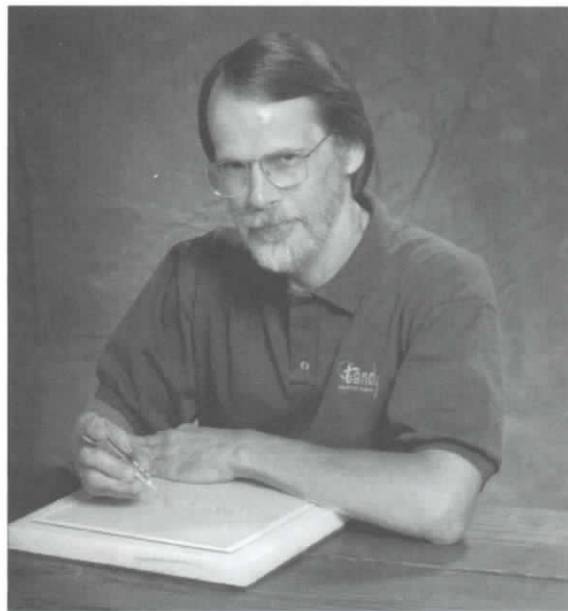


LEATHER CRAFTING



Leathercrafting

FOREWORD



I would like to personally welcome you to the fun and exciting world of crafting with leather. No other natural material offers crafters and artists alike the creative possibilities of this amazing medium. Leather, long recognized for its beauty, strength and durability, can be fashioned into articles that are both functional and artistic. In this book, we've offered instructions to help you become more knowledgeable about what you can do with leather and how different tools and supplies will help you achieve the impressions you desire. We at Tandy Leather hope this book will not be your only experience with leather, but an introduction to a craft that will continue to offer you pleasure for a lifetime. Call or visit our stores nationwide and let us help you explore the many, varied forms of this fascinating craft.

Tony Laier
Master Leather Artist



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INTRODUCTION TO LEATHERCRAFTING

Decorating leather is a fascinating art that dates back to prehistoric days. Archaeologists have found leather pieces . . . partially preserved leather cloaks and flagons scattered wherever ancient people roamed.

Beautifully decorated leather thong sandals have been unearthed from the tombs of Egypt. And the prized shields worn by Roman centurions were of decorated leather.

Indeed, if you were to open the Bible to the Book of Genesis, Chapter III, Verse 21, you would find the first literary reference to leather: "Unto Adam also and to his wife did the Lord God make coats of skin and clothed them."

Eons ago, hunters found the animals they killed for food could provide them with sandals and garments by simply curing and fashioning the skins.

From the hides the cave dwellers used for clothing, to the pressurized leather suits worn by the first astronauts, to the laptop cases carried by today's professionals, leather has fulfilled the need.

For centuries, leather has continued to serve humans. During the Middle Ages, however, only the wealthy could afford boots, capes, saddles, decorated chairs, 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 gleaned 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.

THE STORY OF LEATHER

Leather, one of our oldest natural resources, is a foremost gift to us from Mother Nature. Without it we might not have survived. Vivid evidence of its outstanding importance dates back across the centuries of civilization; it goes back beyond the birth of our nation to the cultures of 18th Century Europe and on back beyond the era of the domination of the Romans.

Modern archaeologists have unearthed leather articles and artifacts from cultures dating back over 33 centuries and found them to be in an excellent state of preservation. These articles were produced in the 1300 or 1400 B.C. period.

Our ancestors' dependency and appreciation of leather, coupled with their instinctive drive to improve upon the beauty of Nature, led them to practice creative artistry using leather as a media or raw material. From fashioning crude protective footwear to the creation of unbelievably beautiful articles of great utility, human beings have reaped a great harvest of benefit and pleasure from leather.

The history of leather is closely merged with the progress of humans. The ancient cave dwellers counted leather as one of their most valuable assets. With the skins of animals they were able to fashion crude footwear, which permitted them to range far and wide in search of food. With leather vessels in which to carry water, they were no longer isolated, no longer limited to living near a lake or stream.

Leather provided clothing, armament and even shelter for early civilizations. Archaeologists have found remnants of leather clothing scattered as far and wide as ancient people wandered.

HISTORY OF LEATHER TANNING

Animal skins used by prehistoric people deteriorated rapidly, drying out, becoming stiff and unmanageable.

Gradually, they learned to scrape off the flesh residue from the underside of the skins and stretch the skins in the sun to dry. To soften the dried skins, they pounded them with stones and made them still softer yet by chewing the skins.

Archaeologists believe that people from an ancient Hebrew tribe were the first to use an actual tanning process. The people discovered that the juices from crushed tree bark had a very preservative effect upon dried animal skins.

After burying animal skins in a deep earthen vat with layers of finely crushed bark between them, the people saturated them with water and closed off the vat for a period of six months. They found that leather thus crudely tanned would last almost indefinitely.

Early Egyptian civilization prized leather like gold.

To the ancient Romans, leather was so important, they used it as currency. Status and rank of Romans were judged by the quality and style of their sandals.

When people realized the importance of recording their thoughts and knowledge in books which they could carry and store more conveniently than stone tablets, they began to express themselves on parchment leather pages.

As people found new and different uses for leather, new and more sophisticated methods of tanning were developed.

MODERN TANNING

From the crude and simple processes of the early leather tanner, emerged the foundation and basic principles employed by our modern tanneries.

Much of today's tanning technology was developed in Europe, especially England. With new advantages provided by modern chemistry, we have now developed processes whereby we can produce a beautiful and long lasting leather to satisfy any need, no matter how exacting.

The modern leather tannery is made up of three major sections. The first section stores, cleans and removes hair from the animal skins. Next, natural oils are removed and preservative chemicals introduced into the very heart of the skin structure. During the final stages of production, the leather is stretched and dried. It is trimmed and shaved to meet exacting specifications as to thickness and texture. Additional oil and fat liquors are used to give leather the desired "feel" and character.

Finally, leather is measured and sorted before shipment to one of the thousands of leather fabricators who will manufacture products of beauty and durability in answer to our ever growing demand for fine leather products.

TANNAGE TYPES

Advanced technology has developed a variety of tannages to accommodate various end product needs. It would take volumes to cover this wide range of tanning methods. We, however, will concentrate on the two types of tannage which dominate the American leather industry: chrome and vegetable tanning.

Chrome tanning is the fastest, requiring only about one-fourth the time needed by other processes. Skins are agitated in a strong solution of chromic salt in large drum-like containers. This tightens the fibers of the skin, adds tensile strength and makes finished leather water resistant. You can determine if leather is chrome tanned by cutting through the body of the leather. Internal fibers will appear bluish white. Chrome tanned leather is used primarily for footwear.

Our family of tooling leathers are vegetable tanned because this method creates the exact grain surface conditions needed to receive our carving and stamping tool impressions. Vegetable tanned leather absorbs water readily and dries out quickly because the fiber structure is less compact than that of chrome tanned leather.

Hides are placed in deep vats containing a formulation of extracts from several types of tree bark, water and preservative chemicals. During the approximate one-hundred day tanning period required, hides are subjected to stronger and stronger solutions of the tanning formulation.

Because vegetable tanned leather is pliable, it is much easier to work with than chrome tanned leather. The latter is much more difficult to alter and decorate as desired.

TYPES OF LEATHER

Byproducts of the meat packing industry (hides and skins of cattle, sheep and goats) provide the main source of raw materials for American tanners. In terms of volume and value, cattle hides and calf skins predominate. These furnish most of the footwear and leather goods produced in America.

Other animal skins adapted to people's use include: horsehide, for orthopedic braces, gloves and other special uses; pigskin, for wallets cases and numerous small leather accessories; sharkskin and ostrich are used primarily for exotic luxury items.

THE UNITED STATES LEATHER INDUSTRY

From its humble beginning in the small settlements of the thirteen colonies, the American leather industry has grown into a sprawling enterprise. It supplies the ultimate in beauty and quality in both leather and leather goods in this country and throughout the world.

From the beginning of our history to the present, leather continues to be our constant companion and friend.

INTRODUCTION TO LEATHER CARVING

Leather is unique . . . different than any cloth put together by humans . . . for it is the actual skin of an animal that grew as the animal grew. To change this skin into leather, the skin must be tanned. Various methods of tanning produce leather for different purposes.

Leather for CARVING must be of "vegetable" tannage. This tannage absorbs moisture readily . . . allowing you to mold and form the leather easily . . . and carve, stamp and dye or add high gloss to your leather projects. The skins of bovine animals (cows, oxen, etc.) provide most of the leather for carving. This leather is commonly called "STRAP" leather.



A skin is a full hide as it comes from the animal. Smaller animals (calf, goat, sheep, pig) are usually tanned as a skin or full hide.

The complete hide of the animal is known as a skin. It may be left whole or cut into sections: sides, bellies and backs.

SIDES and SKINS, usually sold by the square foot, are measured by special machines at the tanneries. The number of square feet is usually marked on the underside of the hide with a crayon, chalk or pen. Fractions of a foot are always in FOURTHS (For example: $12^1=12\frac{1}{4}$ sq. ft.; $12^2=12\frac{2}{4}$ sq. ft.; $12^3=12\frac{3}{4}$ sq. ft.)

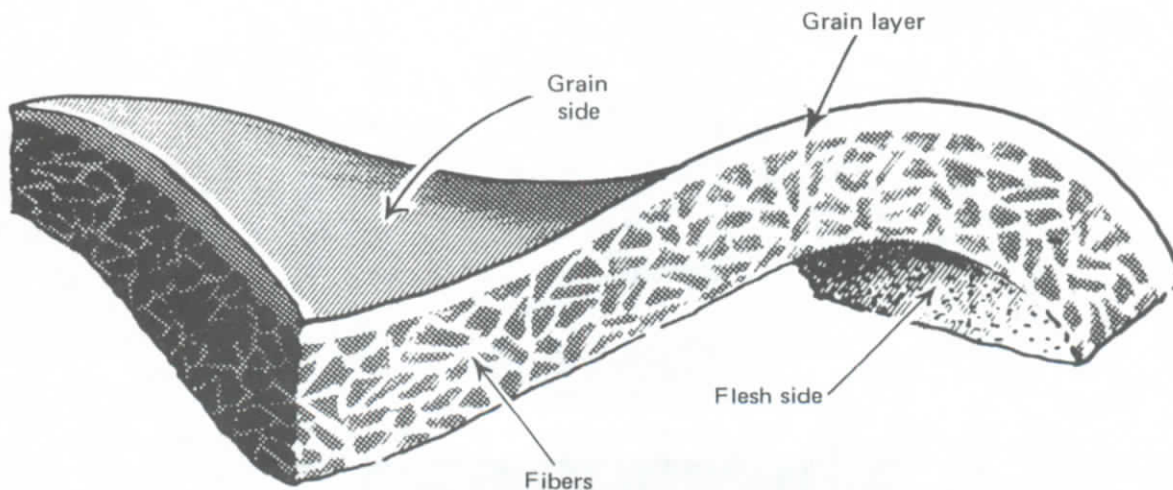


For easier handling during tanning, large animal hides are usually cut in half at the backbone. Thus, a side of leather is just that! It is one side or one half of a hide.

Unlike cloth, which is manufactured, leather is grown by nature and is less uniform in grade and thickness. Therefore, it is not unusual for a given leather in a given grade to vary slightly from time to time.

The THICKNESS (or weight) of leather is usually measured in terms of ounces. One ounce equals approximately $\frac{1}{64}$ " in thickness. Thus, 7-8 oz. means the leather is 7 to 8 oz. in weight or $\frac{7}{64}$ " to $\frac{8}{64}$ " . . . meaning approximately $\frac{1}{8}$ " thick. Lighter weight leathers such as calf or kip (large calf) range from $1\frac{1}{2}$ oz. to 3-4 oz. Heavier leather, 4-5 oz. to 10-11 oz. and more come 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 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.



The "flesh" side of leather is the underpart that was next to the meat and flesh of the animal. The hair side, called "grain" side, is most commonly used for carving and stamping. Its fiber structure is more closely knit and easier to cut with the swivel knife. When carving and stamping tools are properly used, the grain side will retain even the tiniest details.

The grain side has a "grain layer" of about one-fifth the thickness of the hide. The rest of the hide consists of a honeycomb fibrous structure that works like interlacing hinges or scales. During tanning, fats and oils are added to this honeycomb structure to make the grain side leather soft and workable.

LEATHER DEFINITIONS

Skin: Leather tanned in the whole pelt, same size and shape as it came from the animal. Calf, goat, sheep and pig are usually tanned in this form.

Kip: One half of a large calf, usually 9 to 17 square feet in size.

Extreme: A side just larger than kip, but smaller than cow or steer, usually 17 to 20 square feet.

Side: One half skin or hide, usually 22 to 26 square feet.

Back: A side with the belly cut off, usually 15 to 18 square feet.

Belly: The lower part of a side, usually 6 to 10 square feet.

Grain: Epidermis or outer layer of animal skins.

Full Grain: Leather just as it is when taken off the animal. Only the hair has been removed and the grain or epidermis left on.

TOP GRAIN does not mean "full grain." Top grain has often been sanded to remove scars and is then sprayed or pasted to "cover up."

A foolproof method of finding out if Natural Leather has a doctored grain or is coated, is rubbing it with a damp cloth. If any coloring or "dope" comes off on the cloth, or if moisture is not absorbed into the leather immediately and evenly, then it has been doctored or coated.

Tooling Steer: Heavier than kip or tooling calf.

Split: This refers to the under sections of a piece of leather that has been split into two or more thicknesses. Finished splits may be waxed and rubbed down smooth, embossed with a design or left as is.

Slunk: Skin of an unborn or prematurely born calf. The skin is sold with the hair still on it.

Short Hair Calf: The hair is still the same length as when the animal was slaughtered. The hair is slightly longer and not so soft and slick as that of a slunk.

Clipped Hair Calf: The hair has actually been clipped. Since these hides are from older animals than the slunk or short hair, the hides will be larger in size.

Cape: A soft, smooth lamb or sheep tanned especially for linings. It has a beautiful leathery feel.

Shelter Cape: Soft lambskin in a weight suitable for garments of many kinds.

Gold and Silver Kid: Small kidskins with a lamination of gold or silver.

Shearling: A sheepskin washed and tanned with the wool left on, then clipped to the desired length, usually one fourth to one inch.

Morocco Goat: A goat originally from Morocco, now from India. Has a crinkled effect and is very durable. Used for billfolds, Bible covers, etc.

Coronado Goat: A smooth India goat, very tough and used for lacing and billfold liners.

Chrome Calf: This is a smooth finished calf used for many purposes. It is not suitable for tooling. Comes in many colors. A shoe leather.

Suede: A finish produced by running the surface of leather on a carborundum or emery wheel to separate the fibers in order to give the leather a nap. Used for bags, bag linings, pillows, jackets, skirts and garments of all types.

Sheer Suede: A very light, fine and soft suede as the name indicates.

Chrome Suede: Taken from the flesh side split off a cowhide.

Glove Horse: A genuine horsehide tanned soft as a glove.

Pecca Pig: Pig design on lambskin.

Skiver: The top grain split off a sheepskin. Very light and used for pasted or glued linings. The flesh side of this leather is often used for making CHAMOIS.

Chamois: The flesh side of a heavy sheep, specially treated.

Pliver: The grain side of a small sueded sheep. The leather has been split, the grain side called Pliver, the flesh side called Sheer Suede.

