

Tools



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Humankind has created thousands of tools for various tasks. When it comes to clay animation, tools can be narrowed down to three categories: sculpting tools, armature tools, and set-building tools. The following paragraphs highlight the best tools for each category.

Sculpting Tools



Is there a secret for making good sculptures for animating? Is there a special tool that is used to bring these clay figures to life? Yes, there is a special tool used by clay animators, and all clay animators take very good care of this tool. It's called "hands." Your hands are the best tools for sculpting clay characters. You can pinch, twist, add, subtract, soften, and smooth clay with your hands, but there are a few tricks you should know to prevent problems and mishaps. Dirty hands are the primary problem-maker. If, for example, you are animating a talking man, and you press on his face with a dirty finger, you will get a discolored spot where you least want one. If your hands are really dirty you can ruin a shot, especially if your character's face is made from white clay.

Hand Habits

Secrets of Clay Animation Revealed E-Book Sample 4

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The best thing to do when sculpting your character is to make sure you wash your hands before sculpting and before animating. Make sure your tabletop isn't soiled with remains from other projects, such as building your set pieces. The dirt on the table will get on your hands and on your clay. Also, a lot of animators tend to wipe their hands on their jeans, picking up "little blue fuzzies" that can eventually build up all over your character. This is frustrating because it does not take long for your character to become a different color.

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