Centering:

Place bat on wheel head. Dip finger into water and hold it on the bat to make concentric circles creating a bulls eye. Plop wedged clay on bulls eye middle (if you’re off, pat it into the middle).

Turn the wheel on –high speed. Lock your elbows into your knees. Place your hands together at base of clay, like clapping.

Squeeze hands together forcing clay up into a tower, then back down. This action will help align the clay molecules and prepare for throwing.

If you feel friction, you need more water. Keep the top rounded so it looks like a mound.

Do NOT proceed until your clay is centered!

Entering/Opening:

Slow wheel to medium speed.

At the 6 o’clock position using your middle finger to find the center of your clay and push down. Don’t go all the way to the bat. Try to keep about ¼” (quarter inch) of clay at the bottom.

You can measure this by stopping the wheel, poke a needle tool into the bottom, place your finger and keep it marked, pull the needle out and you can see how far it is to the bottom.

Once you are about ¼” from bottom, pull toward yourself to open wider. Keep the mound shape (rounded at the top).

Throwing/Pulling/Raising the Walls:

Continue at medium speed to begin this step. Begin at the bottom, thumb outside and fingers inside. Pinch the clay gently and move from bottom to top literally pulling the clay up.

You’ll need to do this several times so the bottom wall is NOT thick. You can use a finger or wood tool to create a ridge at the bottom of the vessel to help get a hold of more clay to pull. As you near the lip, taper your pressure.

Smooth lip of vessel with fingers rounding the lip.

Create a ridge at base. Stop the wheel and cut 2 times with the wire tool. (Hold the wire against the bat as you pull from the far side of the vessel toward yourself.)

\*Carefully place plastic bag over vessel and bat and put on your shelf. Allow your vessel to get leather hard before you trim.

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Trimming:

Feel how thin/thick your vessel bottom is before starting so you know how deeply you can trim.

If you want a more precise measurement, use a ruler to measure your vessel from base to lip on the inside and then from base to lip on the outside. Subtract the inside measurement from the outside measurement and you are left with the thickness of the base.

Use circles to help center vessel upside-down on wheel head. Place 3 plastic clay balls in a triangle around the vessel and push them into the wheel head to stabilize the vessel and keep it in place.

Turn on the wheel and make sure vessel is centered. If not, stop the wheel and try again. Do NOT trim until vessel is centered.

To trim, you will want to add a foot on which the vessel can stand and get rid of any extra thickness on the bottom of your vessel (where air bubbles can hide). You will need a loop/ribbon tool to do the trimming. You may also need a wood tool or a rib tool to smooth it out. Your vessel bottom should be concave.

When trimming, the clay should be the consistency of a block of cheese. If you press on the bottom of your vessel, it should hold its shape and not leave an indent. If your vessel is starting to turn light gray, you need to either spray water on it with a water spray bottle or dip a sponge in water and let it soak up the water.

\*Don’t forget to add your name to the vessel when you finish.