Introduction

Leather, one of mankind’s oldest natural resources, is a foremost gift to man from Mother Nature. Without it man might not have survived.

The history of leather is closely merged with the progress of mankind. Long before man devised a written alphabet, he communicated through simple drawings or sign language. Many of these “messages” were done on skins of animals which he killed for food. With the skins of animals he was able to clothe and shelter himself. Modern archaeology has uncovered leather articles and artifacts from cultures dating back over 33 centuries and found them to be in an excellent state of preservation.

The ancient Romans used leather as currency, and the style and quality of a Romans sandals conveyed his status in society.

When man realized the importance of recording his thoughts and knowledge in books which he could carry and store more conveniently than stone tablets, he began to express himself on parchment leather pages.

During the Middle Ages, however, only the wealthy could afford boots, capes, saddles, etc. made of leather. Leather workmanship was limited to a very narrow section of society. A secretive lot, Leather Guildsmen closely guarded knowledge of their art which they handed down from father to son.

When Cortez conquered Mexico in the early 16th century, leather artistry came boldly into the New World. The Conquistadores brought horses and with them came the need for saddles and other horse gear. Spain had long been a leader in leather artistry and the skilled craftsmen who came over to the New Land coupled their vast knowledge with the inspiration they leaned from the beautiful floral patterns to be found all about them. Thus came the transition from basic geometric designs dating back to medieval times to the floral patterns of modern artistry.

Today anyone can enjoy leatherwork, the art of creating beautiful and useful articles of leather. Just as early man learned his “ABC’s” on leather, this section is designed to teach you some of the basics of working with leather.

To decorate leather by carving, you need a small group of specially designed tools: swivel knife, camouflage, beveler, pear shader, veiner, seeder, backgrounder and mallet. These tools enable you to create basic leather articles. As your skill and enthusiasm grow you will want to add more tools to your collection. Of course you also need leather.

Leather is unique, different from any “cloth” put together by man, for it is the actual skin of an animal that grew as the animal grew. The skins of bovine animals (cows, oxen, etc.) provide most of the leather for carving. These skins must be vegetable tanned so that they will readily absorb moisture, allowing you to mold and form the leather easily.

Leather is usually sold by the square foot and is measured by special machines at the tanneries. The number of square feet is usually marked on the underside of the hide with a marker, chalk or machine stamp. Known as a skin, the complete hide of the animal may be left whole or cut into sections: sides, bellies, backs and shoulders.
The thickness (or weight) of leather is usually measured in terms of ounces. One ounce equals approximately 1/64” in thickness. Thus, 7-8 oz. means the leather is 7 to 8 oz. in weight or 7/64” to 8/64”, making it approximately 1/8” thick. Lighter weight leather such as calf or kip (large calf) range from 1.5 oz. to 3-4 oz. Heavier leathers, 4-5 oz. to 10-11 oz. and more are from the hides of mature cattle.

To make leather a uniform thickness, the hides are run through a splitting machine. Since animal hides are not of uniform thickness and since they are wet when put through the splitting machine, the thickness of the leather will not remain the same throughout the hide. There will always be slight variations and that’s why leather weights seldom measure out in exact 64th’s of an inch. This is why leathers are usually shown as 4-5 oz., 6-7 oz., etc.

Now that you have been introduced to the history of leatherworking, you are ready to begin to learn to create luxurious leather articles. Start with a billfold or key case. Soon you’ll be making handbags, bowling bags, sporting goods, etc. Or, you may wish to begin your leatherwork hobby by making a pair of moccasins or sandals, or decorating your home with wall hangings and other accessories.

For centuries, leather has fulfilled a great need in man’s life. So, full speed ahead. You’ll be entering a fulfilling, creative hobby you’ll enjoy all the years of your life.

**How to Moisten The Leather**

Vegetable tanned tooling leather must be moistened with water before you can work with it. This procedure is called casing. As you wet the leather, the fibers swell and soften, thus enabling you to stamp and shape it. Leather is moistened by rubbing a damp sponge on it. Be sure your hands are clean. Rub the damp sponge on the flesh side and then on the grain side. Apply the water as evenly as possible. When the leather begins to return to its natural color, begin stamping. If your leather dries before you complete the tooling design, it will be necessary to remoisten. Be sure you case the entire piece to avoid water spots.

