

Tru-Brix

R E A L B R I C K S I D I N G

MORTAR MIXING INSTRUCTIONS

FOR STANDARD 50 LB. TRU-BRIX BAGS OF MORTAR

Items you will need to get started:

- 2 clean 5-gallon buckets
- 1 1/2" or larger, high R.P.M. drill
- 1 mixing bit
- 1 measuring bucket
- 1 scoop (to load the mortar gun tube)
Tru-Brix Mortar bag(s)
- 1 mortar gun or "bakers bag"

INSTRUCTIONS:

- 1) Start with the two 5-gallon buckets. One full of clean water and carefully measure 6 quarts of water into the other 5-gallon bucket that you will do the mixing in.
- 2) Open the bag of mortar and pour approximately $\frac{3}{4}$ of the bag into the bucket containing 6 quarts of water. If using a colorant, add it at this time.
- 3) Begin mixing immediately with the "turbo mixer" and drill. Be sure to get the corner all the way around the bottom of the bucket. If you don't thoroughly mix the mortar you will have clumps of mortar in the mixture that will cause the mortar gun to plug and jamb which obviously will be very annoying when you are trying to place the mortar in the wall and will waste time.
- 4) After about 2 minutes of mixing you will have a bucket full of too wet to use mortar, add the remaining $\frac{1}{4}$ bag of mortar, at first just stir the added dry mortar into the wet mix.
- 5) Then using the power drill again, begin thoroughly mixing the mortar for approximately 2 more minutes.

If the mortar is too dry to flow through the mortar gun, add only a very small amount of water ($\frac{1}{2}$ cup or less) and mix for about another minute.

If the mortar is too wet and runs out the tube too quickly just let it stand undisturbed for about 5-7 minutes and try again.

If you do not use the mortar quickly enough and it begins to thicken and becomes difficult to use, just add a small amount of water and re-temper (re-mix) until creamy and smooth and flows properly through the mortar gun again. This can be repeated as necessary.

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- 6) Install the mortar in a methodical fashion working up from the bottom to the top so that when you begin striking you can easily follow the same path that the mortar was installed in to avoid hitting wet (most recently installed mortar) while striking firm (first installed/ready to be struck) mortar for an even and consistent appearance.
- 7) Overfill the joints, making sure there are no voids. Begin striking when the mortar is firm, not when it is too wet but soon enough that it strikes easily.
- 8) Strike the head joints of about 10-12 brick (the head joints are the vertical joints between the brick) and the bed joints (the horizontal joints) and continue this process until you have struck off a section of approximately 20-30 brick, then lightly brush this section down to clear off the small crumbles of mortar still on the face of the brick and on the mortar joints. If you have struck at the correct time these crumbs will easily fall off and not smear onto the face of the brick. Continue this process until you have finished striking the most recently installed mortar and **repeat this process again on this section** to achieve a very clean and neat mortar finish **OR leave it alone after the first strike and brush down for a more rough and rustic appearance**. Take a walk and have a close up look at some brick walls to get an idea of how you want your wall to look. Of course the brick style you have will be a factor as to how your mortar should and will appear.

*For first time Do-It-Yourselfers, begin by only doing half batches of mortar until you have become proficient at this process—mortaring is the tedious and slow part of the project and feeling pressured to rush through so as to not waste mortar will make the mortaring a frustrating job.

*If the mortaring process is done neatly the wall will not need cleaning, however if the striking is begun too early and the mortar is too wet when the brush down is done there will be mortar smeared on the face of the brick and additional cleaning will be necessary.

*If mortar overflows the joint and runs onto the face of the brick when pumping in the mortar—LEAVE IT ALONE until the time you are striking that area and it should fall right off of the brick, if you try to scrape it off while it is still very wet it will smear on the face of the brick.

*Before mortaring begins make sure to protect the adjacent areas and floor. Always use gloves when handling any cement based products. This highly modified mortar may cause harsh chemical burns if gloves or other protective gear are not used.

*No brick wall is perfect and no two masons have the same technique, many feel that is the charm of brick, so don't fret if yours has a unique appearance. Don't get caught up trying too hard for perfection up close. Step back and look at the overall appearance and as long as it looks right from a couple of paces away then it's good and right.

*You can pick up some still soft "fall off" at the bottom of the wall or scrape off excess mortar from an overfilled joint at an unstruck area to fill the occasional void in the mortar when striking.