

7 Essential Steps To Straw Bale Success - Day 7

Preparing Your Straw Bale House for Plaster



As charming as some old buildings are, I wouldn't want to have my name on this plaster job! A quality plaster job begins before the plaster is even brought to the site. The substrate is very important as the plaster can only be as strong as the material it is attached to. To that end, straw makes a great bed for plaster and so does wire mesh, if used. Wood, on the other hand, does not do as well with plaster and must be isolated from the mud. In addition, the transitions from bale to wood must also be detailed. Because these two materials expand and contract at different rates, many cracks will appear in the plaster if the transition is not properly detailed with plaster lath



I always cover all wood with roofing felt to isolate it from the plaster. In addition, I cover it with plaster lath to give the plaster something to hang on to. Plaster should never be asked to span a distance on its own without structural support. This becomes really important around doors and windows as well as at the intersection with the ceiling. On the exterior, all wood needs to be covered as described above and any large gaps need to be filled. You can use cob, light straw clay, burlap, spray foam, or other materials to fill the gaps.

When you are ready to apply the plaster, the walls should be tight and solid. All of the wood should be covered and the mesh attached firmly to the wood structure and/or sewn through the bale walls. Any holes or gaps in the bales need to be filled firmly so that when you push the plaster against the patch, it does not deflate. Be sure the site is clean of straw and debris so you can walk safely around the structure. Cover the floors on the interior of the building so dropped plaster will not mar them. Now stand back and smile at the progress you have made!



■ Conclusion

This concludes the "7 Essential Steps to Straw Bale Success" E-Course. For more information on any of the topics described here, please visit www.StrawBale.com. If you are inspired and want to try your hand at straw bale building please visit our site www.LearnStrawBale.com and purchase one of our training courses. Please note that the information contained in this course is simply a sampling of the extensive information contained in our training courses. We look forward to helping you build your dream straw bale home. We have the tools, the techniques, and the expertise to teach you how to do it right, the first time.

Happy Baling,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Andrew Morrison". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Andrew Morrison
Professional Straw Bale Contractor
[Learn Straw Bale](http://www.LearnStrawBale.com)