*Caution: Always use glass or plastic containers for the water. Metal containers may cause the leather to stain.*

**How to Use Craftool® Stamps**

Enhance the beauty of your leather projects with Craftool stamps. These may be used to create original designs or for embellishing the beauty of your carved design. Use a wood or rawhide mallet head to strike the top of the stamp to obtain its impression in the leather.

*Caution: Never strike Craftool® stamps with a metal faced hammer, as this will damage tools.*

Hold both the mallet and decorative stamping tool upright in a secure, but relaxed manner. Hold the mallet in the center of the handle with your fingers rather than the palm of your hand.
Using Kraftool® Alphabet and 3-D Stamps
Alphabet stamps are a quick way of personalizing your leathercraft projects. 3-D stamps come in a wide variety of designs like animals, pictorials, symbols, etc.

Using Alphabet & 3-D Stamps,
For best results:
1. Make sure leather is moistened (see page 25).
2. Place leather on top of a firm surface like marble. This will help you create deep impressions.
3. Properly position stamp(s) on leather (Fig. 1).
4. Place handle in stamp (Fig. 2).
5. Make sure you hold the handle down firmly while striking with mallet (Fig. 3). This will prevent the stamp from “bouncing”. Bouncing creates undesirable multiple impressions on the leather.

How to Punch Lacing Holes
Punch lacing holes after all project parts are cemented together around the edges. For lacing around edges, use a Wing Divider (#3607-00) to mark a line around edges to ensure holes follow in a straight line.
1. Use a single prong Kraftool® Thonging Chisel (#8040 or #8044) to punch around corners and in places where there is not room for multi-prong chisels.
2. Multi-prong Thonging Chisels (#8042 or #8046) come with various numbers of prongs. A chisel of 4 or more prongs makes punching faster. After you punch once, set the end prong back in the last hole you punched and hit punch with mallet. This gives you three new holes and by placing one prong in the last hole, all holes come out perfectly spaced.

Note: Place Poundo Board (#3461-01) on top of Marble Slab (#32228-00) and then place your leather to be punched on top of poundo board. The marble provides a firm base and the poundo board will help protect your chisel from becoming dull or chipped. Strike the chisel hard enough to go through the leather, but not hard enough to go all the way through the poundo board.

How to Lace
Lacing puts the finishing touch to handmade leather articles. How good the finished project looks depends very much on the lacing. Thus, how you lace will have a great deal of importance in the appearance of the finished project. With the following instructions and illustrations, plus a little practice, you will soon be doing a neat, smooth job of lacing.

Note: Always lace with stamped or finished side of the project facing you.

Threading a 2-Prong Lacing Needle
Note: You should load two yards of lacing in lacing needle at a time. Working with longer pieces of lacing will be difficult and can cause the lacing to wear and become frayed as it is pulled through the lacing holes.

Attaching Lace to Two-Prong Needle
1. Spring open needle. Insert skived end into needle, smooth side up (as shown). Close needle on lace with needle nose pliers or tap lightly with mallet so that prongs pierce lace and lock in place. To remove lace, spring open needle.
**How to Lace & Splice the Double Loop Stitch**

Recommendations: Use 3/32” or 1/8” lace with the same sized slits or holes. Double-Loop Lacing uses 7-8 times more lace than the length of the project (ex: 2’ will need 14’ to 16’ of lace).

**Step 1**
Begin on front side, push needle through first slit or hole. Leave 3/4” lace end and continue on to next slit or hole.

**Step 2**
Pull stitch tight; lace over the end you left free. This forms a cross or “bight”.

**Step 3**
Hold end of lace down with finger.

**Step 4**
Push needle under cross (or bight). Hold end of lace down on opposite side.

**Step 5**
Follow the same procedures as in Step 1 & 2 making a cross (bight). Stitch under the bight and pull stitch snug.

**Step 6**
End of lace can be released.

**Step 7**
Lace through 3 corner holes twice.

**Step 8**
When lacing a corner, stitch through 3 corner slits or holes twice each.

**Step 9**
Lace until only 8” of lace remains. You will now have to splice the lace.

**Step 10**
Splicing: Insert new needle & lace down between leathers, 4 slits from lacing; pull out back; leave 3/4” of end between leathers.

