

skill level **3**

clay coral decor accent

free



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Craft with Jo-Ann

SUPPLIES & TOOLS:

- Fimo® 2-oz polymer clay blocks:
 - Soft Indian Red, 1 block
 - Light Flesh, 5 blocks
 - Translucent Effect, 5 blocks
- Work surface: acrylic, glass, ceramic or granite
- Acrylic rolling rod, brayer or
- clay-conditioning machine
- 20-gauge wire
- Wood toy wheel
- Light-colored river rocks
- 6"x6" cork tiles
- Acrylic paint in colors to match river rocks

DIRECTIONS:

1. Cut wire for each main coral branch by doubling the length of the branch and adding 6". Fold each wire in half, forming a small oval loop at the fold. Twist the two ends together except for the last 3" of wire.
2. For the larger branches with large secondary forks, use the same method to create a wire base. Line up the secondary branch wire and twist the stems of wire together (photo A).
3. Tear off a flat piece of foil. On one of the lengthwise edges of the sheet, fold over the top. Place this top edge of the folded sheet 1/2" to 1" above the top of one piece of twisted wire. Roll and scrunch the foil around the wire stem, folding the top edge of the foil over the wire loop while rolling. When the foil around the branch is about 1/4" to 3/8" thick, tear off the excess foil. Repeat this step to cover all wire stems and secondary branches to create a base shape for the coral. Make sure to scrunch the foil as work progresses to remove lumps and air pockets. Remember that the clay added over the top of the foil will make the coral stems thicker, so make the base thinner than the desired thickness of the finished coral (photo B).
4. Cut a 36" piece of wire. Leaving the end sticking out about 1", wrap the wire around the base of the two largest branches of coral, about 1½" from where the foil wrapping stops. Keep wrapping and adding branches as desired. When all the branches are wired together, twist the end of the wire with the 1" wire sticking out. Trim excess wire and tuck in ends. Wrap the wire with a strip of foil, scrunching it as in previous steps.
5. Preheat oven to 230°F. Move oven rack down low enough to allow adequate space for baking coral. Mix eight parts Light Flesh clay with one part Soft Indian Red. Knead together or run through the clay conditioning machine on the thickest setting until the colors are completely mixed. Roll the mixed clay into a sheet that is approximately 1/16" thick. Start to wrap a single layer of the coral clay over the foil surface (photo C). Press the sheet of clay over the foil and into the surface. If air pockets appear, slit the clay, press the air out and blend the slit closed. Continue this until the entire foil area of the coral base is covered, leaving the wires at the base uncovered.

Created by Jo-Ann Fabric and Craft Stores®

Skill Level 1: Experience necessary

Approx. Crafting Time: Varies

Please read and follow all manufacturers' instructions for all tools and materials used.
Provide adult supervision if children participate in this project.
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Add extra clay where needed to fill in gaps where branches connect. Roll extra coral clay into 1/4"-3/8" thick cylinders. Cut cylinders at a 45-degree angle to make extra branches in varied lengths (photo D). Press cut cylinders onto wired branches and blend at the base of each branch; round the tips (photo E).

6. Pull the exposed wires through the center hole of the wood wheel, then bend the wires outwards, flat to the wheel (photo F). Place coral in baking pan and weigh down base with index cards and river rocks. Stuff batting gently in between and under all coral branches to support them while baking (photo G). With excess coral clay, roll a small 1/8" thick sheet of clay. Cut out a 1"x1¼" triangle and smooth all cut edges. Texture the surface with indentations using a ballpoint pen (photo H). This will be the texture tool for the coral. Bake coral and texture tool for one hour, turn oven off and allow to cool completely in the oven. Note: Moving the coral while it is warm may crack the base of the branches.

7. Remove cooled clay coral from oven. Preheat the oven a second time. Remove all batting. Condition the translucent clay and roll it into a 1/16" sheet. Cover all branches with clay, pressing it into an even layer (photo I). Add a little extra clay to the tip of each branch and blend it (photo J). After covering each branch with translucent, wrap it in plastic wrap to protect the clay. Unwrap one branch at a time, coat it with cornstarch, and powder the texture tool as well. Use the textured triangle to press texture into the branches. Once all the branches are textured, place the coral back in the baking pan, and weigh it down with the index cards and rocks. Carefully stuff with the batting between and under the branches. Bake coral again for 45 minutes, turn oven off, and allow oven and coral to cool completely. Make sure temperature is correct in the oven, as translucent clay is sensitive to excess heat and may brown.

8. Remove cooled clay coral from oven. Glue the coral wheel base and wire to a cork tile. Prop the coral up carefully to allow it to dry upright for about half a day. Use the utility knife to cut a hole and a slit in the center of a second cork tile. Add glue to the top surface of the first tile, and wrap the second tile around the base of the coral. Press it on top of the first tile; prop the coral up as done in previous steps (photo K). Allow to dry for several hours.

9. Place river rocks around base of coral, over the cork base. Once arranged, trace around the outer edge of the rocks. Remove rocks and cut along the outline (photo L). Glue the rocks in place and prop coral up so the base can dry properly. Paint the cork base to match the rocks; allow to dry.



