

- Hi, I'm Lindsay from Life, Love and Sugar, and today we're talking about leveling, torting, stacking, and building a cake. So first, what is leveling and torting? So you know how you bake a cake, and sometimes it has that dome on top? Well, leveling is just shaving that top dome off. Now, why would we do that? Well, the main reason is so that you have level layers as you're building your cake. If you have a bunch of cakes stacked on top of each other that all have this dome, you're gonna end up with a lot of pressure in the center of your cake as it kind of falls out to the outside. And that's why sometimes you see cakes split through the middle. So that's why leveling is important. Now, torting is when you take a cake, such as this one that's thick, and you actually divide it into multiple layers. So we're gonna talk about that today, too. And then we're also gonna talk about building a stable cake. So let's start with leveling and torting. I like to use a cardboard cake round to build my cake on. Then I can move it around later and put it on a cake stand or whatever later. And I'm gonna grab my first layer of cake. This is just my moist vanilla cake. Now, this is actually a fairly level cake, but if you really wanna be particular about it, you can definitely level it. Other times, cakes have a larger dome. You can buy utensils that are made for leveling and torting, but often they're kind of flimsy, and I've never really enjoyed using them. So I really just use a long, serrated knife, serrated so that it cuts nicely through your cake. One thing that can be nice about cakes is they have this nice little edge here, all the way around. And so sometimes I like to use that as my guide for leveling the top of the cake. So I'll just kind of start right at that edge, and saw all the way across until I have a nice level top, just keeping a close eye on these edges as I move through my cake. So I've just got the tip and the base of the knife kinda touching these edges so that I know I've got a level cake as I trim off the dome. Now we can take that off and put it aside. And we have a nice, level cake. Now, torting can be a little bit trickier, and again, they have tools, but I don't really find them that useful. What I like to do is I take my knife, and I try to find the midpoint of the cake. You could use a ruler if you wanna be really exact. Find your midpoint, and kind of put a little marking right on your cake so you can see it. All right? And then I just kinda get in position, find that marking, put my knife there, just kinda tuck my arm into my hip, and just keep my arm steady as I turn the cake. Keep the knife in place, and make this mark all the way around the cake. You can check every once in a while, make sure you're still in the right spot. Reset, and go around. And once you've gone all the way around, you should have a line that goes all the way around your cake. And now you can kinda use that as your guide. So I'll put my knife in here. Now, you could keep your knife in place and just keep sawing further, further, further in, turning in a circle, but I'm not a big fan of that. I personally prefer to just put my knife in the line and just kinda eyeball it, and just keep an eye here and there as I go around and make an even cut. And there we go. Perfectly along those lines. Now, these layers get kinda thin, so they can be a little tricky to

move around. I like to use a cake lifter when I start working with real thin layers, and then I know I'm not gonna rip my cakes apart. You can just slide that in the middle, lift this cake right off, and move it wherever you need it as you fill this cake. So I'm gonna go ahead and put that back down and we'll torte our other layer. There we are. Torted and ready to go. Now we can build our cake use my cake lifter to lift this layer off. And so at this point, we're gonna wanna start building the structure of the inside of our layers. An important part of that is your frosting. I'm using a lemon buttercream. You may be using something else, but regardless of what you're using, it needs to be stiff enough to hold your cake and your filling in place. So you do wanna have a stiff buttercream, not something too thin. In fact, let's see, if I put my spatula in my buttercream, it actually stands right up. It doesn't fall over to the side. It's nice and stiff, which means it's gonna hold the fillings of my cake, whatever that may be, whether it's something thin or thick, it's gonna hold it in place so my layers aren't shifting all over the place or seeping out from the sides of my cake. So for this cake, I've got some lemon curd and lemon buttercream, and we're gonna layer that in. This layer is going to be lemon curd. So we're actually gonna pipe a dam of buttercream around the outside of this cake first. And that's gonna keep our lemon curd filling in place. So you want a piping bag. I use the Ateco 808 tip. It's a nice large, round tip. And now we're gonna pipe our dam around the outer edge. I like to get as close to the outer edge as I can so that I have plenty of space in the middle for filling and so that I'm not leaving a bunch of gaps on the outside. And I also like a nice tall dam so that there's plenty of room for my filling. So we have our dam. Now we're going to add about half of this lemon curd. And when I'm adding filling between my layers, I typically stick with about a cup of buttercream. If you're using a filling like a curd or something, I may use a little less, 'cause if you have too thick of a layer, it's really not gonna be all that steady, even if you have a nice sturdy buttercream dam. So I try not to put too much in there. This is probably gonna be about, let's see, about six tablespoons of curd per layer. And just like with our cake layers, we want our filling layers to be nice and level. So I'm gonna spread this out into a nice, even layer, going all the way to the edges of the dam. So remember I said that I like a tall dam? Well, so I have plenty of space for my filling, but even if there's space left, I wanna go ahead and level this off so the whole thing is level. So at this point, you can come in and remove the extra buttercream that is kind of above the layer of your filling so that everything is nice and level. All right, so we've got a nice, level, clean layer here. So we can add this cake layer back on top of our filling. Let's line it up, make sure everything is in place. There we go. All right, now we are ready for our next layer. This is gonna be a layer of buttercream. Like I said, I use about a cup of buttercream when I'm adding that as a filling. So add this to our cake, and spread that evenly. All right, got that one. Now it's time for our next layer of cake. I'm gonna go ahead and use my cake lifter, 'cause again, they're thin layers, and I don't want

anything to break as I'm moving it around. Make sure it's all lined up. And we're gonna do one more layer of lemon curd. So we'll pipe another dam around the outer edge. There we go. Add the rest of our lemon curd. All right, then we'll level off this dam again. All right, now that's nice and level, so we're gonna add our last layer of cake. All right, there we go. We have a well-built, sturdy cake here that shouldn't shift around, shouldn't move. So from this point, we may wanna add a crumb coat, frost our cake. What I often do, you can see there's a lot of frosting sticking out from the sides of the cake. So I'll just kinda use that to fill in any gaps and create kind of almost a crumb coat. Now, unless I have a cake that just has a whole lot of crumbs, and I'm really worried about it, this is where I usually stop with crumb coats, clean things off so that there aren't any crumbs laying around the base, and I'll frost my cake. So now I've frosted my cake. If you'd like to see the tutorial on that, you can check out my video on my channel or on my website. And for more of the tutorial, in print form, and photos, and all the other information, you can actually head to my site. To learn even more about leveling, torting, and building and stacking a cake, just head over to lifeloveandsugar.com.