



Make Your Own Putty

There are many commercially sold compounds to use as window putty but it's easy and economical to make your own.

Basic

Chalk (calcium carbonate – also called whiting) mixed with linseed oil. You can mix them together thin like cream to be applied with a brush or thick like peanut butter to be applied with a putty knife or your fingers. You can use the kind of calcium carbonate sold by farm supply outlets but the much finer grain material used to make chalk paints will produce a smoother and easier to use compound.

Portland cement

Although some commercially made putty compounds contain Portland Cement, you should NOT use it and should NOT use it to make putty. This material sets too hard and sticks to the glass.

Plaster

Just as you should NOT use Portland cement, equally you should not use plaster.

Linseed Oil – Raw & Boiled

Raw linseed oil works but it makes a putty that takes near eternity to harden. Adding boiled linseed oil will encourage your putty to set quicker. A good ratio is 75% raw and 25% boiled. That's 3 parts raw and 1 part boiled.

Thinning Agents

Thinning agents are added to the putty to make it easier to work. These evaporate quickly so the putty will set fast. You should be careful using thinning agents. Putty made with them has a shorter lifespan than putty made without thinning agents. Some thinning agents used are:

- Mineral spirits
- White spirits
- Paint thinner
- Turpentine
- Kerosene
- Gasoline



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Drying Agents

Drying agents are materials added to putty to make it set faster. White lead and red lead are used as drying agents but are now illegal in many places. The most popular material to add to putty to speed up drying is Japan Dryer. When using a drying agent to make your putty set quicker, remember that making it set quicker is likely to make it last less longer.

Colouring Agents

You can leave your putty natural white or you might want to colour it. Stove black is a popular material used to make black putty or you can use any of the variety of cement dyes use to colour concrete. I you add a colouring agent to your putty take extra care to be sure it is well and thoroughly mixed into the putty.

Storage

Once the putty is fully mixed, to prevent it from drying out you can store it in a sealed container for when you want to use it. A small amount of water left on top of the putty will help ensure it doesn't dry out.

Putty Lifespan

Nothing lasts forever. How long putty does its job depends on the original compound and how well it was installed. A good well mixed putty compound professionally applied should last about 25 years.