

Slab Tray Project

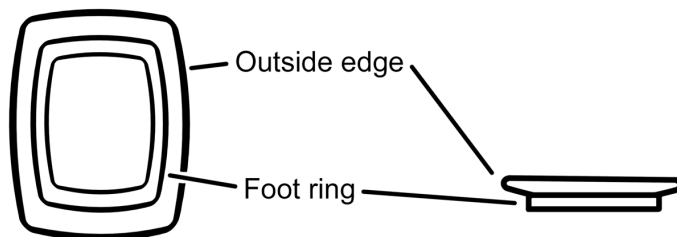
Purpose: To get the feel of working with clay, to learn how to join clay and to have something quick that we can experiment with decorating and glazing on. And to learn how to follow checklists – oh snap.

Goals checklist, extra super-long version:

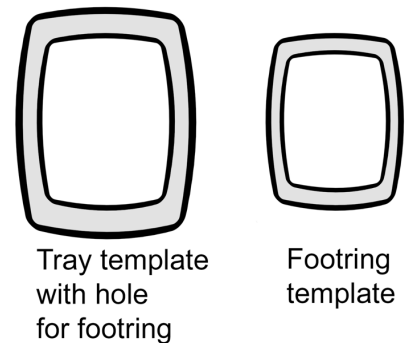
1. ___ No canvas texture! Instead it is decorated using one of the methods demonstrated.
2. ___ Tray is between 8" x 8" and 12" x 12" in size and around 1/2" thick
3. ___ Rim is smooth and rounded, textured or otherwise neatly finished
4. ___ Tray has a foot ring 1/2" high that relates to tray shape
5. ___ Your NAME (not just initials or nickname) is written on the bottom. Examples – Rob Flye, R Flye, Rob F.
I will not fire any work without a NAME on it.

Bottom view of tray

Side view



Paper templates needed



Directions:

1. Cut out two paper templates as shown: one should be the shape of your tray with a hole in it where the footing will be, and the other should be the shape of the footing. To determine the size of the footing, draw a line an inch or two in from the edge of the tray template all the way around, and then draw another line inside that to show how thick the footing will be (probably between 1/2" and 3/4").
2. Roll out two slabs of clay using the slab roller or a rolling pin, canvas and sticks. One slab should be large enough to cut the tray out of and the other should be large enough to cut the foot ring out of. Make the slabs around 1/2" thick.
3. **SMOOTH OUT BOTH SIDES OF YOUR SLABS** with a metal scraper or rubber kidney. No, really, can't you hear me? **SMOOTH THEM OUT.** Your mama will be proud. It will not only get rid of the nasty canvas texture but also compress the clay and make it better to work with.
4. Place your tray slab on a board large enough to hold it if it's not on one already, then place the tray template on the slab and lightly trace around the outside and inside edges with a pin tool. Remove the template and then carefully cut the outside edge of the tray with a knife, making sure to hold it vertical.
5. Cut out the footing using the same process.
6. Wad all your scrap clay into a ball to keep it from drying out and put it back in the clay bucket if it's still good, or an orange scrap bucket if it's a little dry.
7. Lightly slip and score both the tray and the footing where they will join each other, then gently press the footing in place. Smooth the footing using just your fingertips – do not use more water. A wooden or rubber-tipped tool can be handy for cleaning up and refining the join where the footing meets the tray.
8. Now – **WAIT! Stop! Halt! Cease!** The tray and footing need to firm up before you flip them. Let them sit uncovered for the rest of the period. If you can, probably leave them uncovered until lunch or the end of the day, then come in, check them and wrap them up as appropriate. If you can't come back, wrap them up loosely at the end of the period. Do not leave them uncovered overnight – they will dry out too much.
9. When your tray is soft leather hard, carefully flip it over – place it on a banding wheel if possible. Give the surface a soft concave curve by slightly lifting up on the edges with your fingers while pressing lightly down on the center with your thumbs. Spin the tray around and work evenly.
10. Once your tray is formed and firm enough, continue to clean up and refine the surface and edges and decorate as desired.
11. Put your name on the bottom and put your tray on the greenware cart. Remember, more than just your initials – no name, no fire.