

Kneading

Kitchen

What kneading does, and how to tell when it is finished.

Kneading aligns gluten strands into an elastic network.

1 Mix and rest first

An autolyse of 20–30 minutes does much of the work by itself.

2 Knead

8–10 minutes by hand, 5–6 in a mixer on low.

3 Test the windowpane

Stretch a piece thin enough to see light through without tearing.

4 If it tears

Knead longer, or rest ten minutes and test again.

NO-KNEAD ALTERNATIVE

Wetter dough, long slow ferment

Gluten develops by time instead of work

Stretch and fold four times during bulk

Over-kneading is nearly impossible by hand and quite possible in a mixer. The dough turns slack and shiny.