

# Mixing Hydraulic Lime

Mixing Hydraulic Lime Making mortar using hydraulic lime in powdered form is easier than using lime putty as the sand and lime can be hand mixed together dry before the water is added, in the same way that cement mortar is mixed. Alternatively, it can be successfully mixed in a drum mixer. However, you must be careful to avoid adding too much water. The mortar will become wetter and more plastic as mixing continues. About twenty to thirty minutes in a drum mixer should be sufficient. The finished mix should be reasonably firm, not sloppy. Leave for a while to allow the lime to swell or 'fatten up', to improve its workability, then mix again briefly using a shovel, paint stirrer or in the drum mixer immediately before using.

Hydraulic lime mortars should be used within a few hours of mixing. Refer to the manufacturer for maximum time allowed. (Most hydraulic limes can be reused for up to 24 hours).

Some practitioners advocate leaving the mix to fatten up overnight and knocking it up for use the next day. Whilst this will create a fatter, more workable mix, it will almost certainly reduce some of the hydraulic set and therefore reduce the advantage of using a hydraulic mix. However, advocates of this method vehemently deny any reduction in the performance of such mortars. It is probably best to take the advice of the manufacturer regarding knocking up. In the past hydraulic mixes were often made by layering hydraulic quicklime with sand, sprinkling it with water and leaving it overnight for the lime to slake. During slaking the lime expands and crumbles, mixing with the sand, reducing the amount of hand mixing needed. It is possibly this procedure which initially gave rise to the practice of leaving a hydraulic mix overnight.

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