



Instructions For Making Your Impressions For Custom Ear Plugs, Custom Ear Molds and Custom Earphones

Overview

Making your impressions is simple, fast and easy. You will place a small piece of foam down in the ear canal to stop the material from going too deep into the ear. Next, mix a two-part putty-like impression material, and inject the material into the ear canal using a blunt, plastic tipped syringe. Then just wait a few minutes, remove the impressions, pack them and mail them back to us, where our expert craftsmen will use your impressions to create your unique custom ear plugs, ear molds, custom earphones or hunting hearing aids.

NOTE: Some audiologists warn against making your own ear impressions, particularly if you have any existing medical conditions. Although reports of injury or health issues arising from making your own impressions are rare, if you have any concern about the condition or health of your ears or about your ability to make your own impressions, we recommend that you contact an audiologist to get your impressions made. We offer our impression kits as a convenience only and we will happily accept either the impressions you make using our kit or impressions you obtain from your audiologist. It is your choice.

STOP

PLEASE CAREFULLY READ ALL OF THE FOLLOWING INSTRUCTIONS BEFORE BEGINNING THE PROCESS AT STEP 1.

Step 1: Check your supplies.

Before handling any materials in the kit make sure your hands are clean.

Your impression kit should contain all of the following:

- Five packets of two-part impression material: one packet for each mold or plug you intend to have made, plus extra packets in case you need to remake one or more impressions. Each impression material packet should also contain two foam stops, called Oto-Blocks, (a large one and a small one) and a Q-tip.
- One plastic tipped syringe.
- One white plastic bite block for use when making open-mouth impressions.
- One sample size packet of Oto-Ease earmold lubricant.
- The box in which this kit was shipped to you, which you can use to return the impressions.
- A return shipping label, these instructions and an order form.

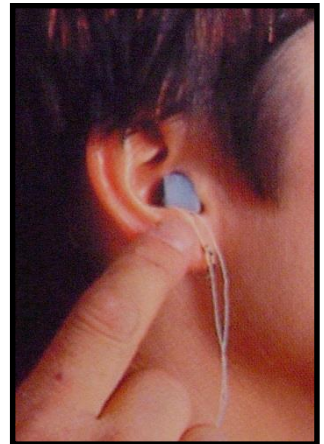
If anything is missing please contact Ear Plug Superstore for assistance: custom@earplugstore.com or call 918-478-5500.

NOTE: Please do not discard the syringe or any unused supplies after making your impressions. If you need to remake an impression(s) and you do not have the syringe or supplies left from your original kit, you will need to purchase another impression kit.

Step 2: Read all the instructions.

Before doing anything else, read all of the instructions so that you can move quickly through the steps. Once you mix the two-part impression material, it will immediately begin to set up, so be fully prepared before you begin.

The temperature of the material dictates the setup time. The warmer the temperature of the material, the faster it sets up, so if the material is above 70 degrees Fahrenheit, put it into the refrigerator for an hour or more to cool it and thereby slow the speed at which the material will set up, giving you time to work with it. You can leave the material in the refrigerator indefinitely without harm.



Step 3: Insert the Foam Stop

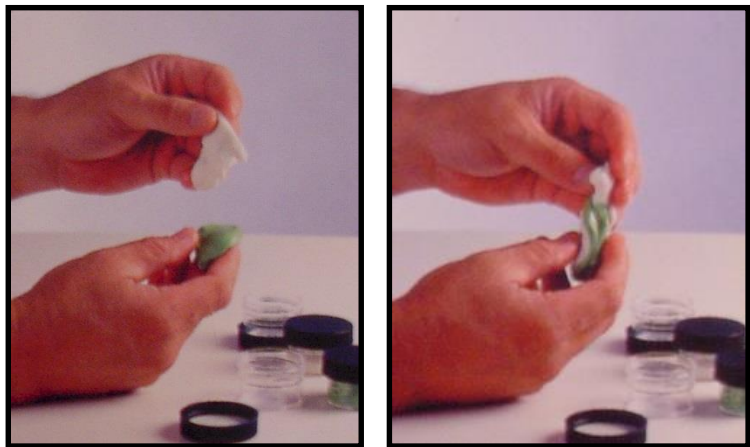
Put the larger foam stop into the ear canal, checking to make sure it fits properly. The foam should fill the ear canal, but should not be difficult to insert. If the foam piece is too large, try the smaller one, or simply trim a bit off the larger one to make it smaller. Be sure not to dislodge the string from the foam. The string might be needed later to help remove the foam stop from the ear canal.

