

How to Build Your Own Pot Person

These garden art decorations can be as small or as large as your imagination and garden space allows. Use smaller pots for a child-size figure and larger pots for adult-sized figures. You can even make "Pot Animals" like dogs or cats (a family pet!).



The great thing about this terra cotta pot crafts project is that you don't necessarily have to use brand new pots. Use the slightly damaged ones you have laying around. You'll be able to position a cracked or missing portion out of sight. It's okay if your pots are a bit dirty because your pot-person will be exposed to the elements, and after time, will get a weathered look anyway.

You'll more than likely want to "soften" the appearance of your finished pot-person. After all, a bunch of strung together pots isn't going to be that interesting, as illustrated by the pot-dog to the right. Push dry sphagnum moss, real moss or low-growing, creeping type plants into the spaces on the arms and legs. Make sure the plants you choose are suited to the location of your pot figure, i.e. sunny or shady location.

Attach the terra cotta pot used for the head with the planting hole upwards. This way you can plant something interesting to resemble hair. Or you may just want to place a hat on the pot-person's head, tilted down over its "face", making it look like it's taking a nap.

How about a pair of gloves to help simulate hands? A pair of boots on your figure's "feet"? You could even paint the pots to simulate clothing. Or buy glazed pots for this purpose.

You'll want to string together each arm and leg separately. Use sturdy non-rotting rope (such as nylon) that is heavy enough gauge to easily work with. Plus it does need to withstand years in the outdoor elements.

To be on the safe side, allow at least triple the amount of rope for each arm and leg. Not only do you have to tie knots for each pot you use, but you also need extra left over to attach to the torso.

You need to keep a little bit of space between each pot as you build the arms and legs. This can be accomplished by either:

- Using rope that is thick enough so when you tie a knot, it won't slip through the drainage hole; or
- Using a piece of stick, a large washer or similar object that you can tie a knot around. The object will act as a "stopper" and not slip through the drainage hole.

Determine the spacing you want between each pot. Add a knot as you thread on each consecutive pot.

****TIP:** After you've got the first pot strung, slip the cord up through the 2nd one. Decide the space you want between the pots. Mark (with a felt pen or similar) the cord where it comes out from the TOP of the second pot. Remove 2nd pot from cord. Now you can tie a knot where you marked the cord and slip the pot back on. If you like the spacing, measure where the knot is tied and proceed for the rest of the arms and legs.

Making the torso is relatively easy. Refer to the illustration below. The upper and lower sections are two pots. You'll need to tie knots and/or objects (as previously mentioned) on your rope to keep these two pots held firmly against each other.

Now, you've got to attach the head pot. If you're going to have it planted, make sure you do a good job of anchoring it to the torso. You may also have to use wire with "stoppers" coming through the top-most drainage hole of the torso, into the drainage hole of the head for additional stability. You don't want the head to flop over once it's planted.

This is where you need to get a little creative. Depending on the position of your pot-person, you'll have to experiment a bit to get each arm and leg tied off to the rope running up the middle of the torso.

Arms:

As you can see by the illustration below, you'll be able to tie-off the arm ropes between the torso and head pots.

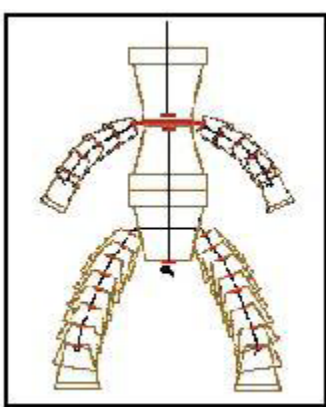
Legs:

You have two options to attach the legs to the torso:

Anchoring each leg separately from the torso: you might very well be able to anchor each leg to the surface upon which your figure is seated. You've got a length of rope coming out of each leg's top pot. Use this to attach to the surface your figure is sitting on. (Nail it down, tie it down, etc.) You should be able to easily hide it and make each leg appear as if it's coming right out from the torso. Just make sure each leg is placed close enough to the torso.

Attaching directly to the torso pots: you can drill a hole into each side of the lower torso pot to be able to pass each end of a leg's rope through and tie off together inside the pot (as shown to the left). **Yes ... this takes a little extra care to do successfully. You've got to use a masonry bit on your drill and proceed slowly when drilling the holes so as not to break the pot!

Don't push too hard, rushing to get the hole made! You'll need to put a piece of wood against the inside of the pot to allow you to push against the outside with the drill. Yes, I know ... the piece of wood will be need to be rounded a bit to conform to the inside of the pot. Maybe an old wooden broom handle can help you in this situation. Patience ... and a little ingenuity are needed for this step.



Click to enlarge

Materials List

Add an Outfit to Put Some Whimsicality and Pizzazz into Your Pot Person

Terra cotta pots required to construct a small pot-person:

- (1) 6" or 8" pot for head
- (2) 8" pots for torso
- (12) 3" or 4" pots for arms
- (16) 4" pots for legs

Terra cotta pots required to construct a large pot-person:

- (1) 8" pot for head
- (2) 10" pots for torso
- (12) 4" pots for arms
- (16) 6" pots for legs



As desired: Dry sphagnum moss, real moss, or low growing creeping-type plants to fill in the spaces between arms, legs and torso. A plant to be used to simulate hair. A pair of shoes or rubber boots? Some gloves? Maybe a bandana or clothing?

As with most creative projects, this terra cotta pot crafts project for making whimsical pot-people has lots of room for your own interpretation. Notice in the photograph at the beginning of the article how the pot that joins the arms and legs to the torso is positioned differently from the teaching example I've detailed for you in this article. Or, in this photo right above, you'll see a different way to position the arms and legs.