Natural Lamb: Used for linings. Suitable for tooling in the heavier weight. Color "natural" as name indicates.

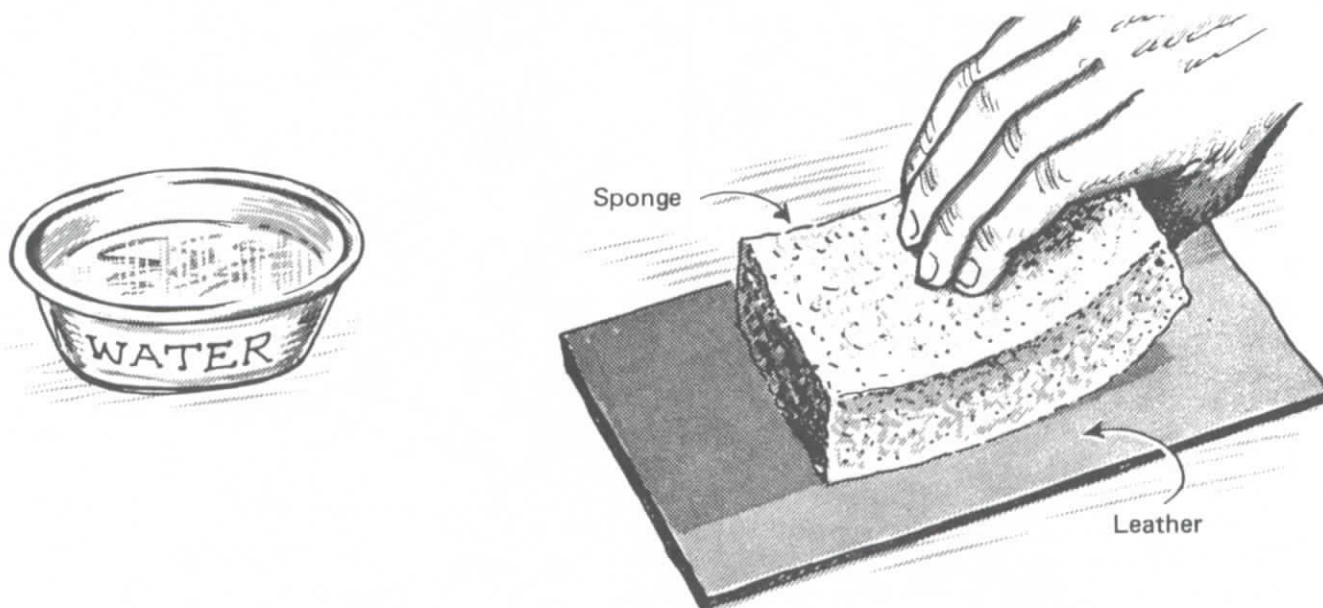
Genuine Sharkskin: Breathable, yet water-repellent. From the depth of the sea, this leather has an unusual grain surface. Used principally for shoes, boots, belts and wherever leather is used. Virtually scuff proof.

PREPARATION OF LEATHER

Before you can work leather, you must moisten it. As you wet the leather, the fibers swell and soften. Vegetable tanned leather, properly moistened, is like modeling clay. You can mold it, model it and shape it.

Your best guide to moistening leather is through practice. Your sharp swivel knife blade will cut easily and smoothly and your stamping tools will imprint clearly and firmly into the leather **ONLY** when you have moistened the leather to the proper degree.

When the dampened grain side of the leather has almost returned to its original color, it is ready to carve. You can also test the leather by holding it against your cheek. If it's dry, it will feel warm. If it's damp, it will feel cool and that's when you can begin carving the leather. With practice you will soon know instinctively when to begin carving.



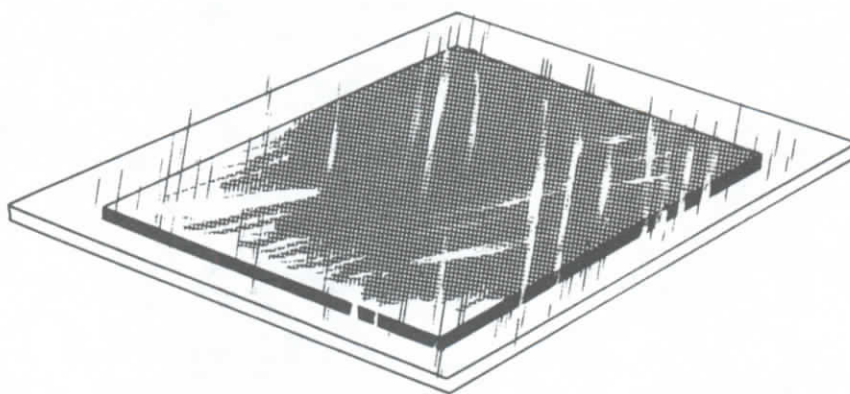
How do you wet the leather? You wet it by casing it, which means you simply rub a **DAMP** (not wet) sponge to the flesh side of the leather as evenly as possible. Then turn the leather over and dampen the Grain side (carving surface). When it begins to return to its natural color, begin carving.

If some areas begin to dry, wipe your sponge over these areas to keep them damp enough to carve. If your leather is too dry, it will be too hard for you to cut with the swivel knife. If your leather is too wet, your cuts will not remain open. If leather is properly cased, your carving cuts will remain open.

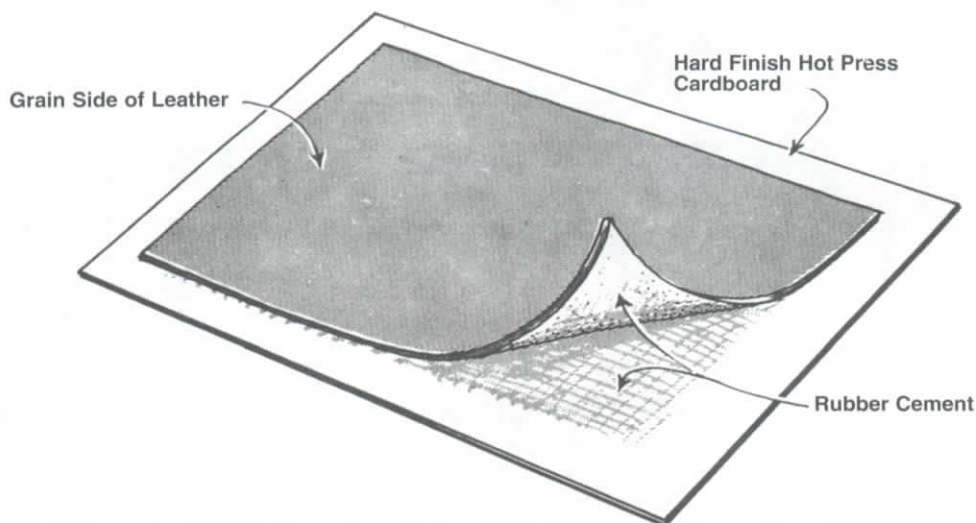
CAUTION: Always use glass, plastic, porcelain or enameled containers for water; NEVER use metal containers. The slightest contact with metal will produce dark stains on your dampened leather . . . stains that are almost impossible to remove. Be careful to keep all filings or steel dust from grinding wheels, etc., completely away from your leather. Unnoticed by you until you have dampened your leather, such particles will mar or stain your leather.

If you must leave your leatherwork for an hour or so, hold and preserve the moisture content by covering it with a piece of plate glass or plastic food bag. If any drying spots have appeared, apply moisture lightly with a sponge and cover with the glass or plastic bag. This will retain the moisture for several hours and the leather will be in perfect condition to continue carving upon your return.

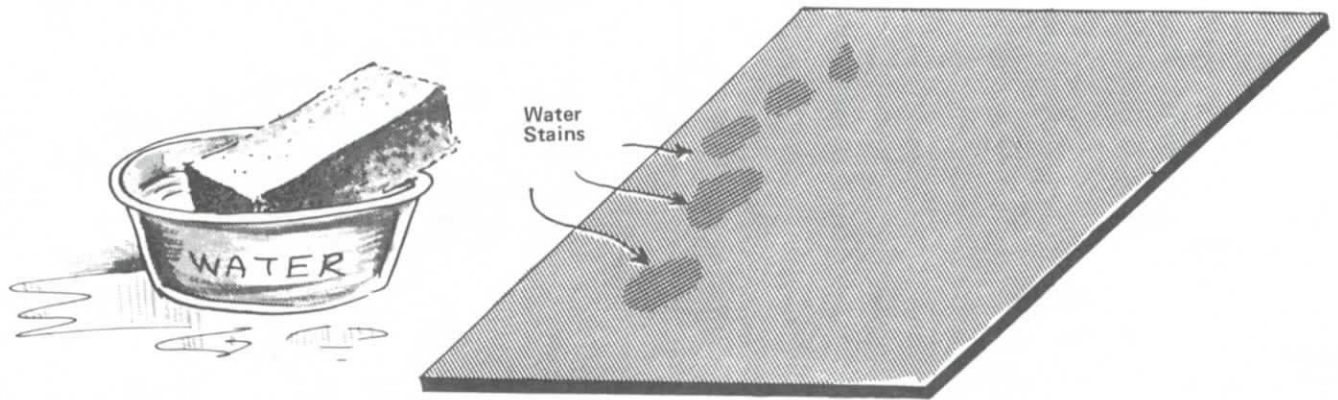
CAUTION: Storage of damp leather for a prolonged time can cause mildew.



To prevent leather from stretching while stamping the design, apply a light coat of rubber cement to flesh side of leather and to cardboard (use hard finished cardboard for easy removal of leather after stamping). Allow cement to dry then adhere in place. Case leather and carve and stamp design. To remove leather, place carved side down on bench and peel cardboard from the leather. Hold leather as flat as possible so that it does not wrinkle when removing cardboard.



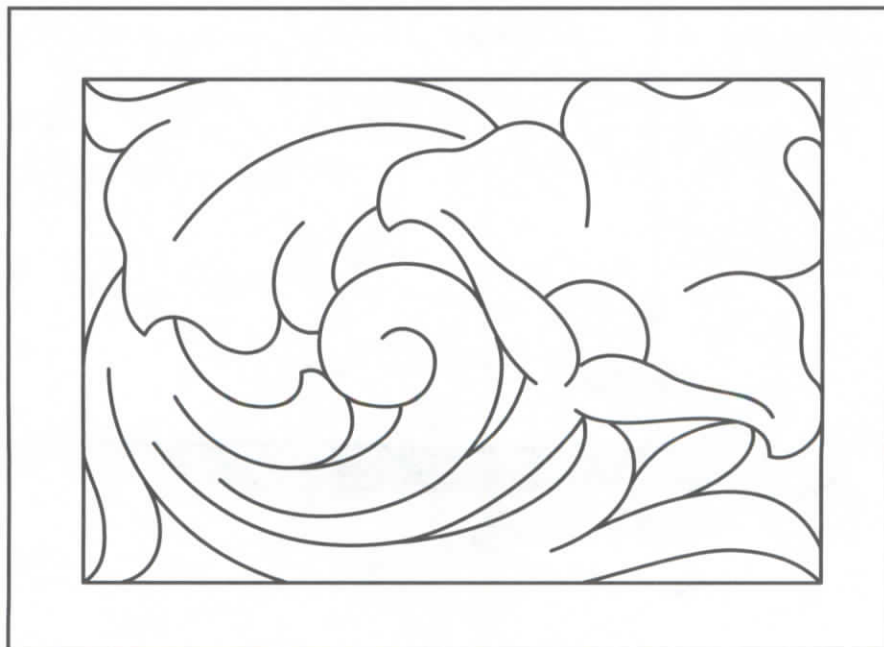
CAUTION: For projects which will not be lined, the use of cement on flesh side of tooling leather to adhere to backing can cause difficulty.



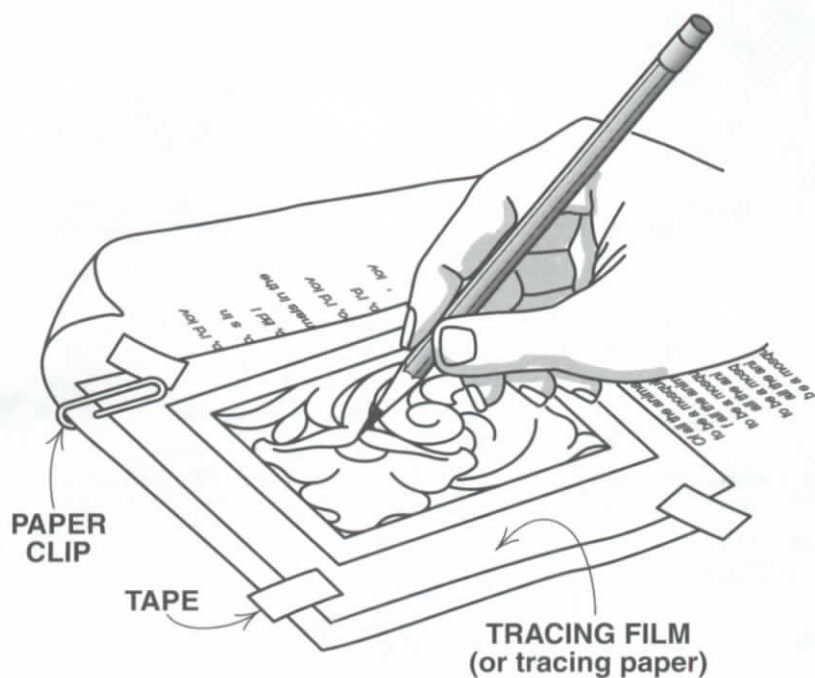
Water can also stain leather. It is possible a few drops of water will accidentally spill on a piece of leather, and going unnoticed, will be allowed to dry. This will cause a definite stain and create a darkened area that cannot be removed, unless treated at once! If water has been dropped onto dry leather, moisten the entire piece of leather at once. Apply more moisture to the spotted area with a sponge, fading out the surrounding areas. Enough moisture has to be applied to the spotted area to render it invisible, or the spot will always remain. In other words, the area surrounding the spot must have an equal amount of moisture added so that when the entire piece dries, the spotted area will dry unnoticed.

TRANSFERRING YOUR DESIGN

A tracing pattern is a drawing of the outlines of a design, indicating the lines to be cut with the swivel knife. Even when the design is an original creation, a tracing pattern is necessary. Decorative details or uses of the stamping tools are usually not shown on the tracing pattern.

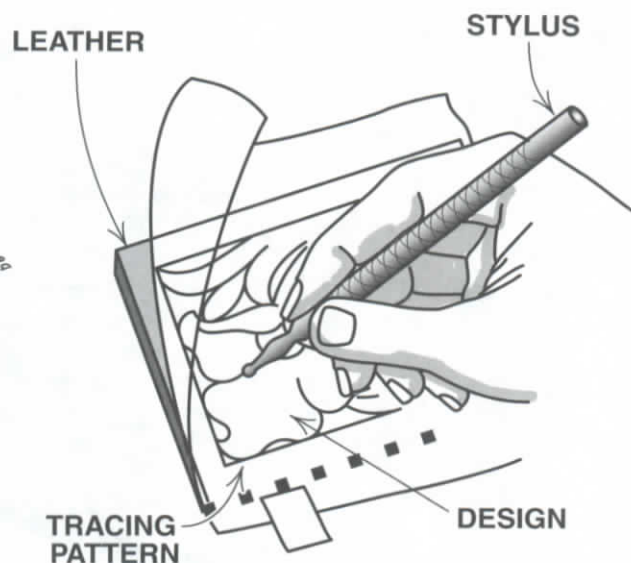


Tracing film is recommended for making transfer patterns. Tracing film will outlast tracing paper, but either is satisfactory. Never use carbon paper on leather.