**Step 11**
Tuck end between leathers.

**Step 12**
Pull old lace tight. Cut off end at an angle, allowing about 1/2” to remain.

**Step 13**
Tuck end between leathers. Lace over with new lace so it’s caught and won’t show. Continue lacing.

**Step 14**
When you have laced to starting point, use modeling stylus to pull end of the beginning lace free of stitches.

**Step 15**
From back side, pull the end of lace out of slit.

**Step 16**
From front side, pull end of lace out of the loop.

**Step 17**
Maintain Loop

**Step 18**
Push stylus tip of modeling tool down between leathers and hook it over end of the lace.

**Step 19**
Cut off end of lace you have pulled out and tuck end between leathers. Lace through the next slit.

**Step 20**
Tuck end between leathers.

**Step 21**
Lace under the bight. Do not pull this stitch tight.

**Step 22**
Carefully cross over as shown and push the needle down through loop.

**Step 23**
Pull needle through. Push laced edges together to adjust starting loops for easier completion.

**Step 24**
Pull any slack out of the first loop and adjust lacing with fingers to make all stitches appear equal.

**Step 25**
Pull end of lacing down tight. Make sure all stitches appear even and equally spaced.

**Step 26**
Push needle through the last slit as shown. Bring it up between the leathers and out between lacing.

**Step 27**
Carefully cut off end of lacing. Top lacing flat with mallet or roll flat with a wooden dowel.

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How to Lace the Whipstitch - #1

The following instructions for the Whipstitch are for use on a project with separate beginning and ending points. The amount of lacing required for the Whipstitch is 3 to 3-1/2 times the distance to be laced.

![Step 1](image1.png)

**Step 1**

Begin lacing, starting between the two layers of leather. Leave about 1/4" at the end where you slit.

**Step 2**

Lace through hole as shown. Keep the lace from twisting. Pull the stitch up tight to lock the lace.

**Step 3**

Push needle through the second hole. Pull stitch up tight. Continue lacing, tightening the lace as you go.

**Step 4**

Push needle through last hole as shown. Bring it up between the leathers and out between lacing. Carefully cut off the end of lacing.

**Step 5**

Pull the beginning stitch tight and continue lacing, pulling the stitches tight as you go.

**Step 6**

Lace to the second to last hole and leave a loose hole.

**Step 7**

Push needle through last holes. Spread leathers; push needle through next-to-last hole on back, bring needle up between leathers.

**Step 8**

Pull loose loop tight and continue pulling all slack out of the lace.

**Step 9**

Pull all stitching tight; pull end of lace tight. Trim off end of lace close to leather, tap all lacing flat with smooth mallet.

Sewing a Running Stitch

The amount of lace needed for the running stitch is 1-1/2 times the distance to be laced.

![Step 1](image2.png)

**Step 1**

Begin lacing, starting between the two layers of leather. Leave about 1/4" at the end where you slit.

**Step 2**

Lace through hole as shown. Keep the lace from twisting. Pull the stitch up tight to lock the lace.

**Step 3**

Push needle through the second hole. Pull stitch up tight. Continue lacing, tightening the lace as you go.

**Step 4**

Push needle through last hole as shown. Bring it up between the leathers and out between lacing. Carefully cut off the end of lacing.

**Step 5**

Pull the beginning stitch tight and continue lacing, pulling the stitches tight as you go.

**Step 6**

Lace to the second to last hole and leave a loose hole.

**Step 7**

Push needle through last holes. Spread leathers; push needle through next-to-last hole on back, bring needle up between leathers.

**Step 8**

Pull loose loop tight and continue pulling all slack out of the lace.

**Step 9**

Pull all stitching tight; pull end of lace tight. Trim off end of lace close to leather, tap all lacing flat with smooth mallet.

Tandy Leather Factory store managers are experts in leathercraft. They are happy to answer any questions you may have, as well as demonstrate any leathercraft technique.
**How to Apply Leather Finish**

Leather finishes are applied to protect the leather and preserve the qualities and appearance. Before applying leather finish, there are several points which you should know:

- All tooling of the design must be completed before finish is applied.
- Be sure the surface area is dry and clean of any dirt, dust or other matter.
- Leather finishes must be applied prior to assembly.

