails are made that way. Snails are first a ball, then a cylinder, and then a snail three steps, 1-2-3. Later when the clay-counselor makes a prop plane she won't be surprised that the plane has three cylinders of its five main parts. If the builder, adult or child, can make a cylinder they can make a snail. If they can make a snail they can make a radial engine prop plane. The drawing below demonstrates this concept of ball-to-part construction. We start with a ball, then

to a fat cylinder, then a longer cylinder, conical cylinder and then a snail.



1. BALL

2. SHAPE

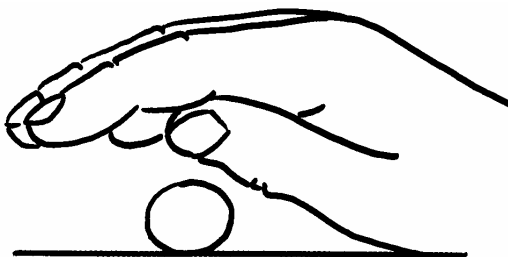


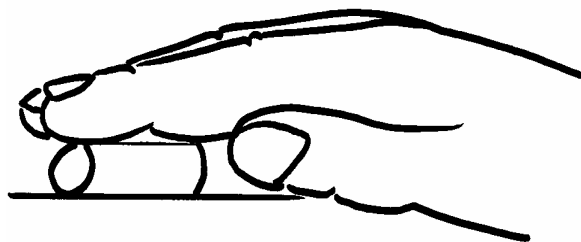
3. PART

STEP THREE: MAKING A CYLINDER

The hand is a wonderful tool. Its sensitive touch and remarkable dexterity make it the most versatile instrument in the universe. Every other man-made tool, from a surgeon's laser-scalpel to an astronaut's space-wrench to a Boeing 777, to kitchen utensils is an extension of the hand. The tool, when held in the hand, and guided by the eye can perform the simplest to the most complex procedure. The human hand when combined with the eye and brain is the marvel of our species and what has set us apart. Making a cone out of clay is a simple demonstration of that brain-eye-hand marvel.

I will give the builder two guarantees; the **first** is that your first efforts at building a slightly tapered cylinder will probably fail. If there is no failure then we both did our jobs right the first time. The **second** guarantee is that if the builder follows the directions and keeps trying, keeps practicing, success is inevitable. These guarantees are much the same as those we give our little clients or our own children when we want them to learn a new skill, make a friend, or change some unwanted habit.

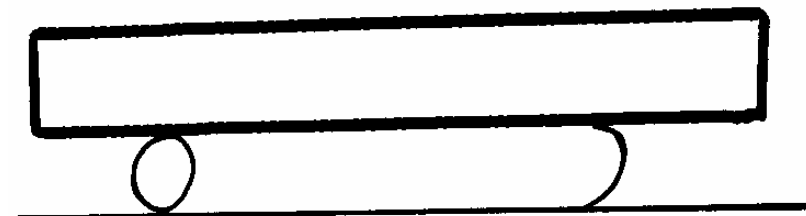




Place the round, smooth, hand-warm ball on tabletop and in front of you.

With your hand open, fingers extended parallel to the tabletop and touching each other roll a cylinder. Don't be worried that you are going to make mistakes or have to start over, those things happen. That ball wants to become a cylinder and you're going to help it. The hand-rolled cylinder will be a little lumpy. The CTB (Cassette Tape Box) will take out those lumps.

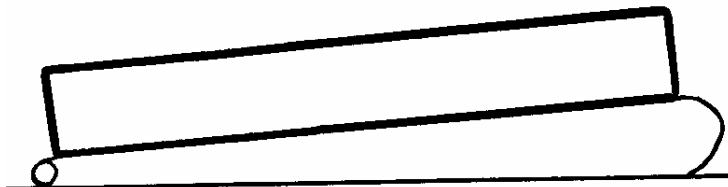
Use the CTB as a roller. Its transparent top allows the clay-counselor to see their work and adjust the downward force, direction and angle of roll. Roll the cylinder about half as long as the CTB.



