

Mixing concrete by hand can often be the best approach for smaller projects. Read on for advice on everything from the right protective equipment you'll need to practical tips for mixing in the right amount of water.

STEP 1 Always use Irish Cement safely when mixing concrete. Protect your eyes, skin and lungs. Safety information is printed on the bags and can be found on the Irish Cement website.



STEP 2 Store bags off the ground and protect them from rain and moisture. Use the cement within 3 months of the packing date printed on the bag. And always use opened bags right away.



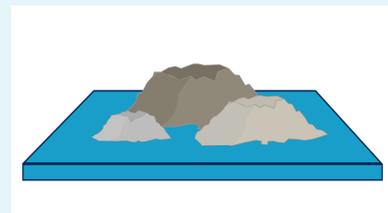
STEP 3 The simple rule of thumb for general purpose concrete is 1 – 2 – 3.



STEP 4 For more accurate mixes always use a measure like a bucket



STEP 5 find a suitable flat surface to mix the concrete, and pile up the dry ingredients. Keep turning over the pile with a shovel until the ingredients are completely mixed and you get an even colour



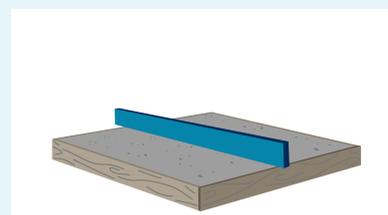
STEP 6 Water is the other vital ingredient in making concrete. Use enough water to make the mix workable and allow it to be placed. Make a crater in the mixture of cement and aggregates and add some water. Carefully mix the dry mix inwards and repeat until the concrete has a consistent colour and texture.



STEP 7 Concrete actually sets by the reaction of cement and water so too much water will make the concrete weak.



STEP 8 Compact and level off the concrete carefully to ensure a consistent even finish.



STEP 9 Remember, protect your work from rain or during hot weather to ensure the concrete sets correctly. Properly 'curing' the concrete like this will ensure better quality longer-lasting concrete. Depending on the conditions curing can take up to 7 days.