1. Press a sponge dampened slightly with water to the top of a bottle of leather finish and tip the bottle so a little finish flows onto the sponge.
2. Apply a light coat of finish to the carved side of the leather, moving the sponge in a circular motion over the leather. Work the finish into the cuts and impressions.
3. Let the finish dry thoroughly, then apply a second coat if you desire a shinier finish. Allow the piece to dry thoroughly.
4. If a high gloss is desired, buff the leather with a piece of sheepskin or a clean, soft, lint-free cloth. The project is now ready to be assembled, either by stitching with waxed thread or by lacing with leather or plastic lace.
How to Set Line 20 & Line 24 Snaps

Use these snaps for holsters, straps, vests, etc. where a firm fastener is required. Line 20 is for 5 to 7 oz. leather. Line 24 is for 8 to 10 oz. leather.

Craftool® Line 20 & Line 24 Setters

Stud Socket Eyelet Cap

No. 8057 Sets Line 20 Snaps

Stud Socket Eyelet Cap

#8056 Anvil

Set Snaps in Strap as Shown. Punch proper size holes for eyelet and cap. Insert parts, set tool in position and strike firmly with mallet.

How to Set Glove & Line 16 Snaps

#8103-10 Snap Setter Set

Three Setters & an Anvil for Setting Glove & Line 16 Snaps

Socket & Cap SETTER

Stud & Eyelet SETTER

Socket & Cap SETTER

Use These 2 Setters For Glove Snaps

Use These 2 Setters For Line 16 Snaps

Use smaller concave circle for setting Glove CAP

Use larger concave circle for setting line 16 CAP

Use Flat Back Side of ANVIL to set All EYELETS

Glove Snap Parts:

Socket Stud Eyelet

Line 16 Snap Parts:

Socket Stud Eyelet

See our full line of snaps and other fasteners on pages 114-117 of our 2009 Leathercraft Catalog.

Position snap parts as shown. Insert setter and strike firmly with mallet.
How to Set Rivets

Rapid Rivets are available in several sizes and lengths. Select the proper size and length for your specific project. To properly adjoin, rivet post should extend about 1/8" above combined thickness of materials.

Punch proper size holes for the rivets. Push post through from back side of project. Place on marble surface, the cap on post, with concave face of setter on cap. Strike setter sharply with mallet. For double cap rivets, set the same as regular rivets except you must use an #8056 Anvil under the cap of the post.

Braiding the Three-Strand Mystery Braid

Step 1
Make two cuts in leather strip, dividing it into 3 equal parts joined at both ends. Edge and burnish each strip if you wish.

Step 2
Pass the lower end of strip through the slit between strands 2 and 3.

Step 3
With resulting braid kept at the bottom, go to the top end and pass strands 1 over 2, 3 over 1 and 2 over 3. Now pass the lower end of strip between strands 2 and 3.

Step 4
Again pass strands 1 over 2, 3 over 1 and 2 over 3. Braiding cycle is now complete, appearing as in Fig. 4. To continue braiding, follow Steps 2, 3 and 4 until strands are not long enough to complete another full cycle (Steps 2, 3, and 4). Equalize and smooth braid.

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No more stumbling around in the dark, ever again, with our flashlight kit. Perfect for use in the cabin or tent, walking to a ceremonial campfire or snipe-hunting. Decorate the included 2” leather rounder, secure to wrist cord and you’re ready to go. A useful camp project that can be used for years to come. Approximately 5-1/2” long and uses two AA batteries (included). Available in yellow.

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**Youth Group Leathercraft Set**

Discover the fun of leathercrafting with the basics of stamping and painting. Teach kids pride in accomplishment by letting them craft their own leather items. Contains 50 projects. Kit includes eight wooden mallets, twelve stamping tools, 1/2” alphabet set, one extra handle for alphabet set, six Cova Color® paints, ten brushes, two sponges, one 25-pack wristbands and one 25-pack of bookmarks.

*55511-01*

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