



Why not try making your own plaster cast of a badger footprint.

What you need:

- Plaster of Paris
- 200ml of water
- Empty plastic drinks bottle
- A bowl to mix the plaster in
- A spoon
- Something to mix the plaster with
- A paintbrush
- Paperclips



Step 1: Make the rings



1. Cut the drinks bottle into plastic rings
2. Cut a slit in each one so that they can be opened out if necessary
3. Fasten the ends together with paper clips. This allows you to adjust the size of the rings, or join two together.

Step 2: Find some prints



Using the skills and knowledge you have gained via the badger project, try and find some badger prints the next time you are out.

It is best if the prints are in nice sticky mud, free from grass and roots and on a fairly flat surface.

Step 3: Choose a print



Choose a print and place the ring around it, pressing firmly.

You do not have to dig very far. This was placed about 1mm in.

Step 4: Put some water in a container



150 ml of water should be enough for two good plaster casts.
You may want to measure this before you leave.

Step 5: Add the plaster



1. **ALWAYS** add the plaster to the water and **NOT** the other way around.
2. Use a different spoon to mix than to spoon the plaster in – you **DON'T** want to get any water in the **UNUSED** plaster
3. Mix it in and keep adding plaster until it reaches the consistency of double cream.
4. Mix gently so that you do not get lots of air in.

Step 6: Pour it into the ring



1. Pour the plaster into the ring gently
2. Start by pouring into the print itself then round about it.
3. For a strong cast it should be at least 1 inch thick
4. Now wait for it to set – 30-40 minutes

Step 7: When the plaster is set



1. You will be able to tell when the plaster is set by tapping the top of the print with your fingernail
2. Once your nail doesn't leave an impression you can lift the cast out.
3. Lift the cast out slowly and gently by holding both sides of the cast and rocking it slowly whilst pulling it upwards. This will prevent parts of the cast breaking off.

Step 8: Final preparation



1. Do **NOT** put your cast in an airtight container – they need to breathe. Instead wrap them in kitchen towel if you want to avoid dropping mud everywhere.
2. Store them at room temperature for 24 hours to allow the soil to dry and the clay to harden further.
3. When the soil is dry you can brush it off with a paintbrush
4. Be **CAREFUL** not to rub away the print. It is normal for the cast to remain slightly brown on the print side. You can run it under cold water to take some dirt off, but **DO NOT SOAK** the cast or it will fall to bits.



Admire and enjoy!

**Well done! If the cast did not work out properly try again!
Sometimes they work sometimes they don't!**

Don't forget to wash your hands!