HOW TO MAKE A TRACING PATTERN

Place a piece of tracing film or tracing paper over the pattern (shown above), and tape or clip it in position. With pencil, carefully trace over all of the lines of the design . . . just as they are shown. Draw the flower first, then fill it with the stems and leaves. Erase incorrect lines and redraw them, if necessary. The tracing film is now ready to transfer to the cased leather.



HOW TO TRANSFER THE DESIGN

Carefully place tracing pattern (pencil marks up) over the leather and tape in position. With a ballpoint stylus (or any dull pointed instrument) retrace all the lines of the design . . . beginning again with the flower, then with the stems and leaves. Press firmly, but not too hard and the lines will be transferred beautifully to the leather. Before removing tape, lift one corner of the pattern and check to see if you have traced all the lines.

CAUTION: Cased leather is highly sensitive to marks. Be sure your hands are clean, free of pencil lead and other foreign matter. Protect your leather from improper tool marks and fingernail scratches.

THE SWIVEL KNIFE BLADE



Straight



Hollow ground

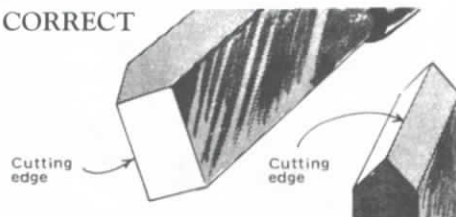


1/4" angle

There are many types and widths of swivel knife blades available to the leatherworker for a variety of cutting purposes. Have your leather dealer show and/or explain their uses to you.

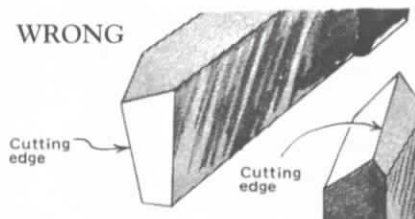
New swivel knife blades are pre-sharpened, and except for an occasional stropping (polishing) they're ready to use. If the cutting edge of the blade becomes dull or damaged it will need to be re-sharpened. Remember that the beveled sides of the blade should be perfectly flat and even. The cutting edge should be in the center of the blade, as shown in the illustration marked "correct." A properly sharpened and stropped blade will produce easier and smoother cutting, less fatigue and better results.

CORRECT



This blade was sharpened correctly. The beveled sides are sharpened flat and even. The cutting edge is straight and in the center of the blade.

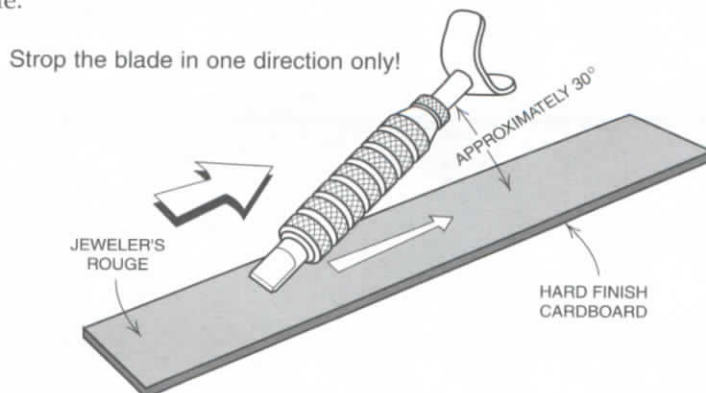
WRONG



This blade has the beveled sides unbalanced and uneven. The knife was held at different angles on each side. The angles are wrong and cutting edge is not in the center of the blade. Re-sharpen the blade.

STROPPING THE BLADE

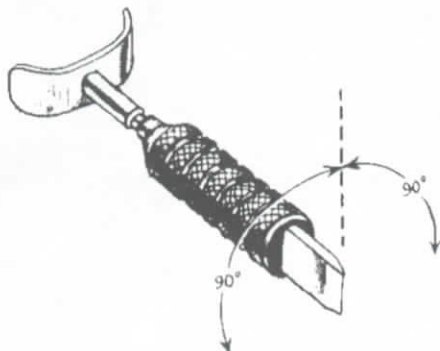
The beveled sides of the blade should be stropped often while a design is being carved. STROPPING the blade polishes these sides and keeps the blade cutting smoothly, reducing "drag." Use a stiff, hot pressed or hard finish cardboard with jewelers rouge rubbed onto the surface as a strop. Note: stropping a swivel knife blade on a leather strop is not recommended. As the blade is pressed into and pulled across a leather strop, the leather will roll up over the cutting edge of the blade causing it to become rounded and dull. Hold the knife at a 30 degree angle to the strop. PULL IN ONE DIRECTION ONLY. NEVER PUSH THE BLADE WHEN STROPPING. Pull the blade across the strop several times using a long smooth stroke, then turn the blade over and repeat on the other side.



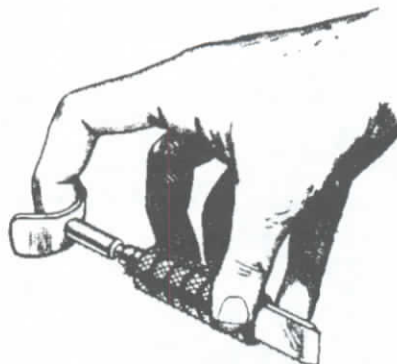
We cannot overemphasize the importance of keeping your blade sharp. As you work your projects, strop your blade often.

HOW TO HOLD THE SWIVEL KNIFE

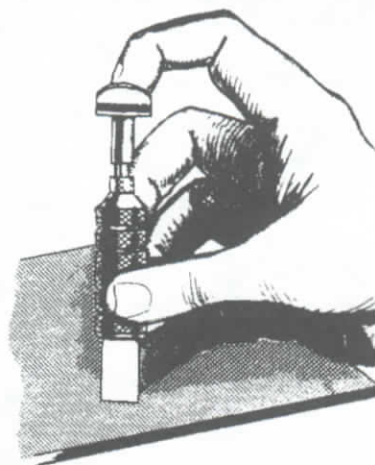
Learn to hold your swivel knife correctly. The way you hold the swivel knife will determine your success in cutting leather. Follow the simple steps below to help you learn how to hold the swivel knife properly.



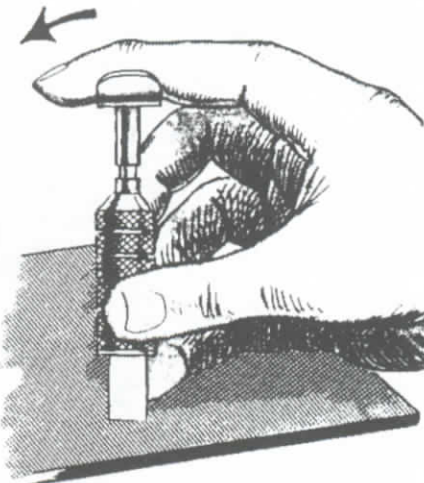
Place the knife on your bench as shown . . . with the length of the blade straight up and down, at 90 degree angle to the bench.



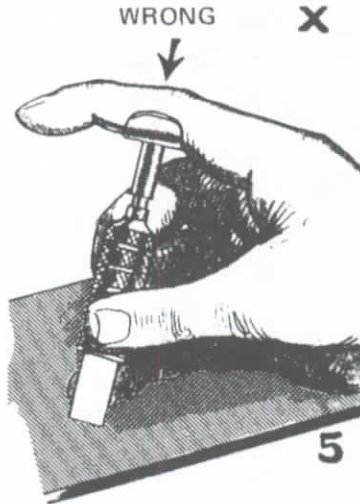
Place fingers as shown. Index finger in yoke; thumb at lower part of barrel, little finger against the blade; and second and third fingers on opposite side of barrel.



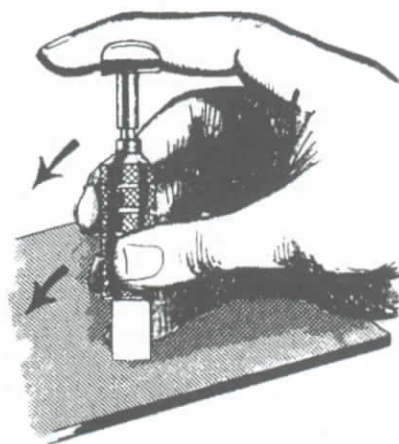
Pick up knife; hold in upright position and rest hand on bench and blade on practice leather, as shown. CAUTION: DO NOT set blade on metal, or any hard or abrasive surface that might damage the cutting edge.



Since the knife is merely held in the tips of the fingers, it is obviously not in position to be used. Move index finger forward and rest on yoke at first joint of finger, as shown.



WRONG: Do not allow yoke to rest at second joint of finger as most control of index finger will be lost.

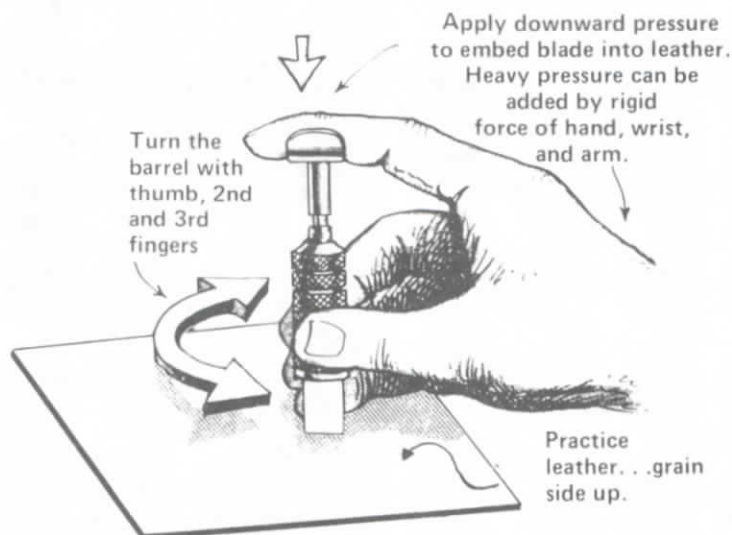


Move second and third fingers forward to more firmly grasp the barrel. Knife is now in correct position for use.

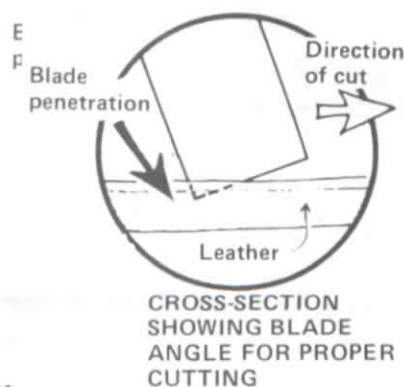
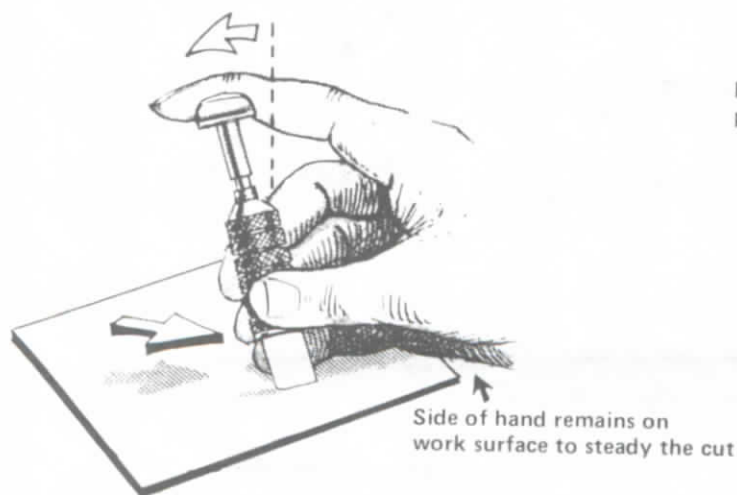
CAUTION: DO NOT set blade on metal, or any hard or abrasive surface that might damage the cutting edge.

HOW TO USE YOUR SWIVEL KNIFE

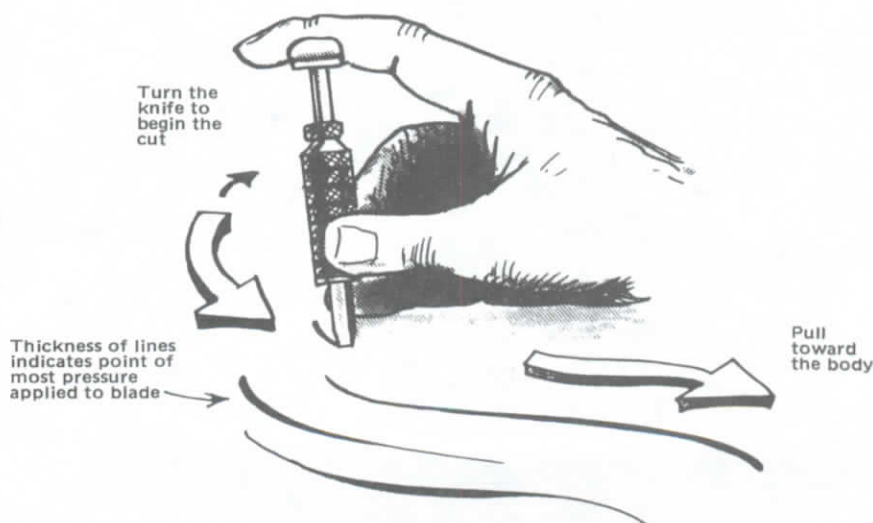
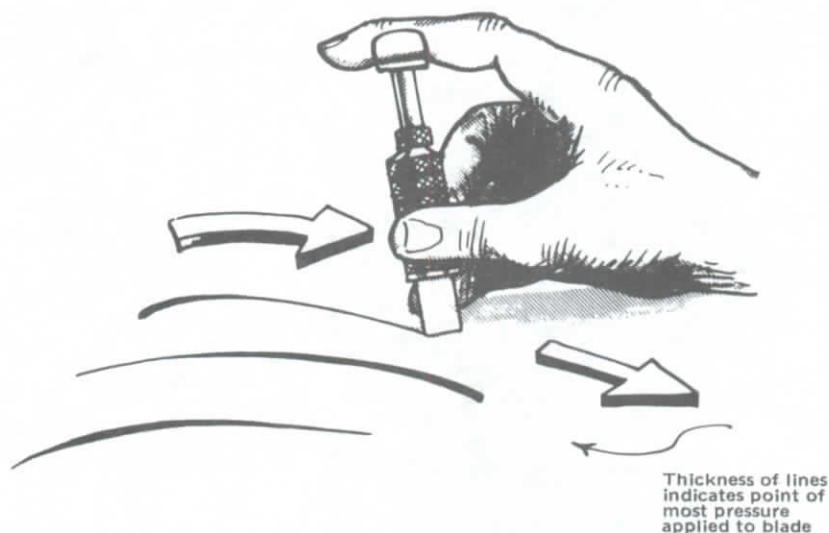
As soon as you have learned to control and use your swivel knife for free-hand carving, you will begin to enjoy the real thrill and rich satisfaction which leather carving offers. You can cut straighter lines, more graceful curves and scrolls in leather with your swivel knife than you can draw free-hand with pencil and paper. To achieve control of the swivel knife takes patience and concentrated practice. Relaxation is your key to successful control. Many students "try too hard" . . . become tense and strained, which makes swivel knife control difficult if not impossible. Learn to relax. Be comfortably seated, and be sure to have excellent light for freedom from eye-strain and lack of shadows in your working area.



