

Emulsifying

Kitchen

Making oil and water combine, and why it sometimes will not.

An emulsion suspends droplets of one liquid in another, held by an emulsifier.

1

Start with the emulsifier

Egg yolk, mustard, or the starch in pasta water.

2

Add oil drop by drop

The first few are the whole battle. Rushing here breaks it.

3

Whisk constantly

The mechanical action creates the droplets.

4

Speed up once thickened

Then a thin steady stream is fine.

5

Loosen if too thick

A little water or lemon juice.

TO RESCUE A SPLIT ONE

Fresh yolk in a clean bowl

Whisk the broken mixture into it, very slowly

It re-emulsifies

Everything at room temperature. Cold ingredients emulsify far less readily, and a fridge-cold yolk is the usual culprit.