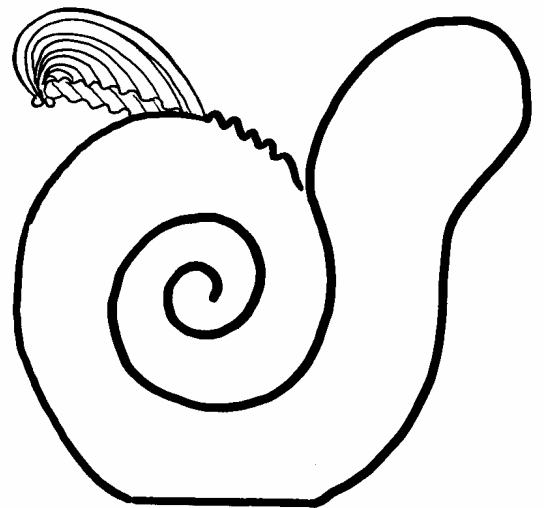
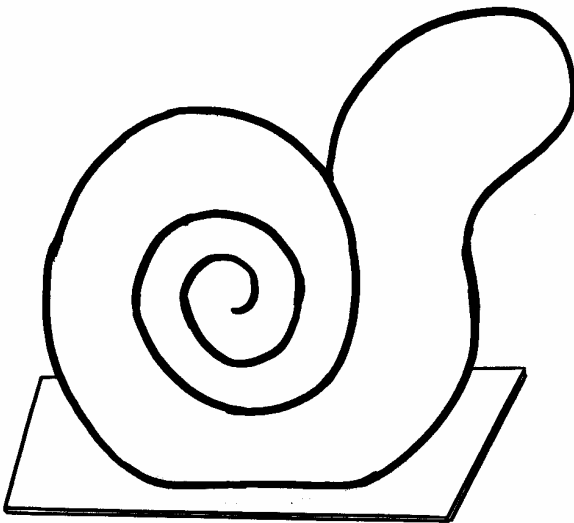
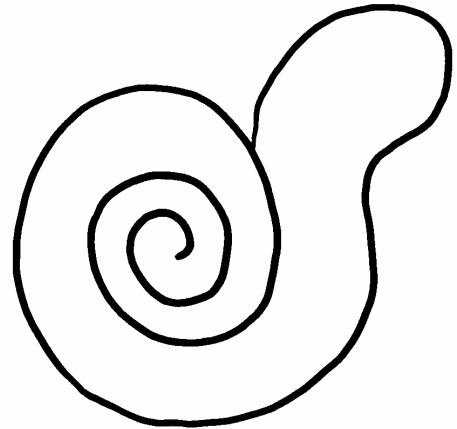
Roll that into a long blunt-end cone with one end considerably thicker than the other. The end result will look like a snail stretched out for a snooze. It has to form that way; the clay has no choice. Think to yourself as you roll, "I am the boss of the clay." You are the boss of the clay. You tell it where to go, it doesn't tell you. Think,

"I AM THE BOSS OF THE CLAY."

Next round the large end of the cylinder with light presses to the end with thumb and finger. This rounding will resemble a snail's head. Use your imagination of what a snail's round head should look like.

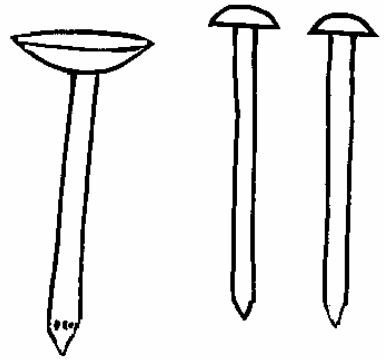
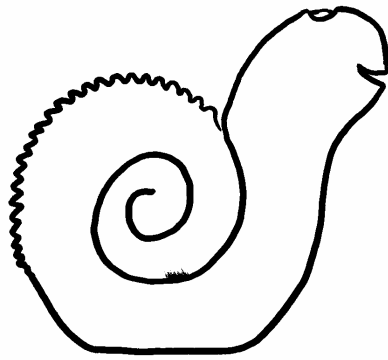
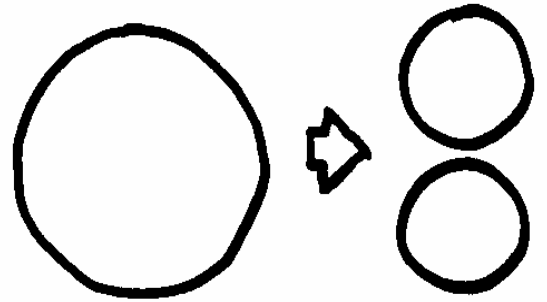


Next lay the cylinder on a flat surface. Paint a brush full of water down its length. Roll it up from the skinny end. Take care to maintain the distinct round spiral revolutions and not let fingers smash them together. Bring the head into focus by bending the very end the opposite way from the spiral. Gently wiggle the snail a flat bottom against the tabletop. This will cause it to stand alone. Paint the flat bottom with water and secure to a small bit of cardboard. Mark the snail's back pattern with the edge of a seashell, the inside of a wooden clothes pin or the edge of a plastic knife. Place the back marks equal distance with equal pressure. Now you should have a snail with back markings, a flat bottom but with no eyes, mouth or antenna.



STEP THREE: MAKING THE MOUTH, EYES, MARKINGS AND ANTENNA

Roll two eyes from a bit of white clay. You select their size. With a rounded pencil eraser or rounded crayon point, mark two dimples on the shell where the eyes are to go. Paint those dimples. Paint the eyes where they touch each other. Place the eyes. Hold the eyes (don't press or smash) to the clay and each other a few seconds to insure adhesion. Take care not to get the eyes out of round while forming them.



With the back of a small paintbrush, pen, or pencil point, mark the eyes. Mark the mouth with the edge of a dry wall nail head. Hold the point down for happy or point up for frowning. Place the two brass pins or quilting pins or broom straws or tooth picks for antenna.