CASE a few practice pieces of leather. If necessary review the instructions for CASING LEATHER. Now that you have learned to hold the knife properly, raise the blade slightly from the leather (keep side of hand on work surface) and turn the barrel of the knife back and forth with the thumb, second and third fingers. The little finger plays no part in turning the knife. It acts only as a pivot to help control the cuts. Press the blade into the cased leather with pressure from the index finger on the yoke. Keep the finger, hand and wrist straight, in line with the forearm, and apply additional pressure with the arm. This is how you control the depth of the cuts.



Practice a few light curves. Experiment with varying degrees of pressure and each cut to practice controlling the depth. Try to maintain an even depth throughout some of the cuts. (NOTE: Proper cutting depth for outlines of designs is approximately one-half the thickness of the leather.) Keep the side of the hand and little finger in contact with the working surface and/or leather at all times. This helps steady the cutting movement. Use your free hand to hold or turn the leather to make cutting easier. Turn the leather as often as necessary to keep the cuts coming toward the body and to keep the cutting hand from a cramped or awkward position. Practice cutting freely; hesitation makes ragged cuts.



For easiest cutting, your knife must be tipped forward so that only the corner of the blade cuts into the leather, as shown. Make a few straight, simple cuts to get the feel of the technique. Hold the knife properly as shown. Apply downward pressure on the yoke and simultaneously pull the blade toward you. Whenever possible, pull the blade toward the body as this ensures easier and more controlled cutting. If the leather is cased properly and the blade is sharpened correctly, it will glide smoothly and easily. If the blade does not pull easily, leather may be too dry or the blade may not be thoroughly polished and/or not sharp enough. Examine the leather and the blade. Remember, leather must be moist for proper, easy cutting; the blade must be sharp and polished well!

See illustration for examples of correct cutting and incorrect undercutting. Always hold your swivel knife perpendicular to the leather.

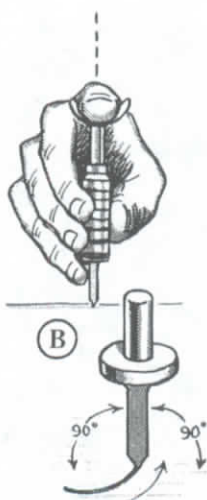
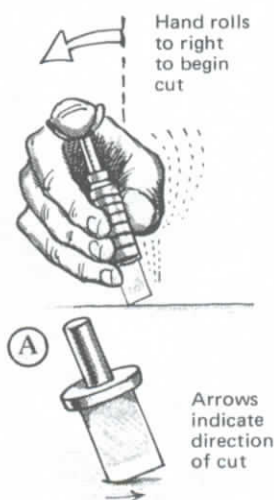
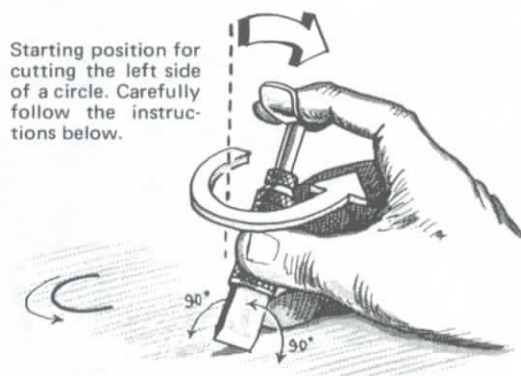
WHAT CAUSES UNDERCUTTING

The diagram illustrates the correct and incorrect ways to cut leather. It shows a hand holding a cutting tool, with a 90° angle indicated between the tool and the leather. The correct cut is shown as a straight line, while the incorrect cut is shown as a curved line, labeled "Avoid incorrect left undercut" and "Avoid incorrect right undercut". The correct cut is labeled "Correct". The incorrect cut is labeled "Leather is forced up on one side of cut".

20

To make circular cuts, turn the barrel of the swivel knife with thumb and fingers. Hold the knife in the regular position with the blade parallel to the arm, pointing toward your body. Now turn the barrel clockwise until the blade is at right angles to your body. Slightly roll your hand to the right until the blade is tipped forward to the proper cutting position. (See sketch below and Front View, Step A). Apply pressure on the yoke and begin the cut. Simultaneously begin turning the barrel and pull the blade to begin cutting circle. Your hand must begin to return at once from the rolled position . . . to the straight up position . . . and as one fourth of the circle is cut, your hand must be in normal upright position to keep the blade from undercutting (see Front View, Step B below). As the circle continues, your hand must begin rolling slightly to the left to keep the point of the blade in an upright cutting position. Completed half circle and position of hand and blade is shown in Front View, Step C below.

CUTTING CIRCLES

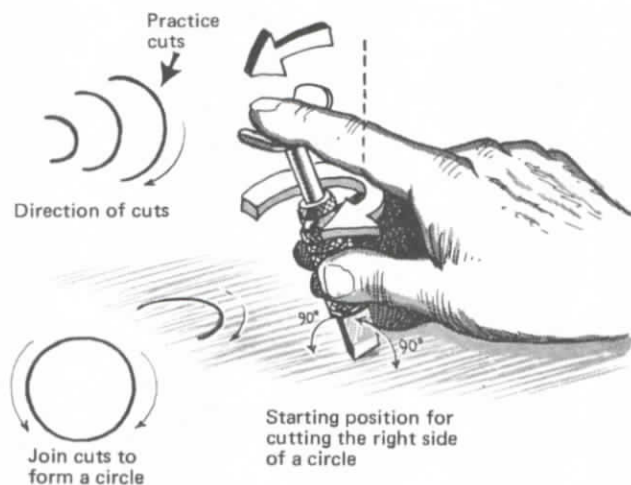


FRONT VIEW: showing position of hand and blade for cutting the left side of a circle.

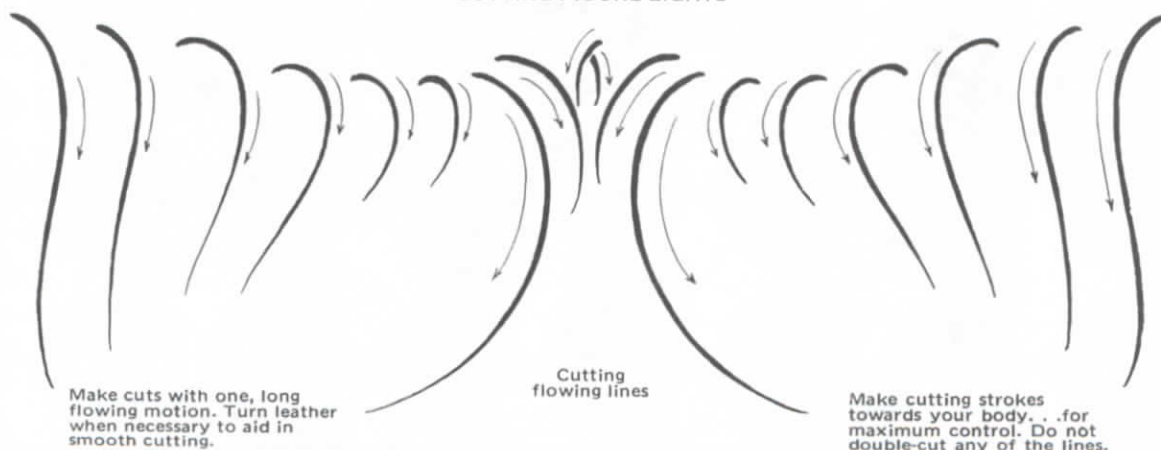
Cutting and rolling movements are made simultaneously. A great deal of practice will be required to coordinate these movements. Once acquired, cutting half circles will be effortless. Practice cutting different half-circle sizes. NOTE: Never go over cuts a second time.

To cut the right side of a circle, simply reverse the steps as illustrated in front view above.

It is important to practice cutting in all directions, especially in the direction that is the most difficult. It is obvious that this will require the most practice. Proficiency with the swivel knife can only be obtained with practice!



PRACTICE EXERCISES



NOTE:

Depth and length of cuts are made with one motion. Do not re-cut any lines to make them deeper or to correct their flow. Practice for this control!

HOW TO CUT THE DESIGN

MAKE SURE THE BLADE IS SHARP! ALSO, STROP IT OFTEN! A correctly sharpened blade that has been stropped occasionally during the carving of the design should cut through properly moistened (cased) leather with very little effort. Refer to pages 12-14 for instructions on how to properly moisten (case) the leather. Refer to page 16 for instructions on how to properly sharpen and strop a swivel knife blade.

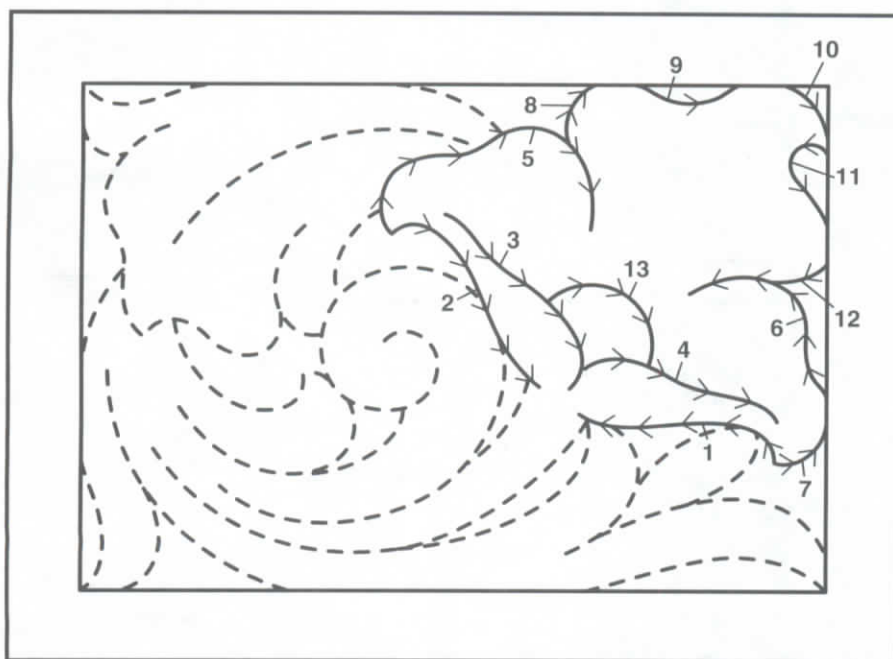


Figure 1: ALWAYS CUT THE BORDER FIRST! Small arrows indicate the direction of the rest of the cuts, the number indicates their sequence. Cut the flower first, turning the leather to make the cutting easier. Start with the base of the flower then add in the petals. Cut the center of the flower last.

FIGURE 1

Figure 2: Cut the scroll next, then the large leaf. Continue following the numerical order, turning the leather when necessary to make the cutting easier.

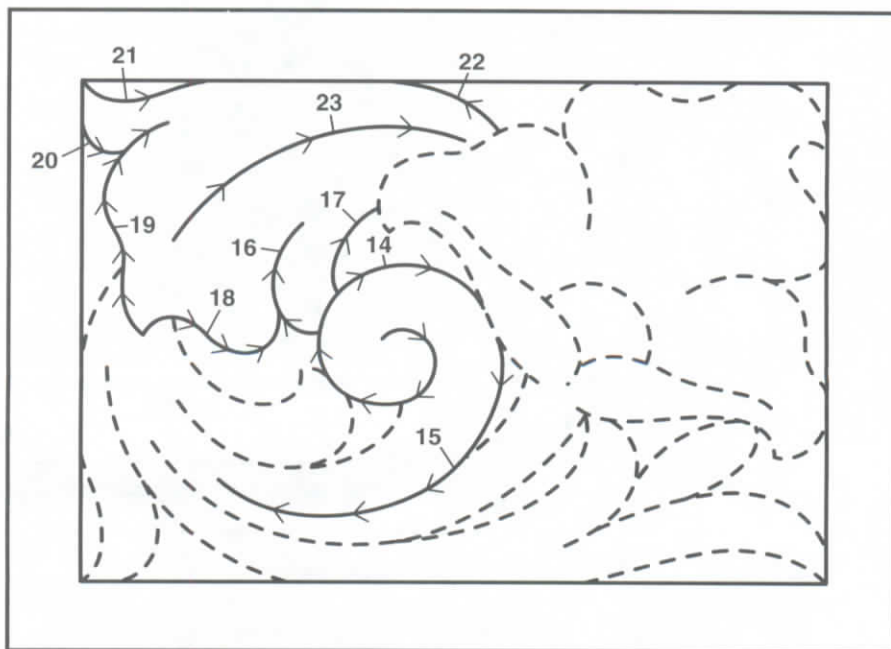


FIGURE 2

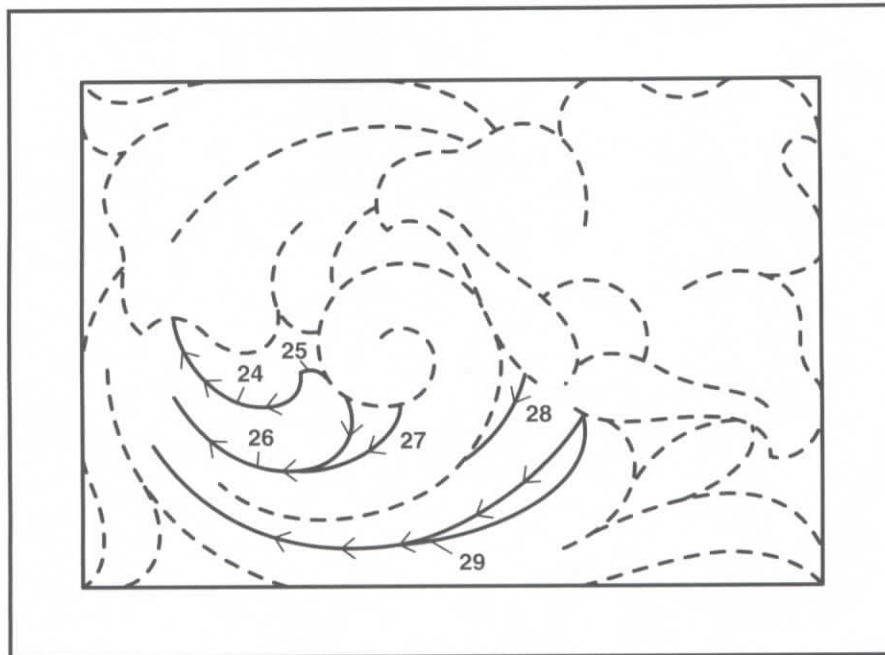


FIGURE 3

Figure 3 and 4: Finish making the swivel knife cuts by following the numerical order shown in both figures.