Even if you have a helper, do this next part yourself so that you can feel how deeply you are inserting the Q-tip. Use a Q-tip to gently nudge the foam stop down past the second bend in the ear canal. Use two mirrors or have a helper look into your ear. When properly inserted, the foam stop should not be visible, or should be just barely visible when looking directly into the ear canal. Be sure to leave the string hanging out of the ear. If needed, the string can later be used to remove the foam stop.

NOTE: The most common mistake made by users is not getting the foam stop deep enough in the canal, resulting in impressions that are too short to be usable. If you can see more than ¼ of the foam stop, it is almost certainly not deep enough.

Step 4: Mix Material

With the foam stop in the ear, prepare the two-part impression material for one ear. Using clean hands, remove all of the base (green or pink) material from its container, and remove all of the hardener (white) from its container.



Knead the two blobs of material together in your fingers, working quickly, until the mass is a uniform color. Stop working the material after 15-20 seconds even if there are a few light streaks remaining. As long as the two parts are mostly combined the finished impressions will usually be fine, and continuing to work the material beyond 20 seconds could give you too little time to inject the material into the ear before it sets up.

Step 5: Put the Mixed Material into the Syringe

Remove the plunger from the syringe, place the kneaded material into the syringe and use the plunger to push the material down into the tip until it is within ¼ inch or so of the tip of the syringe. This will remove the air pockets from the material.

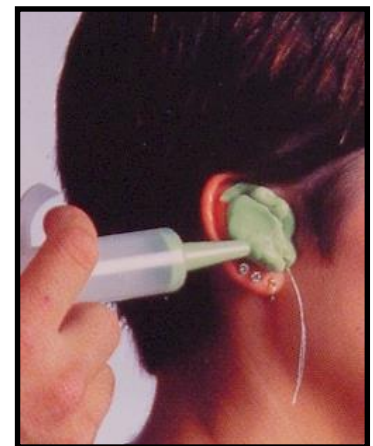
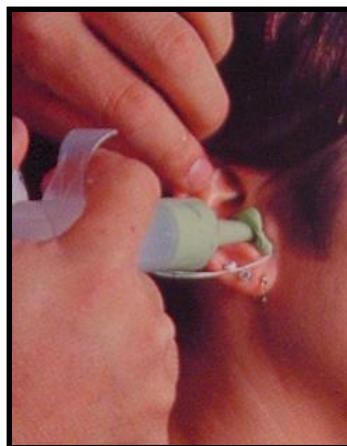


Step 6: Open Mouth and Insert the Bite Block

If you are planning to make open-mouth impressions, open your mouth and insert the bite block between your front teeth using the notch that best suits you. Then bite gently on the bite block to hold your jaws still throughout the remainder of the procedure. The effect of using a bite block to make open-mouth impressions is to slightly enlarge the ear canal, which produces slightly larger ear impressions, and therefore slightly larger finished ear plugs or ear molds. Since the finished ear plugs or molds will be larger, they will fit more snugly in the ear and the seal they make in the canal will be more likely to remain intact even when the mouth is opened, as in singing or talking. For applications in which you will not be opening your mouth a lot, such as sleeping, motorcycling, or factory work, we generally recommend closed-mouth impressions which are more comfortable for long-term wear, but for any application where you will be talking a lot and especially for singing, we recommend open-mouth impressions.

