Pre-hydrating dried yeast

Sometimes it is necessary to pre-hydrate dried yeast before use. This is easy, and can be done as follows:

1. Get a small glass container with lid (e.g. a jam jar or similar jar) and clean it thoroughly.
2. Fill it with tap water until half full. Place the lid LOOSELY on top of the jar. DO NOT SCREW IT ON OR THE JAR MAY EXPLODE!
3. Put the jar into a microwave oven and switch it on until the water boils. (Note: if the jar has a metal lid, this can still be used safely in a microwave.) Let stand for about five minutes with the door of the microwave oven open (so that it doesn't get all steamed up) while the hot water and the steam sterilize the jar and the lid. Close the door, switch the oven on again and bring the water back to the boil.
4. As soon as the water boils, take the jar out of the oven using a cloth or something similar (jar and lid will be piping hot at this point!) and tighten the lid.
5. Let the water cool down to room temperature. (Note: a good time to do all the above is before you start brewing so that the water has ample time to cool.)
6. About 15 minutes before the yeast has to be ready for use, open the jar (there will be a slight vacuum inside the jar, like when you first open a jar of jam) and sprinkle the dried yeast into the water. Do not stir. Put the lid back on and let stand for 15-20 minutes.
7. Give the jar a slight shake to distribute the yeast into the water, creating a thin slurry. Open the jar and pour the entire contents of the jar into the fermenter. (A little yeast will stay behind in the jar, but this can safely be ignored.)