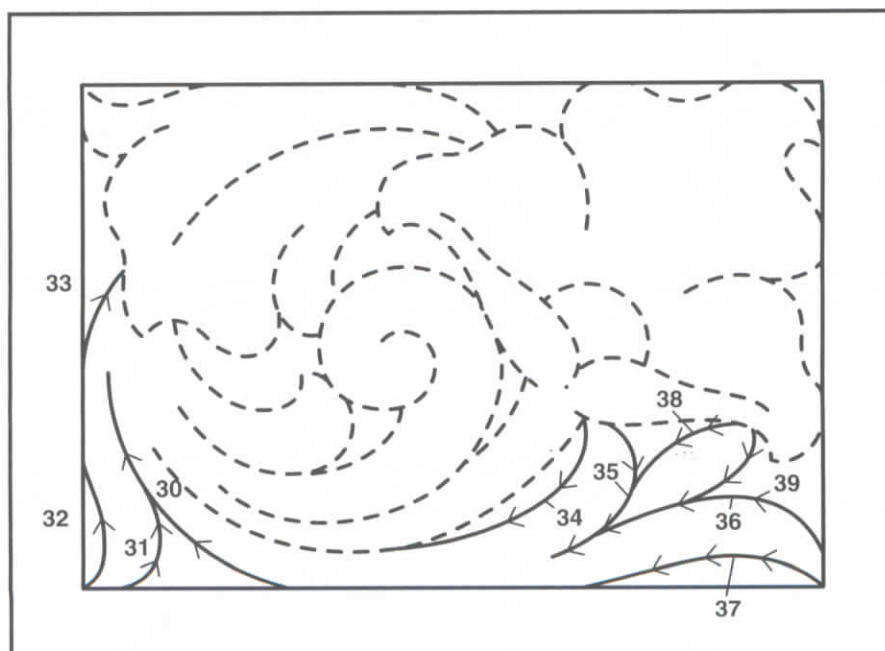
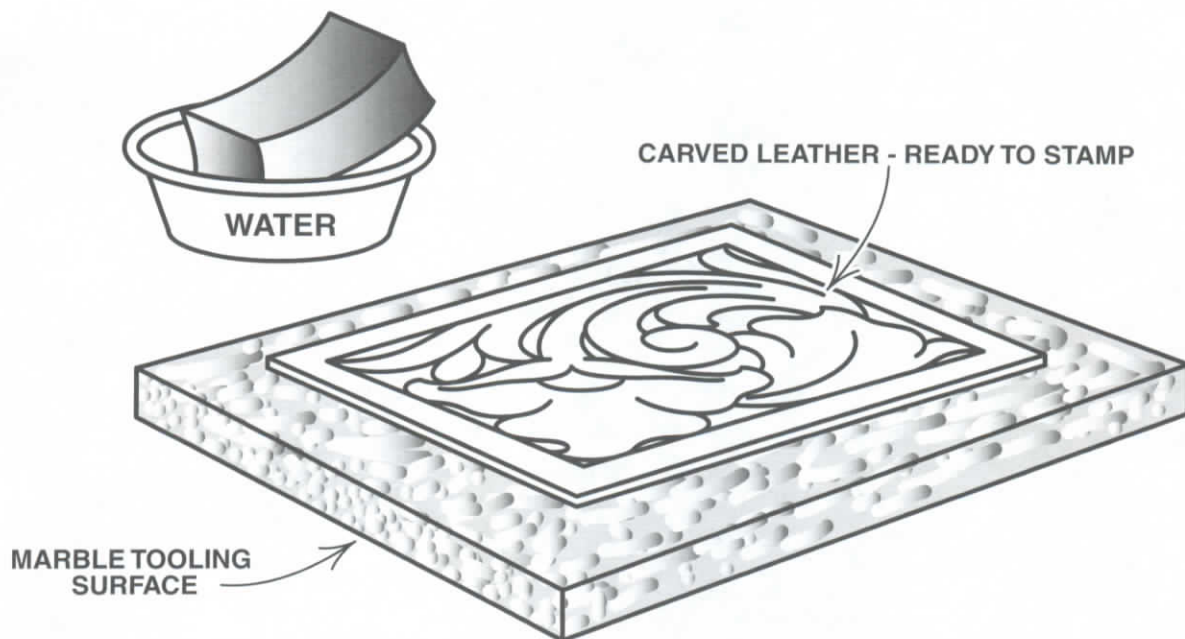


FIGURE 4

GETTING TO KNOW YOUR OTHER LEATHERCRAFTING TOOLS

Now you are ready to develop the design with STAMPING tools. To stamp leather it must be placed on a hard, smooth surface. The best working surface is a piece of marble at least 1" thick. It will stay glass-smooth for years.

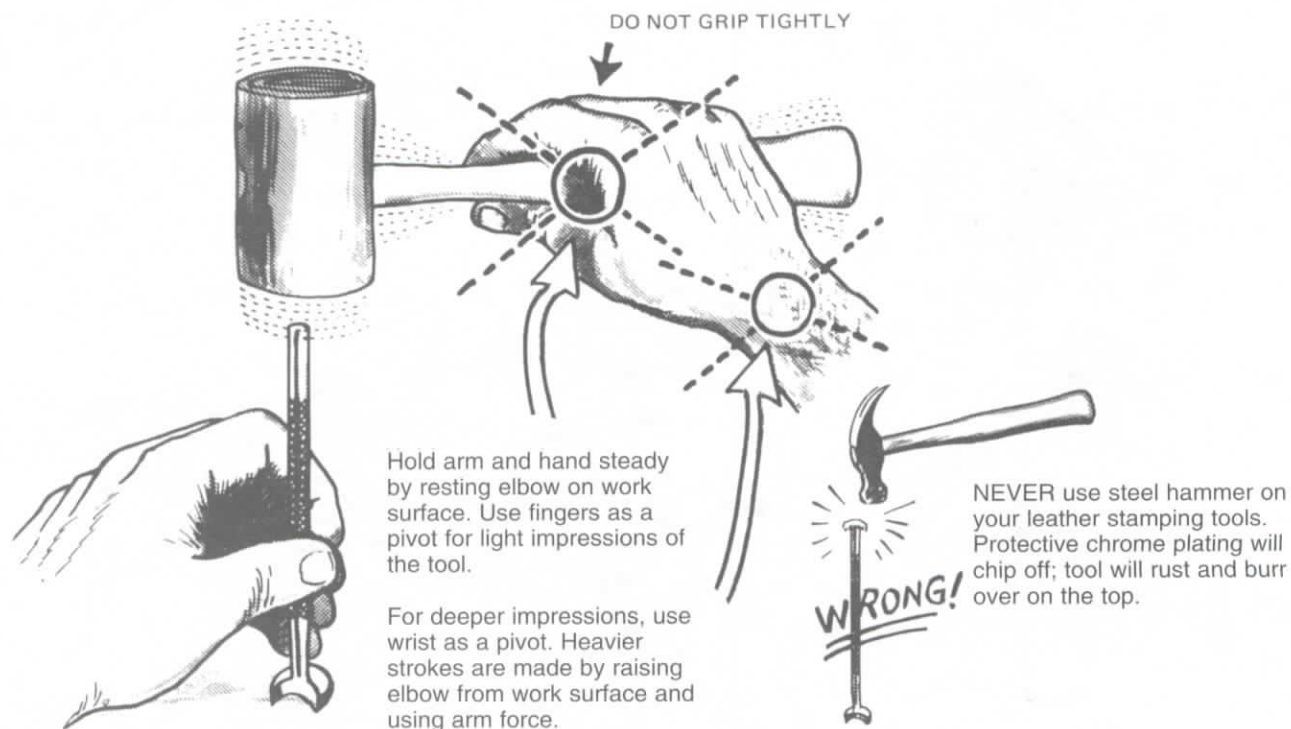


STAMPING tools are designed to create specific effects in the development of the design. Several of the most used stamping tools are described on the following pages. They can be used in countless combinations to enable you to be creative and original in your development of a design. However, each basic tool is available with variations in size, serration pattern, curve and slope.

THE MALLET

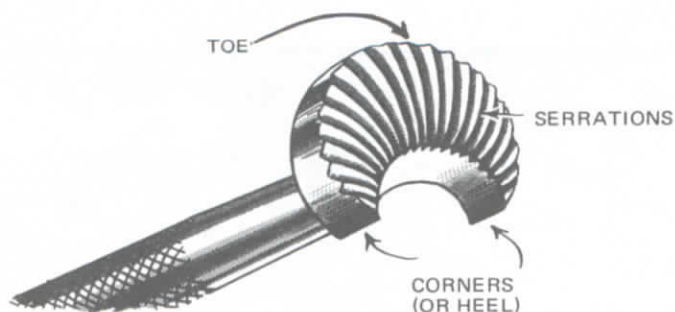
The MALLET is used to strike the top of the stamping tool to make an impression in the leather. CAUTION: Never strike stamping tools with a metal-faced hammer. This will cause permanent damage to tools.

The stamping tool is generally held in a perpendicular or upright position when struck with the mallet. The mallet is held as shown in the illustration. The mallet handle should be held securely, but in a relaxed manner. Do not grip the handle tightly. It is held with the fingers, rather than the palm of the hand. Note, also, the handle is held almost in the center for best balance. Held in this manner, the fingers or wrist serve as a pivot (turning point) for striking the mallet against the stamping tool. The elbow should rest on the work surface during most of the striking action. When deep tool impressions are desired, hold the handle more tightly toward the end. Lift the elbow from the bench for more force. In any case, hold the mallet in the most comfortable position for you!

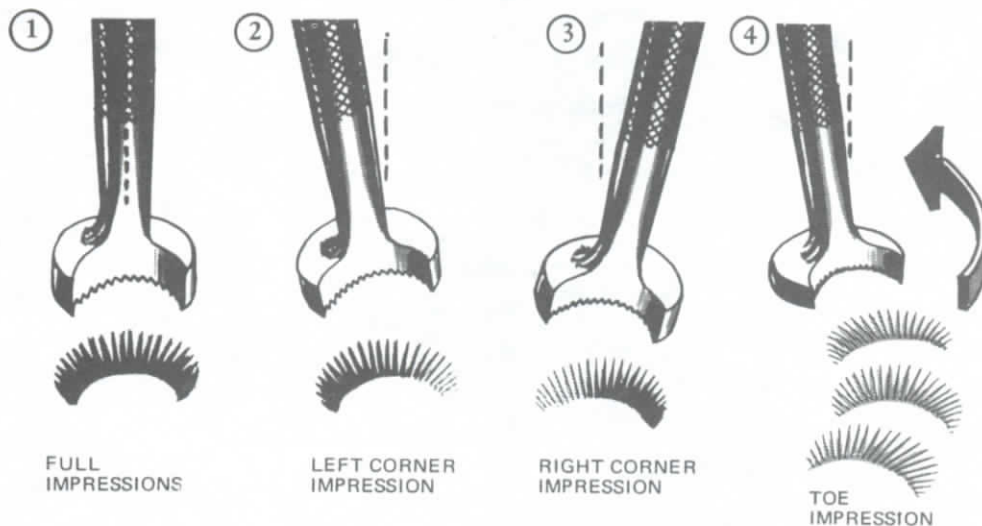


THE CAMOUFLAGE

The CAMOUFLAGE tool is available in a wide variety of sizes and shapes to fit almost every stamping need. The camouflage tool is half-moon shaped with two sharp corners (or heels) and has a rounded, serrated face that slopes toward the toe. The serrations generally fan out from a central focal point into a sunburst effect. The purpose of this tool is to texture certain areas of a pattern to add to its beauty and flow of design.



The moisture content of the leather should be "just right." The drawings below show the impressions made by the tool when held in varying positions and struck by the mallet.



This is a full impression of the stamp. Hold the tool straight up and down, then strike sharply with the mallet so that all lines are equal in depth.

Lean the tool to the left. Hold securely with hand so tool does not slip when struck with the mallet. Impressions on right side should "fade" to nothing.

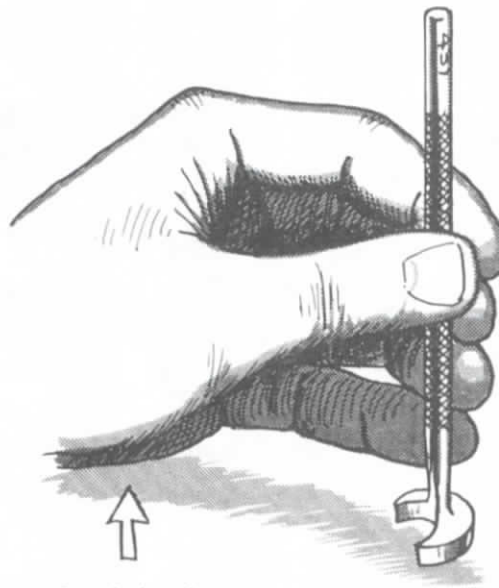
Leaning the tool to the right fades the left corner impressions and firmly imprints the right corner of the tool. Hold tool firmly.

Here the tool is tipped forward on the toe so that the corners do not dig in. The tool is usually tapped lightly in this position.



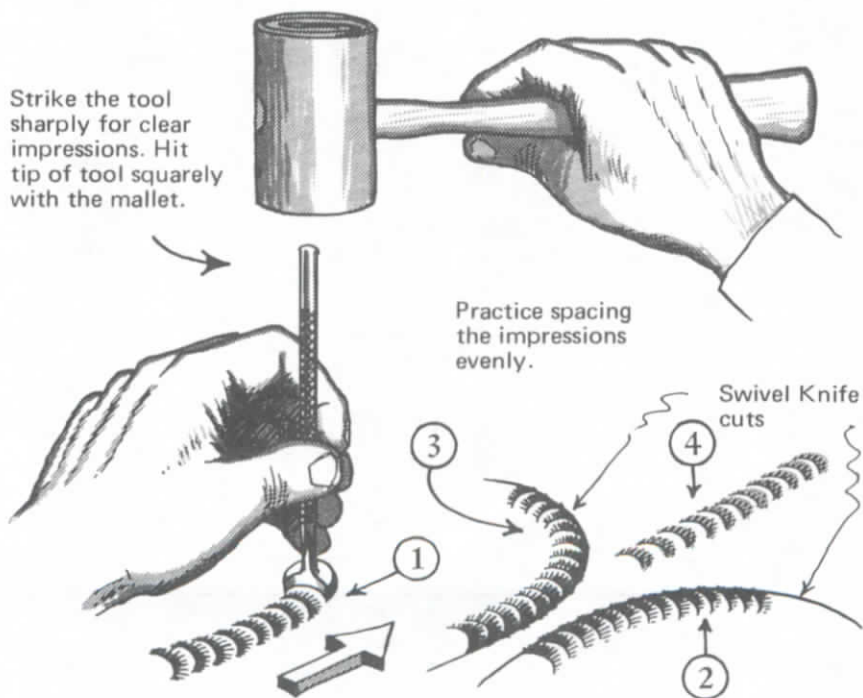
Photo above shows by number tool impressions created by the camouflage tool of corresponding number in the illustrations at top of the page.

THE PHOTO PATTERN OR PHOTOCARVE is a photograph taken of carved and/or stamped leather reproduced in actual size, showing position and use of tools. It is presented to help the leatherworker when other forms of instruction or visual and physical materials are not available. An important part of leatherwork is learning to "read" Photo Patterns.

