

A Better Sink Trap

MAINTENANCE

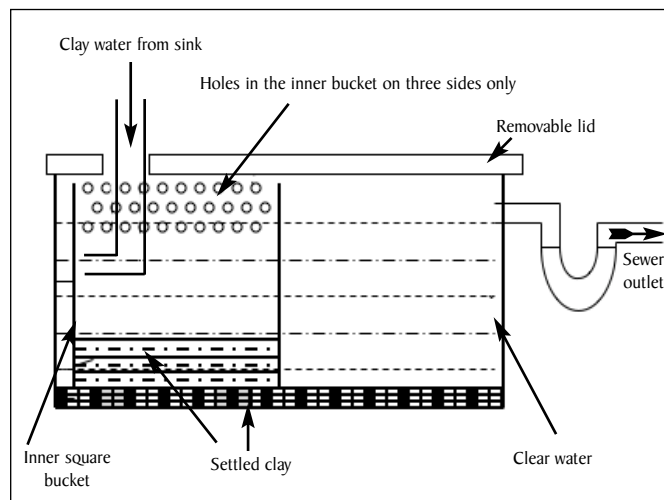
Working with clay can sure be messy, and throwing your mess down the drain is just not an option. Having worked in several studios during the last five years, I learned a lot about what works and doesn't work in a studio. When I finally set up my own studio in our new home, I wanted to tackle the sink-trap problem. I set out to create something that improved on previous designs, which all had shortcomings. There were three problems that I wanted to solve. First, connecting pipes to round buckets is annoying, and they are prone to leaking after maintenance. Second, opaque traps make it difficult to determine when the trap needs cleaning. Finally, under-sink traps are difficult and unpleasant to clean.

The first modification I made to my design was to attach pipes to a square bucket rather than a round one (figure 1). The outer large bucket is a sturdy 10-gallon, rectangular, translucent storage container. It needs to be strong enough to take the weight of water and clay, and have at least one side as flat as possible to attach a pipe to the sewer drain. If you think your container is not strong enough, use two containers for added strength. On the inside sits another square bucket (a cat litter bucket works well for this purpose). This bucket serves as the first filter. Drill three rows of holes in the top 4 inches on three sides of this bucket. Do not make holes on the side that faces the sewer outlet because water pouring from the holes will agitate the sediment close to the drain.

The height of your trap depends on the height of the sink outlet and the waste pipe. Because my sewer drain is high, I had to raise both my sink and the trap (figure 2). You may not have to do this. The sink legs are fastened to the blocks so they cannot be kicked out.

Hooking up the trap is easy. Use washers and silicone to make a watertight seal for the drain. Locate the smaller square bucket at the end farthest from the drain. Even if there is a lot of clay water flowing out from the inner bucket it will still flow on the sides that are farther away from the main outlet, giving

Sink Trap Plan



Choose a rectangular transparent bucket for easy pipe connections and to see through when it's time to clean. Double filtration utilizes holes in the top 4 inches of the inner bucket on only the three sides farthest from the outlet.

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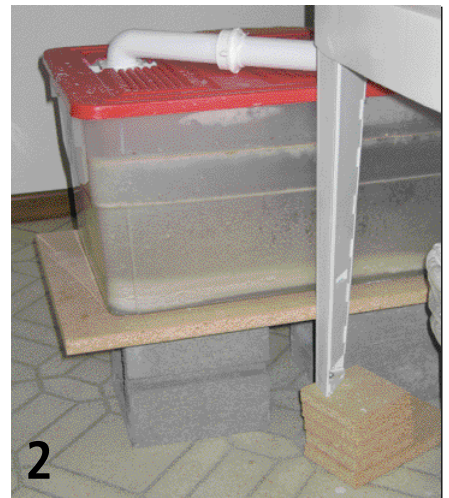


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The sink and trap are raised up due to the higher sewer outlet. Installing the trap to the side of the sink makes for easy cleaning and maintenance.

enough time for the clay to settle before the water goes out.

To solve the inconvenience of cleaning the trap, I located the entire trap to the side of the sink rather than right below it (figure 2). When the trap is located below the sink, it is hard to reach, remove and reattach the fittings. By directing the sink trap to the side, there is no need to remove any fittings; just pop up the lid, rotate it around, and the sink trap can be cleaned easily. No loose connections, no mess!

I installed this sink trap over a year ago and it has worked great. When the settled clay level reaches a certain point, I know it is time to clean. So far I have cleaned it twice and it took less than half an hour without any problems. Also because the bucket is transparent, you can actually see if your clay trap is working. It makes me feel very comfortable when I see clear water seeping out the outlet.

Charan Sachar is a studio potter in Federal Way, Washington, who does wheel throwing, extruding and hand-building. Watch for his demonstrating making a teapot on HGTV's "That's Clever" on August 23, 2006. For examples of his work, please visit his website at www.creativewithclay.com.