

Kneading in an Unusual Manner

How may one prepare baby cereal on Shabbat?

Is there a permitted way to create a dough-like mixture on Shabbat?

May one mix juice with mashed fruit?

Different types of unusual kneading

It is clear from the **Gemara** (156a) that there are circumstances where it is permitted to knead in an unusual manner. During its discussion, the Gemara mentions several types of kneading that are unusual:

1. Concerning **flour made from toasted grain**, the Gemara states that it is permitted to knead it **a little bit** at a time.¹
2. Concerning *shatit*,² the Gemara states that one may knead it by **changing the order of the placement of the substances**: “On

1. As will be explained below, some say that the leniency of mixing a little bit at a time is specific to flour made from toasted grain, either because even when kneaded, the final product is not considered a unified compound (see p. 1059 and note 14), or because it was edible even before the kneading, such that the kneading serves only to improve the food and is therefore not prohibited by Torah law (*Beur Halakha* 321:14 s.v. *shema*; cited on pp. 1092–1093). By contrast, the *Hazon Ish* (58:1, 7) holds that this leniency applies even to substances to which the prohibition of Kneading applies by Torah law; see p. 1004 note 17.

2. The *Rishonim* discuss whether *shatit* is flour made from toasted grain, mixed with liquid (**Rashi**; **Ramban**; **Rashba**; **Meiri**), or flour made from coarse grain that did not reach one-third of its full growth (**Rambam** 21:33).

a weekday one places the vinegar and then places the *shatit*; on Shabbat one places the *shatit* and then places the vinegar.”³

3. Concerning **bran** (the outer husk of the grain generally used for animal feed), the Gemara states that one may mix it in the directions of **warp and woof**. This means that instead of mixing in a circular motion as usual, one passes the spoon through the mixture in a horizontal direction, and then in a vertical (literally “to-and-fro”),⁴ or by **shaking the utensil** or pouring the mixture from one utensil to another.⁵
4. Concerning **mustard, garlic, and cress**, the **Gemara** (140a) states that it is permitted to knead them on condition that “one does not beat them but rather mixes them,” meaning that one mixes them **gently** rather than vigorously (**Rashi**) or mixes them **by**

3. According to **Rashi and others**, cited in the previous footnote, *shatit* is essentially flour made from toasted grain to which liquid has been added, such that a runny mixture has been formed. Accordingly, changing the order of the placement of the ingredients is effective for flour produced from toasted grain, provided that it is merely a runny mixture. According to the **Rambam** cited in the previous footnote, it is possible that the leniency allowing one to knead as long as one changes the order of the placement of the ingredients is limited to flour made from coarse grain that is not easily kneaded, but does not apply to flour made from toasted grain, or other powders, that are more easily kneaded (see **Taz** 321:11). The halakhic authorities imply that changing the order in which the materials are added is effective in every case, according to the criteria that will be clarified below; see note 15.

4. **Rashi** (s.v. *sheti*) implies that one may pass the spoon through the mixture only one time horizontally and once vertically. By contrast, the **Rambam** (21:34) implies that one may pass the spoon through the mixture in this manner even many times, and that is the ruling of the **Beur Halakha** (324:3 s.v. *umaavir*).

5. Although mixing horizontally and vertically or by pouring from one utensil to another is mentioned in the Gemara only concerning bran, the **Ritva** (156a, s.v. *heikhi meshanei*) writes that it is reasonable to assume that this is permitted even concerning flour made from toasted grain, and some say that it is permitted even concerning items for which one would violate a prohibition by Torah law if one kneaded them in the normal manner. This point is subject to a dispute among the *Rishonim*, as will be discussed below (pp. 1057–1062).

hand in a case where it would be normal to mix with a spoon (**Mordekhai** 433).⁶

Thus, kneading can be defined as being performed in an unusual manner due to the **quantity** that is kneaded (a little bit at a time), due to **changing the order of the placement of the ingredients**, or due to **an unusual manner of kneading** (horizontal and vertical, shaking the utensil, by hand or gently).

The **Gemara** (156a) implies that there are two important differences between kneading that is performed in an unusual manner because the ingredients are added in a non-standard order and kneading that is performed in an unusual manner due to the other departures from the normal procedure of kneading. First, as noted above, changing the order in which the ingredients are added is effective only with regard to **a runny mixture, but not with regard to a dough-like mixture**. It has already been mentioned (p. 1042) that according to the **Hazon Ish** this does not constitute a full change from the normal procedure, and therefore it renders the act permitted

Two differences between types of kneading in an unusual manner

6. On a practical level, the **Shulhan Arukh** (321:15) states that it is permitted to mix mustard, garlic, and cress gently even with a spoon, but the **Rema** (321:16) cites the opinion that one may do so by hand but not with a spoon. The **Bah** (321 s.v. *uma shekatav Rabbeinu*) understands that even the **Shulhan Arukh** allows one to gently knead only a small quantity at a time, whereas the **Mishna Berura** (58, and *Shaar HaTziyun* 74) writes that according to the **Shulhan Arukh** it is permitted to gently knead even a large amount at one time. Yet, in the **Beur Halakha** (*Orah Hayim* 321 s.v. *yakhol le'arvo*) he wonders how it is possible to allow what appears to violate the prohibition by Torah law of Kneading simply because one kneads gently, which is a relatively small variation in the normal manner of kneading. He concludes that this leniency applies only to a mixture that had already been created before Shabbat (see below, pp. 1076–1078, with regard to kneading after kneading). As will be explained on pp. 1081–1084, the leniency in this case also applies to mashed vegetables. Mixing by hand rather than with a utensil, which is a more significant variation in the common manner of mixing, is apparently effective in creating leniency in any case, as implied by the **Rema** (321:16), who writes that it applies to the case of *shatit*.

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only in the case of a runny mixture, because kneading such a mixture in general is prohibited by rabbinic law rather than by Torah law.

On the other hand, the Gemara implies that most of the departures from the normal procedure render the act permitted **only according to Rabbi Yossi bar Yehuda**, whereas adding the ingredients in an unusual order is effective in rendering the kneading permitted even according to Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi. The reason for this difference is clear: According to Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi, simply combining water with flour or a similar ingredient is part of the labor of Kneading and is prohibited by Torah law. Therefore, kneading cannot be permitted unless it is performed in an unusual manner **from the time the water is added**, such as by changing the order in which one places the ingredients. The other departures from the normal procedure occur later, at the stage of the actual kneading, and cannot render permitted the placement of the water, which has already occurred.