Step 7: Fill the Ear Canal and the Outer Ear

This step may be easier for you if done by a helper, but you can do it yourself if you sit in front of a wall mirror and hold a hand mirror beside your head to let you see directly into your own ear. Carefully place the tip of the syringe inside the ear



canal about halfway to the foam stop, making sure there is space around the tip to allow the impression material room to flow out around the tip. Use the plunger to force the impression material into the ear canal. As the material fills the ear canal it will reach the foam

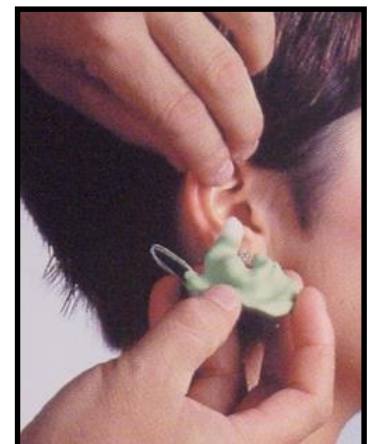
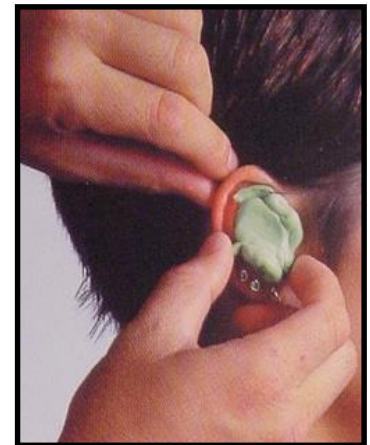
stop then back up and start to flow out around the tip of the syringe. As it flows out around the tip, slowly withdraw the syringe and continue filling the canal letting the material ooze out around the tip. As the material begins to fill the bowl of the ear, slowly pull the tip out of the canal, keeping the tip submerged in the flowing material and moving it around as you continue to flow material so that the outer ear parts get filled as well. Remove the tip when you run out of material or the ear is filled and do not touch the impression material until it is cured.

Step 8: Let the Impressions Cure

Hold your jaw relaxed and still, with your teeth touching, or with the bite block in place if you are making open mouth impressions. Wait 3-10 minutes for the material to set up. When ready, the material will be firm to the touch with no give at all when pressed on by your finger. Allowing ample time to cure will ensure that your impressions will retain their shape after removal from the ear.

If you are not sure the impressions are completely cured, wait a little longer. The material should not yield to a firm touch. If you remove the material too early, you may distort the impression, especially the canal portion, which will potentially result in discomfort or a poor seal against water and/or noise when you get your finished custom ear plugs, custom ear molds or custom earphones.

While you are waiting for the first impression to set up, repeat steps 3 through 9 for the other ear if you are making impressions of both ears.



Note: With both impressions in place at the same time, and before removing either of the impressions, you should experience approximately the same noise reduction that you will get with your finished ear plugs, depending on the exact model you are buying.

Step 9: Carefully Remove the Impressions

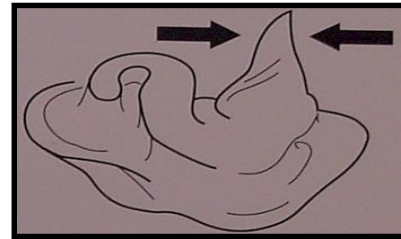
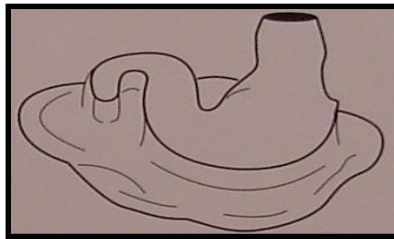
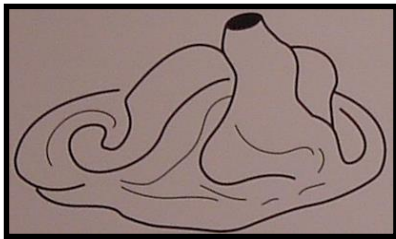
When you are sure the impressions are fully cured, remove each impression by working your fingers under the edges of the impression

and gently prying it out while rotating it toward the face. If the foam stop does not come out with the plug, use the string to carefully and gently pull it out.