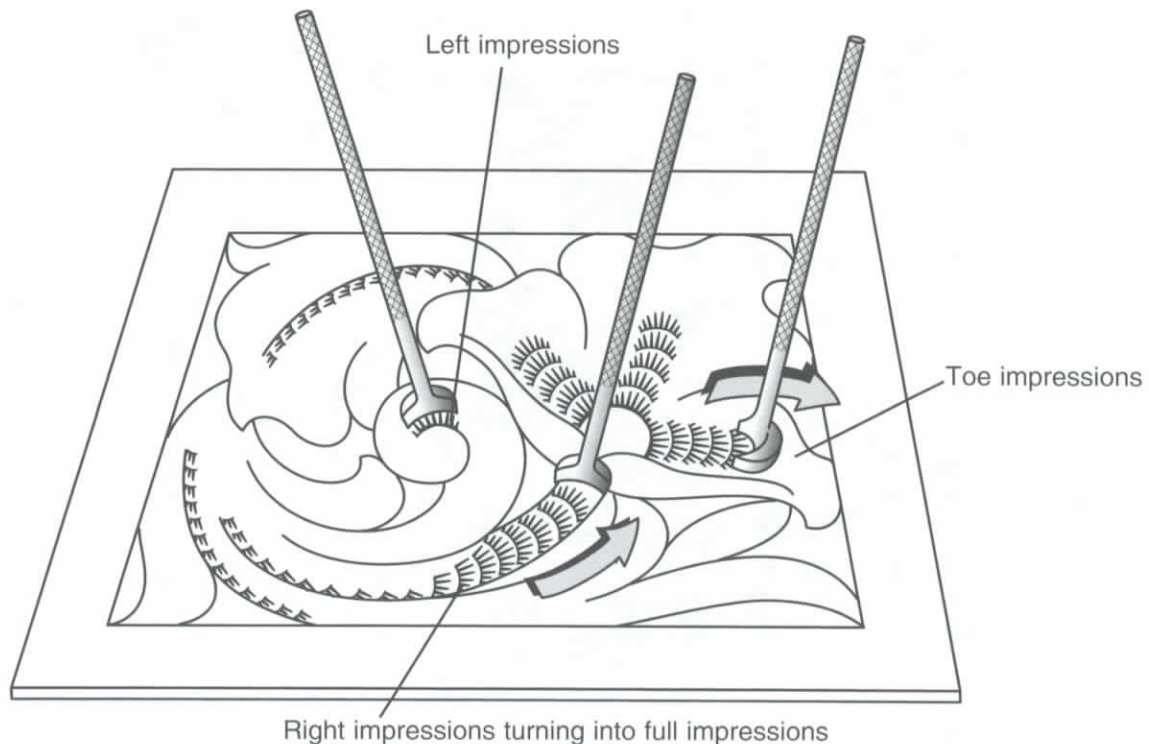


Steady hand
by resting on
work surface.

Hold the camouflage tool as shown, with the fingers evenly distributed to steady the tool. The thumb can be placed high or low, whichever is most comfortable for you. Hold stamp with the corners facing you, as shown above. The side of hand and left arm should rest on the work surface to help steady and control the tool. The knurled shaft permits controlled turning of the stamp by rolling between thumb and fingers.



Always stamp the impressions away from you, for better visibility and control. Practice the exercises shown above, using the four techniques on the preceding page. Space the impressions evenly! After some experience with the tool, you will achieve a stamping rhythm enabling you to advance the impressions evenly and rapidly.



The drawing above shows the camouflage tool in use. As the contour of the design changes, turn the "cam" so that the serrations are parallel to the direction of the pattern flow. Take particular note of this on the long curve on the base of the flower. Notice how the tool must be slightly turned with each impression. When stamping around the stems, lean the tool so that the impression is deepest at the cut line. Use toe impressions on stems and flower petals.

THE PEAR SHADER

The PEAR SHADER is a pear-shaped tool for making a three-dimensional and lifelike effect in the design. The tool "shades" or "contours" areas outlined by the swivel knife. The shading face of the tool is rounded in all directions so that sharp or blunt edges will not mar the leather. The moisture content of the leather should be "just right." (Slightly on the dry side.)

The shading should conform to the general shape of the design. The shaders are "walked" to depress areas away from cut lines, shaping flower petals, leaves, etc. in a realistic manner. The shading operation burnishes the leather to a rich, dark contrasting color. The depth of the impression and darkness of color are controlled by the force of the stroke of the mallet on the shader tool top. Strike the tool forcefully for deep impressions; lessen the force to diminish the impression and the color.

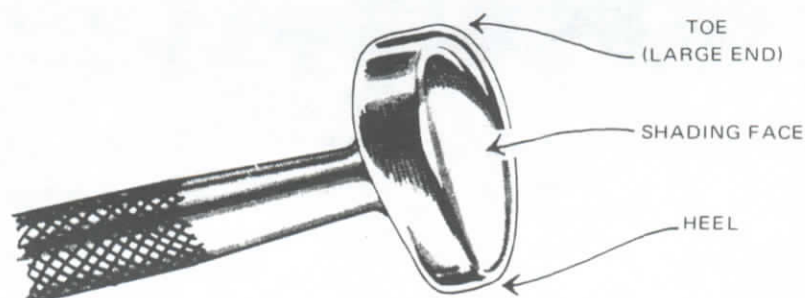
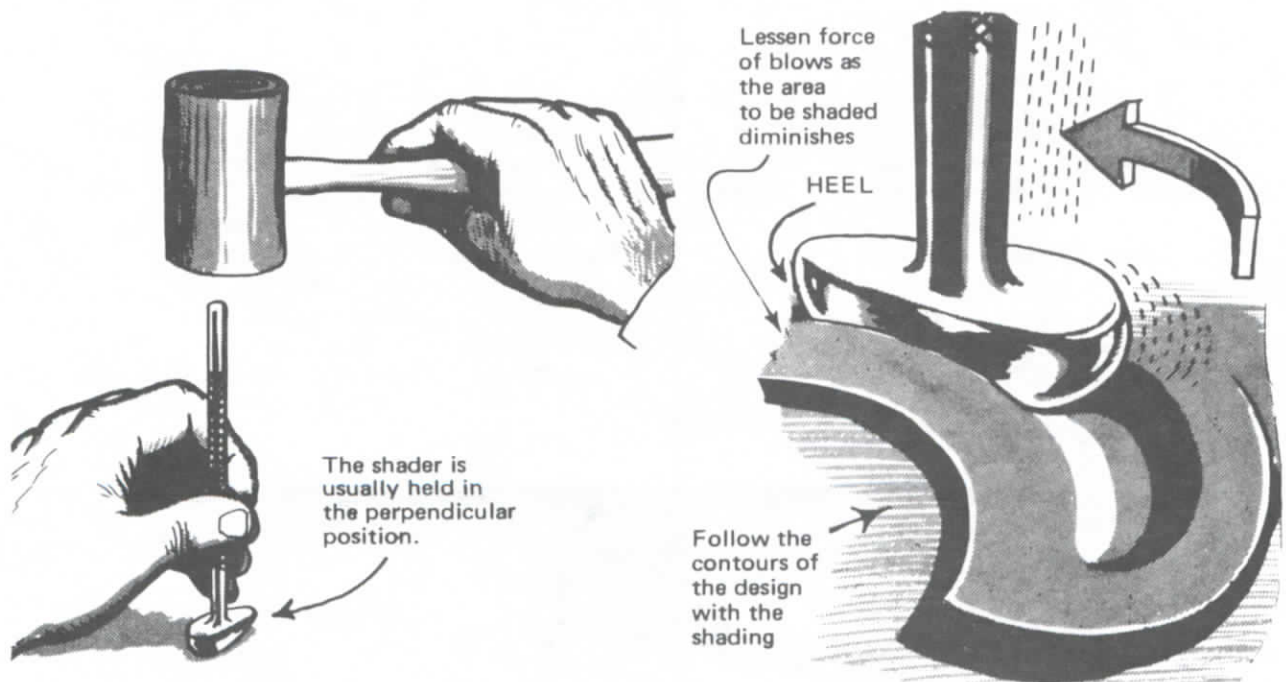




Photo shows the correctly shaded areas. Note how the deep impressions fade to nothing.

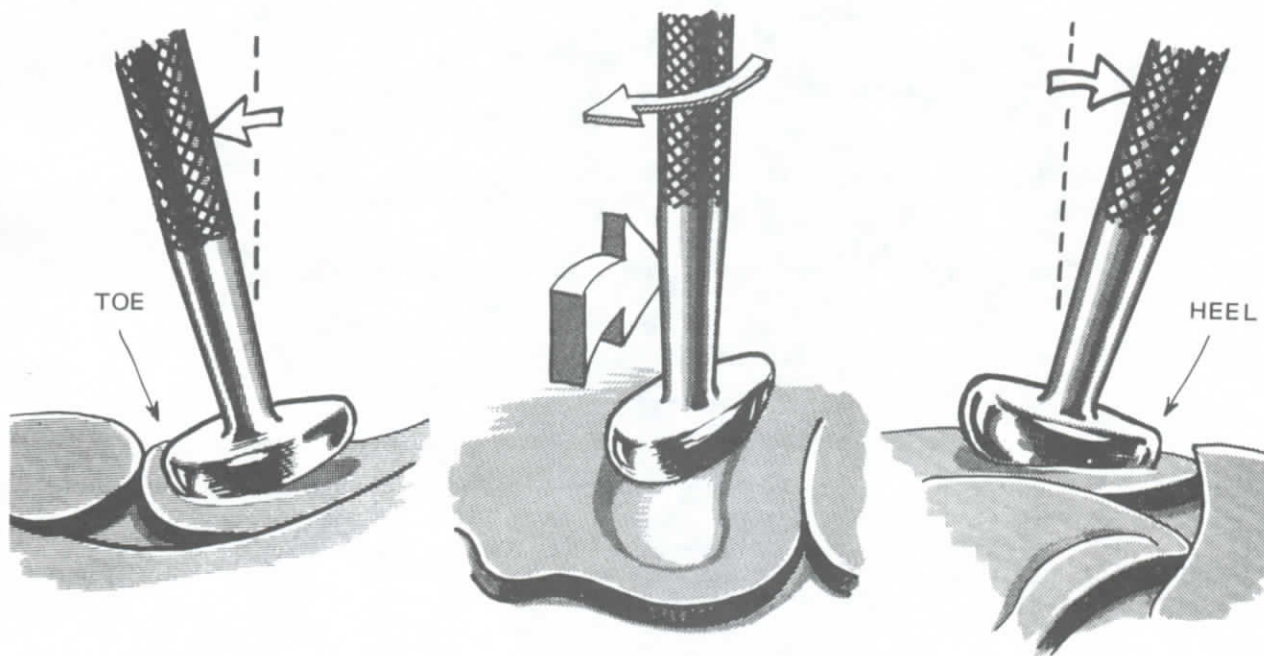
For smooth shading, a small change of position of the pear shader between strokes of the mallet is necessary. This is called "walking" the pear shader. Uneven shading is caused by not moving the tool along the surface evenly between each stroke of the mallet.

"Walking" is done by moving the shader about $\frac{1}{8}$ " as it springs up after being hit by the mallet. Move the tool along the surface of the leather in the direction shading is desired, using less force as the shading fades out. Keep your hand in a comfortable, relaxed position.



It takes practice to learn to shade smoothly. Start by developing a rhythm: move-hit, move-hit, move-hit, move-hit, etc. Practice this until you increase speed. Soon you will be shading smoothly and easily.

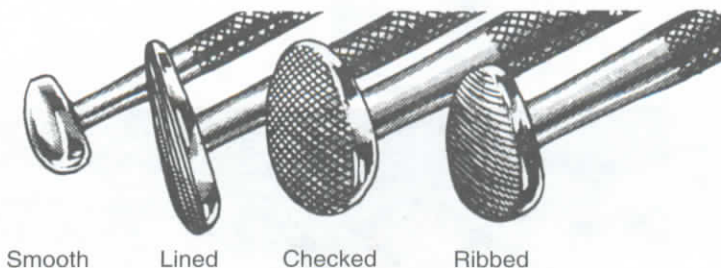
The shader can be "walked" over a very large area and can be turned slightly in the fingers between strokes to broaden or lessen the width of the shaded area and to control the direction of the shading.



The toe of the tool can be used for shading small, rounded areas where the full length of the tool would be too long. Re-walk the shader over any "lumpy" shaded areas to smooth them out.

When an area wider than the tool is to be shaded, the tool can be turned slightly. A broader area is shaded with a minimum amount of stamping as the shader is used partially broadside.

Shade small and pointed areas too small for the full width of the tool by tipping the shader back on its heel. Use only the narrow part to dish the area. Hold tool firmly when tipping to keep it from slipping.



There are many sizes, shapes and textures of pear shaders available for every shading need.

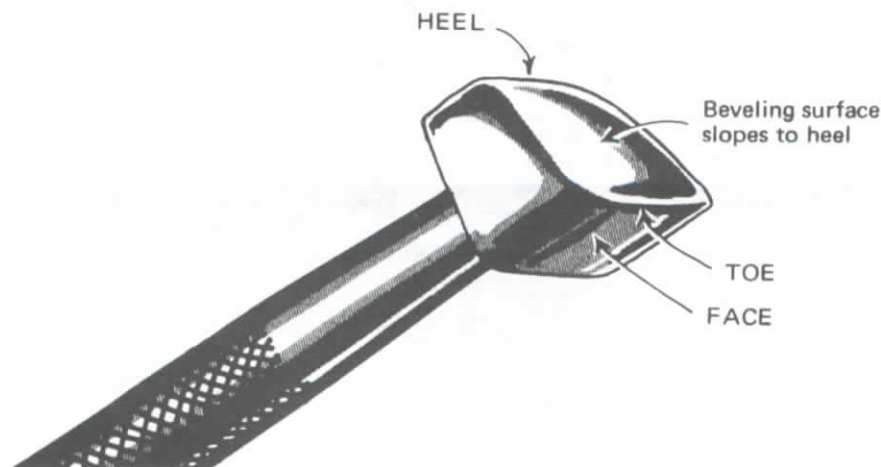


In this photo pattern, the left half of the design and the scroll have been shaded correctly. The leaf marked 1 shows proper use of the heel of the tool in pointed areas. The tool was then turned and walked over the remaining area. The shading should be deepest at the tips of the leaves, then should gradually fade as the tool is moved away. All lettered shaded areas have been stamped incorrectly. At "A" the tool was merely struck with the mallet. Walking was not done. Shadings marked "B" have not been walked and the tool face is turned in the wrong direction. Shading is out of bounds at "C." Areas stamped "D" have been shaded too heavily.

THE BEVELER

The purpose of the BEVELER is to bring the design into bold relief, creating a three-dimensional effect. Usually only one side of the swivel knife cut is beveled down. This is not a strict rule; some designs require beveling on alternate sides of a cut or sometimes on both sides.

The beveling surface of the beveler slopes toward the heel. The deepest part of the bevel is usually next to the cut line of the design, with the sloping bevel fading toward the background areas. Hold tool straight up and down, not at a slant. Bevelers are available in many sizes and textures for creating special and varied effects.

