cleaner mixing
by Jeremy Randall

Sometimes the simplest alterations to the cheapest of studio materials are all it takes to make a big impact on our everyday tasks. Put an end to splattered studio walls and endless clean up with this clever tip.

When mixing glazes or terra sigillata, I have found that the easiest way to avoid splashing material around my studio and all over my clothes is to simply contain the mixing to the inside of the bucket. But this isn’t always easy when trying to fully incorporate dry materials into water or mixing in a small container.

So, to keep things neat and tidy and not waste studio time on cleaning up, I bought an extra 5-gallon bucket lid and cut a small hole in the center of it. The hole only needs to be approximately 1 to 2 inches square. This will accommodate the thin shaft of the paint mixer I use and also allow me to move it around within the bucket.

To blunge weighed materials for a batch of terra sigillata, I use a standard paint paddle and a drill. I slide the paddle through the hole, then attach the drill to the paddle, secure the lid onto the bucket, and mix. You can mix up and down, side to side, or in a figure 8 motion while at a vigorous speed without splashing the material everywhere or losing any material.

To check on the progress of the mix or to clear the sides of the bucket, either disconnect the drill from the paddle or detach the lid and slowly lift it off. Remember that the underside of the lid will have drips. After the mixing is complete, the only clean up is the lid and the paddle. The batch is already in a storage bucket, so just swap out the lid and you’re done.

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1–2 Cut a small hole in a bucket lid. Insert a paint-mixing paddle through the hole then connect the drill to the mixer. 3–4 Secure the lid to the bucket with the drill and mixing paddle installed. 5 Mix the contents of the bucket, using various speeds and directions. 6 Remove the lid to check the mix or scrape the sides of the bucket. The lid assembly can remain attached or be disassembled for easy cleaning.