



Straight sided, bottomless cylinders are a good basic form to start practicing alterations on. Alterations lead to less cracking when clay is just barely dry. (not showing finger printing but still very felxible)

A bottomless cylinder allows the entire form to take on any shape you choose. It is possible to use darts on cylinders with a foot as well, but the thrown floor adds complexity.

When attaching the sides after removing the dart, the rim and foot will extend/ lift.

1.) If dart ends close to the rim and does not extend through it, the rim is likely to strain and is prone to cracking. Compress it and add a little supportive clay--slipping and scoring it into place. I slip and score all seams. (See Simple Seams Handout for details)

2.) When preparing to cut a dart, remember the widest part of the dart is where the cylinder will move toward its center the most.

3.) When a dart ends mid wall it creates a point. The more dramatic the taper of the dart the more dramatic the point. If you do not want a point, the dart must taper gently. Take away less clay for subtle curves/ changes in shape.

The more dramatic the dart the more the walls of the cylinder stretch and change, leading to greater risk of cracking, especially when clay is too dry.

Darts can be taken out of the top or bottom of a cylinder. When taken out of the form's bottom third, it can greatly affect the stance, giving lift.

The last example is a more complex cut. The horizontal line that extends beyond the vertical dart allows the clay to move inward.

4.) At the top of the seam it is difficult to get the walls to meet well. I add clay at this joint to prevent cracking. This applies to any seam. If it is not connecting well, add a little coil or patch of clay to give it strength.

I use a combination of these cuts and darts to augment many different thrown and slab built parts. Check out the image to the left. See if you can figure out which steps led to the pitcher shape and which started as a straight sided cylinder with a slight curving volume.

*With practice, alterations become fluid. Plan on spending many hours to gain this sense of ease. See more in process images at <http://www.ratcitystudios.com>*



Pitcher, Porcelain, Wheel thrown and altered, 2007