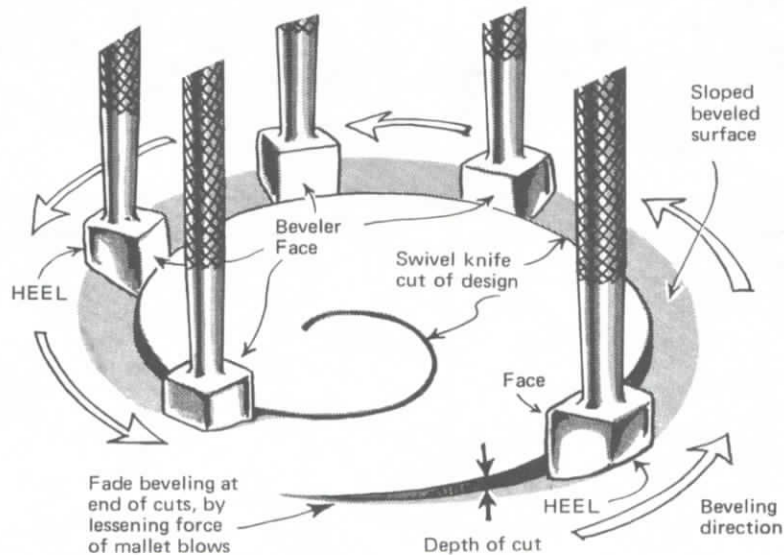
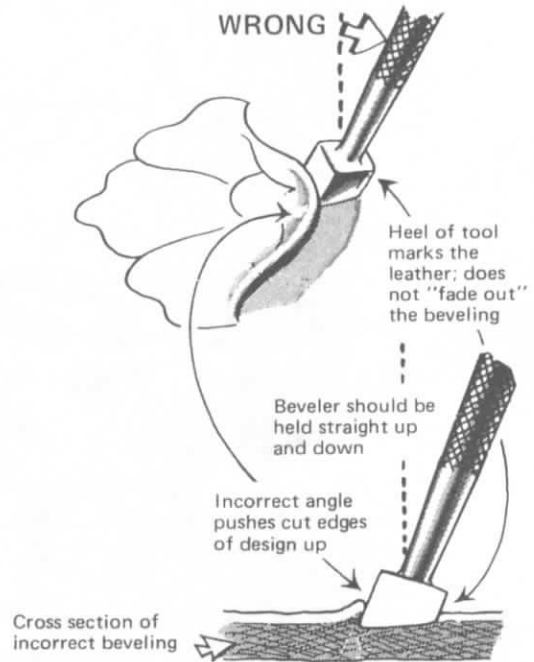
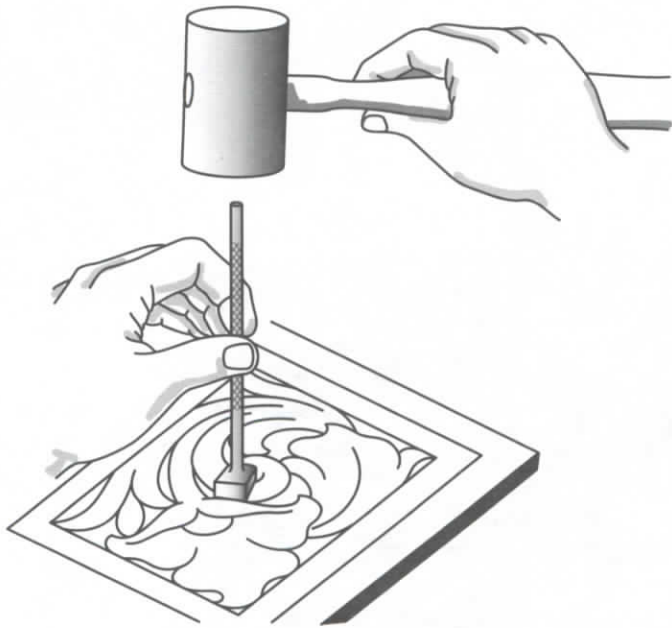


The face of the beveler always faces the cut line of the design. Keep the face of the bevel generally toward you. Turn the leather to keep the tool in this position. The toe of the bevel is placed directly into the cut. When the beveler is struck with the mallet, the action compresses the leather on one side of the cut, creating depth. This action at the same time burnishes (darkens) the leather and gives contrast to the design. The moisture content of the leather should be "just right" (slightly on the dry side) for beveling.



This photo pattern shows all the lines properly beveled, following the stamping operations of the camouflage and pear shader tools.

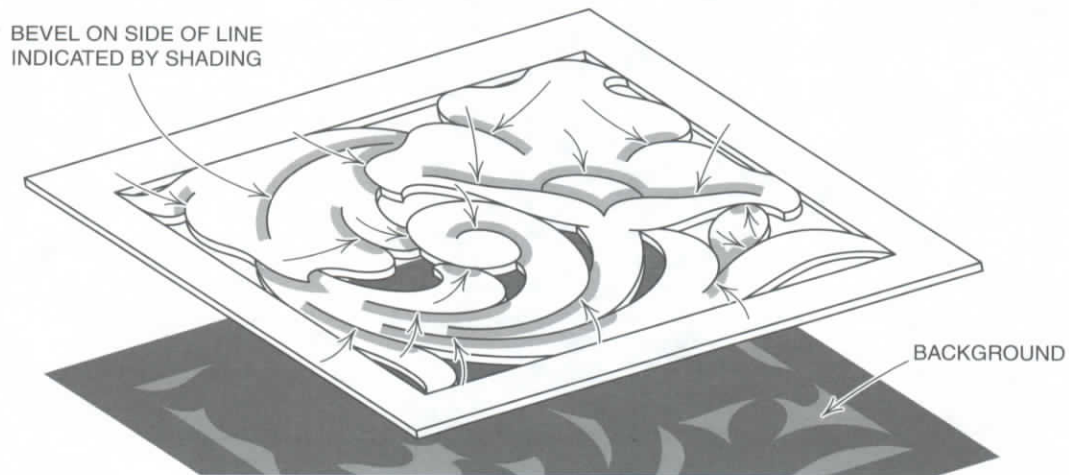
HOW TO HOLD THE BEVELER. Hold the beveler straight up and down as shown in the illustration above. Get comfortably seated at your work area. Have a good light with no shadows over your working area. Rest your arm and hand holding the beveler on the work surface, as well as the elbow of your mallet hand. Hold the face of the beveler towards you.



For smooth beveling, “walking” the beveler, as you learned with the pear shader is necessary. “Choppy” beveling is caused by not moving the tool along the surface evenly between each stroke of the mallet.

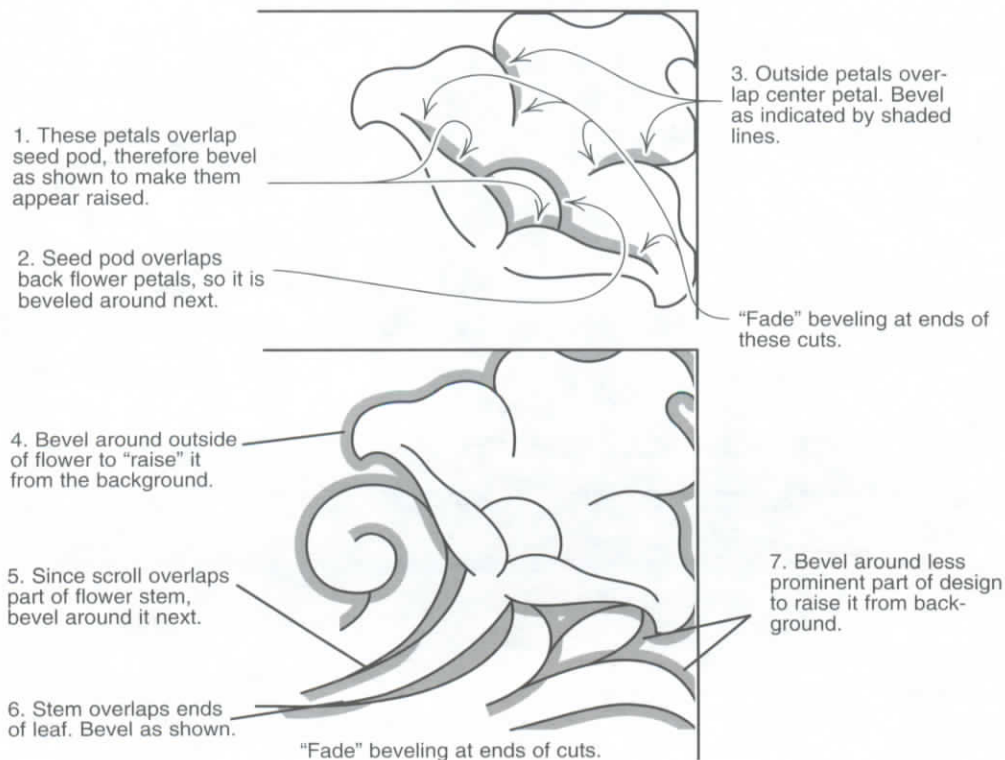
It takes practice to learn to bevel smoothly. Start by developing a rhythm: move-hit, move-hit, move-hit, move-hit, etc. Increase your speed as you become familiar with the rhythm of the two movements. Practice! Soon you will be beveling with ease!

A common question is, "Which side of the line do I bevel down?" A transfer pattern is not always clear on this point. Usually the bevel is around the outside part of the design you want to appear raised. If in doubt, take a pencil and shade around the lines on the transfer pattern as you think they should be beveled. If it does not look right, erase and try again. A good rule to follow: **BEVEL AROUND THE FOREMOST OBJECTS FIRST!**



The drawing above shows the design distinctly separated from the background to emphasize that all background areas must be beveled down and away from the design. This includes areas inside the design, as well as the surrounding background area. To add depth and contour to the rest of the design, it must be beveled as indicated by the shaded areas. The instructions below are added to further clarify any of your questions.

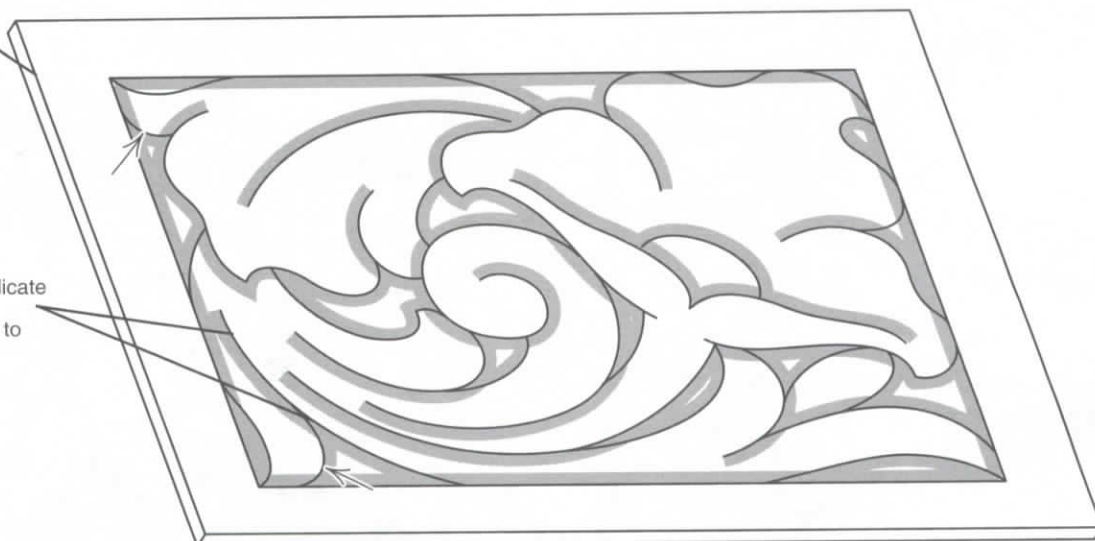
Bevel Foremost Objects of the Design First



TURN LEATHER AS OFTEN
AS NECESSARY TO MAKE
YOUR BEVELING EASIER.

8. Cuts of design usually indicate
overlapping parts of design.
Bevel on correct side of line to
maintain proper effect.

9. Complete beveling of
minor parts of design as
indicated by small
arrows.



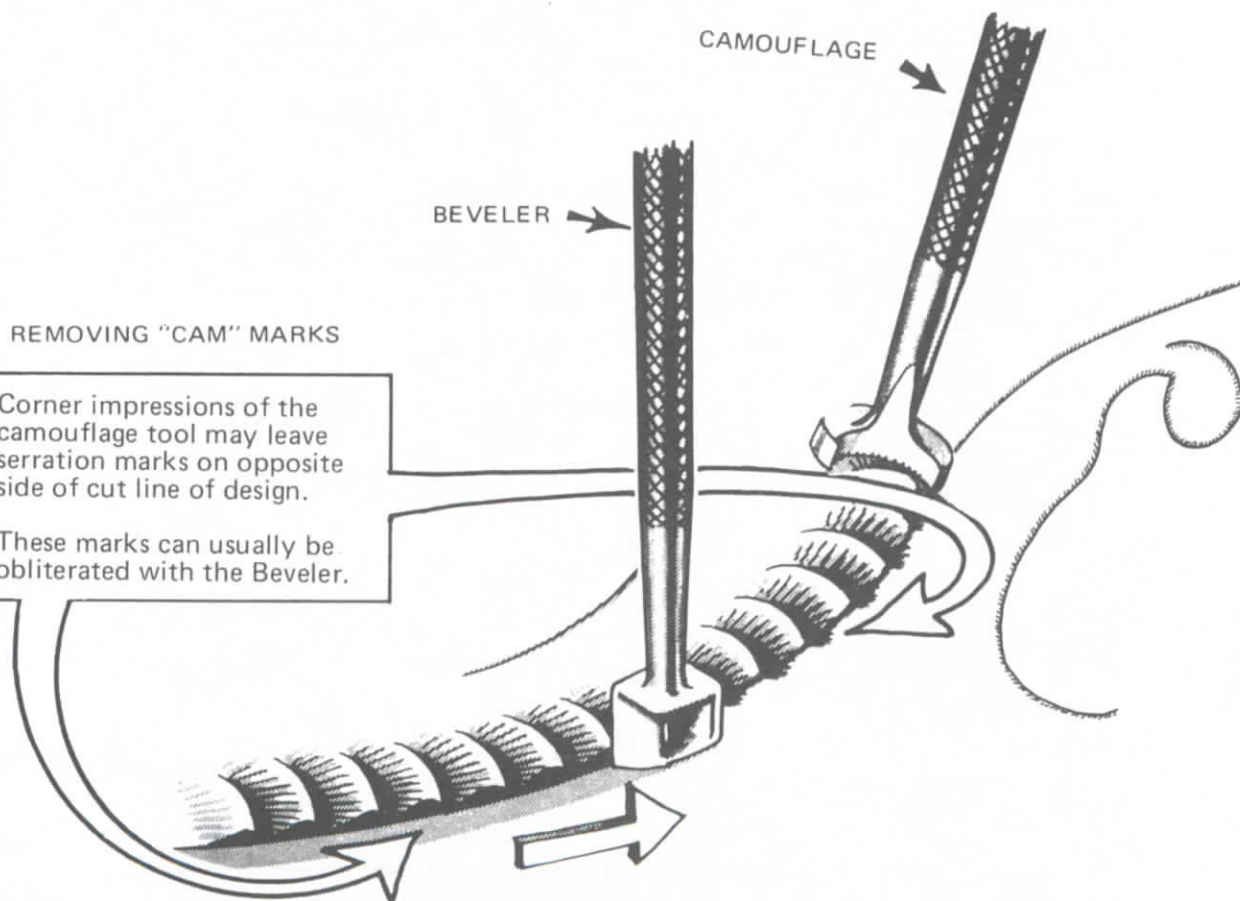
CAMOUFLAGE

BEVELER

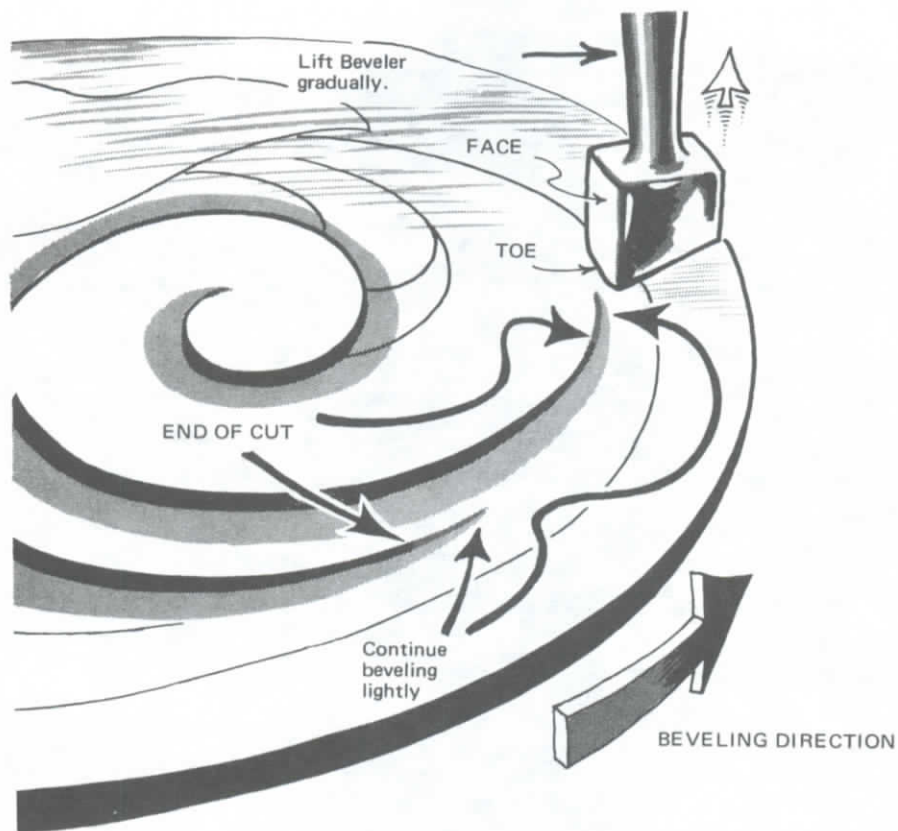
REMOVING "CAM" MARKS

Corner impressions of the
camouflage tool may leave
serration marks on opposite
side of cut line of design.