Step 10: Examine Your Impressions

Now carefully examine the completed impressions and compare with the drawings below. Make a new impression if your first attempt is not satisfactory. For more information on evaluating the impressions you have made, please visit:

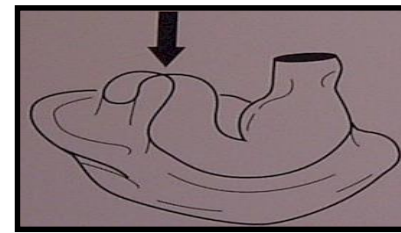
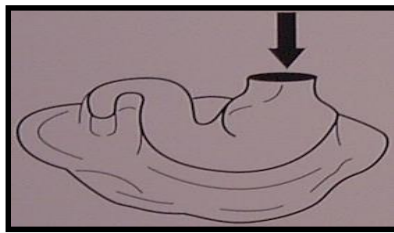
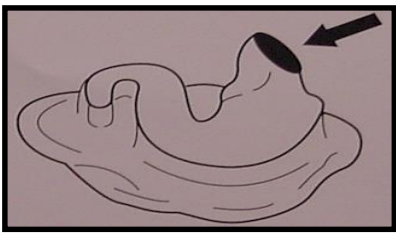
<http://www.earplugstore.com/common-ear-impression-problems.html>



Good impression
Front View

Good impression
Rear View

Bad: Under-filled Canal
Foam Stop Not Used



Bad: Canal too Short
Foam Stop not deep enough

Bad: Canal too Short
Foam Stop not deep enough

Bad: Helix Not Filled

NOTE: To minimize the potential for delays due to inadequate impressions, please take pictures of the impressions you have made and email them to us for evaluation before mailing the impressions to us. Send to: custom@earplugstore.com

ALSO TO ASSURE THE BEST FIT, DO THIS: After making your impressions, take them out of your ears, remove the foam stops, apply a little Oto-Ease lubricant (included in the kit) and reinsert the impressions, then use them as you plan to use the finished product; that is, sing, talk, sleep with them in, go in a loud area, and wear them for at least an hour or two to see if they remain comfortable and if they remain sealed. If you detect any potential problems while

wearing the impressions, email us (custom@earplugstore.com) or give us a call to discuss the issue before you send them in.

(By the way, this process might make you think you can simply use the impressions as finished plugs, however, the impression material just is not durable enough to last, so you will still need to complete the process to get finished plugs that will perform well and last for a very long time.)

When you have completed your impressions and are ready to send them in, fill out the enclosed order form and carefully pack the impressions, along with the form, in the box the kit came in. It is a good idea to put some filler such as tissues or shredded newspaper into the box to cushion the impressions. Be careful not to mash the impressions when packing them for shipment.

If you have been asked to do so, be sure to also include your listening device to be fitted with custom molds in the box along with the impressions. If your device is too large for the box supplied, obtain a box that will accommodate your device and the impressions. When using a larger box, it is a good idea to pack the impressions in the small box and then put that small box into the larger box with your listening device. You do not need to send us your Etymotic, Shure, Ultimate Ears, or Westone earphones unless we have requested that you do so.

Tape the box shut and apply the pre-addressed return label to the box, covering the existing mailing labels (if any) on the box, and mail the box back to us. **Don't forget to apply postage or your impressions may never get to us.**

Please keep these instructions, any unused impression material packet(s), the syringe and the bite block in case you need to remake one or more of your impressions. In the event of a bad fit we will remake your custom products, subject to a 90 day fit guarantee, and we may need to have you remake impressions to do so. However if you do not still have equipment and materials from your kit at that time, you will need to purchase another impression kit or visit an audiologist to have your impressions remade.

Questions? Please contact Ear Plug Superstore.

Office hours: M-F 9:00-5:00 Central Time

Email: custom@earplugstore.com

Phone: (918) 478-5500

Fax: (918) 512-4188

Mail: 1709 Bell Road
Fort Gibson, OK 74434

These instructions are also available online at the following URL:

http://site.earplugstore.com/Making_Your_Impressions.pdf