These marks can usually be
obliterated with the Beveler.



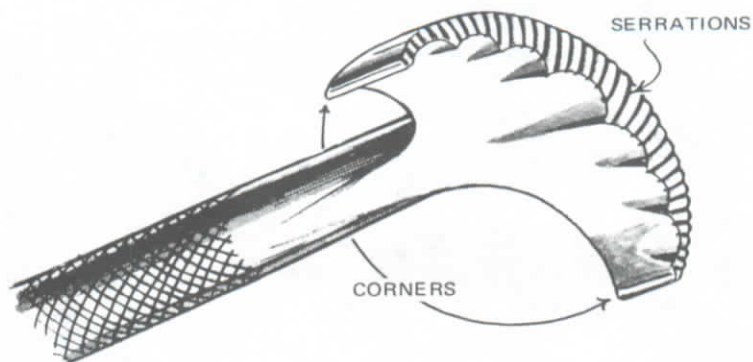
"FADING" THE BEVELING. Beveling should "fade out" on lines of the design that do not join other cuts. On such lines, cutting depth should also "fade out." The knife blade should gradually be withdrawn as the cut is ended. The beveling should taper slightly beyond the cut. Only an unusual design would require an abrupt stop to beveling at the end of a "faded" line. Never begin beveling at the end of a "faded" line. See illustration on the next page.



Begin at center of scroll, beveling lightly. At first quarter turn of scroll, begin beveling deeply. Continue heavy beveling around remainder of scroll. As you near end of the cut, lessen the force of the blows with the mallet and gradually taper the beveling to lesser depth. Do not stop beveling at the end of the cut, but continue slightly beyond the cut. Gradually lift the beveler and use lighter taps of the mallet, thus "fading" the bevel to nothing.

THE VEINER

The VEINER, as the name implies, is used for adding veins to leaves. It may also be used for other decorative and special effects. Veiners are available in several sizes, shapes and curves. It has a medium radius with scalloped inner edge and serrations on the stamping surface. When the impressions are placed close together, the effect is that of bark or overlapping scales.

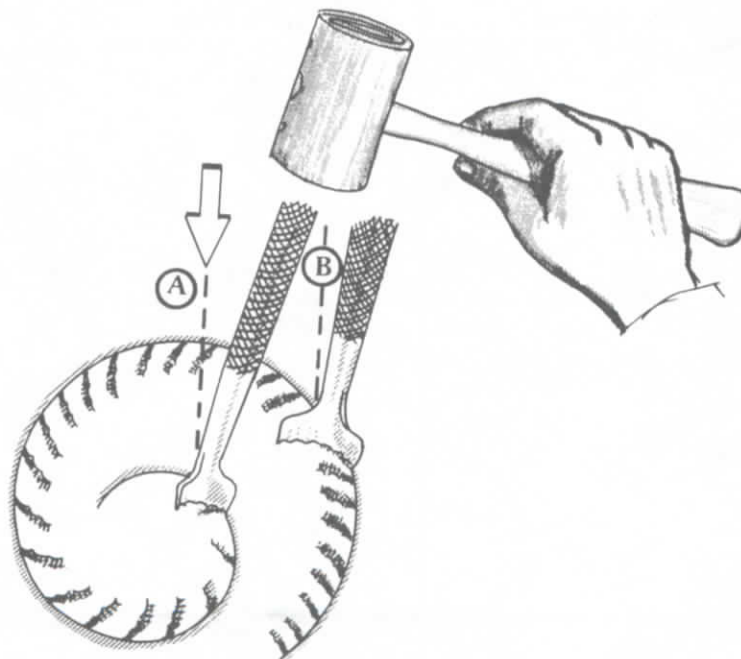


Veiner Tool Impressions



Veiner Tool Impressions

For the most graceful effects, veining impressions should never be at right angles to the line, but should angle in the direction of the stamping, as shown in the photo pattern. Follow the curve of the scroll, slightly turning the tool with each impression until they are almost parallel to the outside of the scroll near the tip of the scroll. Place veiner deliberately before each impression. Check angle and length of impression. Speed will come with practice and your veining will proceed smoothly and correctly.



The angle of the handle of the veiner governs the length of the tool impression. When veining the scroll, the impressions should be spaced evenly. The deepest part of the impressions are made by leaning the tool to a greater degree, as illustrated (Example A). As the scroll widens, a broader impression is desired and the tool must be brought to a more vertical position (Example B). The impressions of the tool away from the edge of the scroll should "fade out." Full tool impressions are seldom used when veining scrolls and leaves.

THE SEEDER

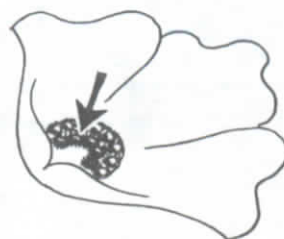
The SEEDER is used for making seed pods in the flower center. Moisture content of your leather should be almost dry. Hold the tool straight up and down as shown in the picture and strike it firmly to make a clear, clean impression. NOTE: Be careful not to strike the tool too hard because too much force will drive it through the leather. You can learn very quickly just how hard to hit the tool by practicing on a piece of scrap leather.



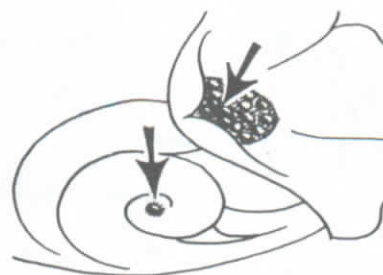
Study this photo pattern for correct placing of the centers in a flower pod. Note that none of the seeder impression overlaps the petal lines.



Begin stamping the outer row of seeds first. Stay within the cut line and space your impressions as close together as a string of beads. Near end of a row, adjust spacing so that last "seed" does not overlap the flower petal.



Stamp the second row of seeds as shown, stacking them close to the first row and keeping them as even as possible. Do not overlap.

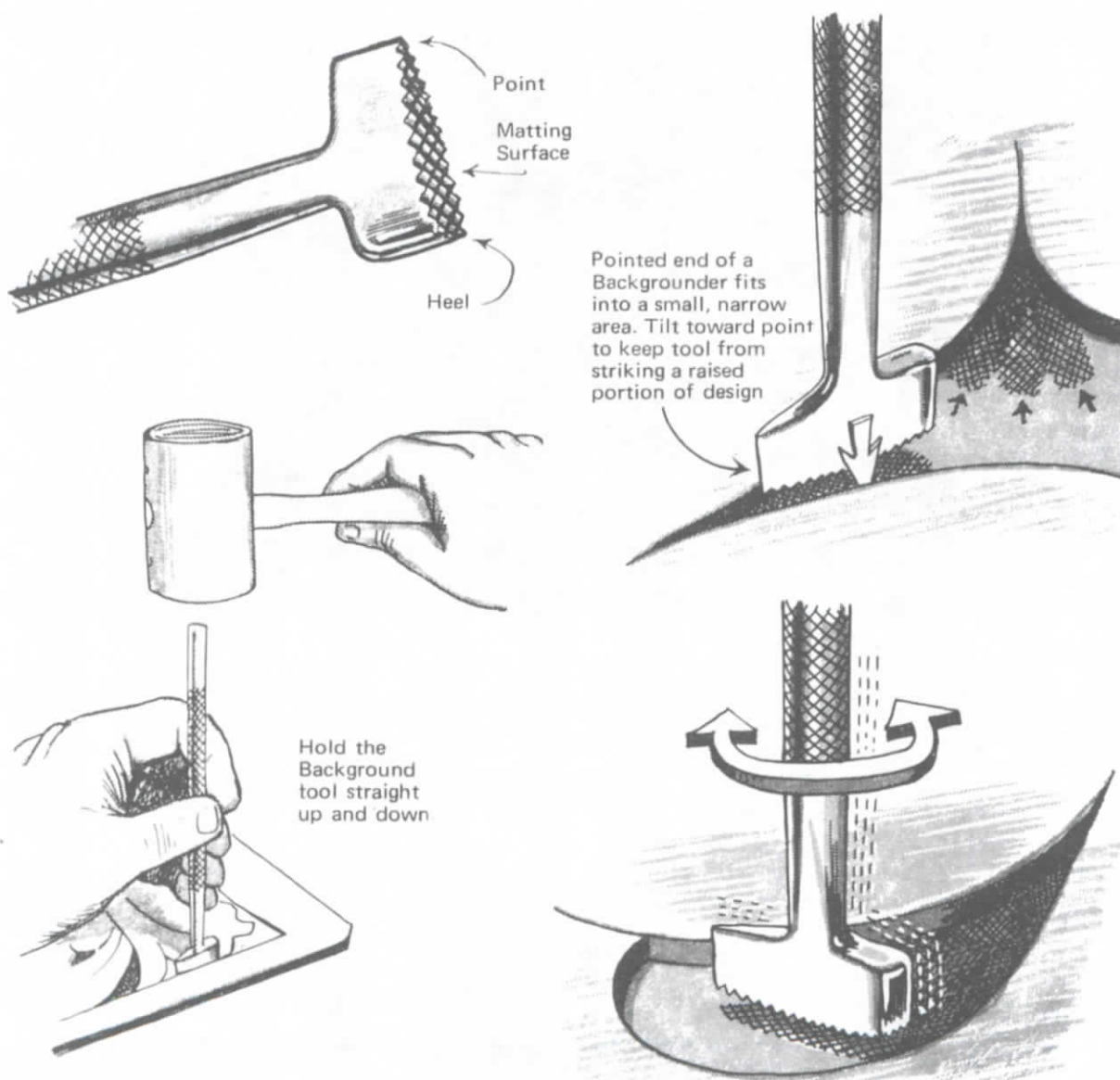


Fill in remaining area. Stamp seeds carefully. Only the serrated edges should touch or overlap. Place a seed in center of scroll.

THE BACKGROUND TOOL

The purpose of the BACKGROUND TOOL is to mat down the background areas within and around the design. Backgrounding is one of the most important steps in leatherwork because it makes your design "stand out" in bold relief. Background tools are made in a number of shapes and sizes.

A practical background tool is one that can be used on both large and small areas. A small pointed end is needed for narrow areas. Carefully fit the tool into the area before striking it with the mallet. In very small areas, the tool can be leaned toward the point keeping the heel from touching a raised portion of the design.



The background tool is used in much the same way as the beveler in that it should be made to "walk" with each indentation joining the preceding one. Moisture content of your leather should be "just right" (slightly on the dry side). Hold the tool straight up and down as shown and strike it firmly with uniform blows of your mallet. Strike the tool hard enough to drive it just below the cut line of the design. Each section of the background should be uniform in depth; therefore it is best to finish one area at a time. A little practice will help you determine just how hard to strike the tool for various depths.

When the backgrounder is used to cover large areas, the tools should be “walked.” As the tool is “walked,” turn the handle in the fingers to prevent a “tool pattern” from forming.



This photo pattern shows the correct use of the background tool. Note the depth of the impressions is even over each separate area. The effect is an overall impression. “Patterns” are avoided by slightly turning and “walking” the backgrounder between strokes of the mallet.

OPTIONAL VEINER (STOP) AND MULESFOOT

Add a special decorative touch with the use of a veiner and mulesfoot.

MULESFOOT

First impression should be deep. Lighten up the impressions as you move away from the stop.



**VEINER
(Left Impression)**
use left or right
veiner (stop)
impression
depending on
the direction of
the cut.

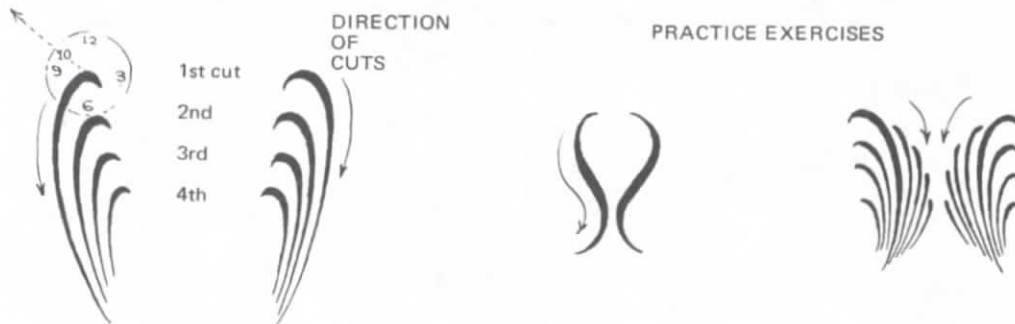
**VEINER
(Right Impression)**

NOTE: When a veiner is used to end (or stop) a cut line, it is referred to as a stop. Tools specifically made for this purpose are also available.

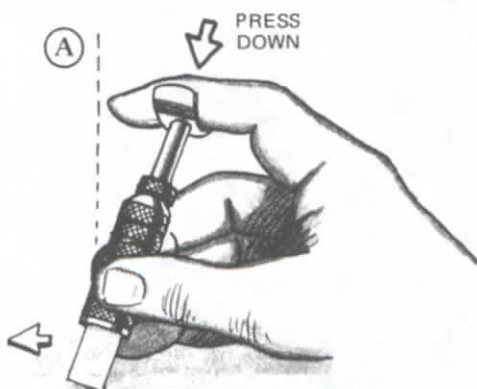
HOW TO MAKE DECORATIVE CUTS

DECORATIVE CUTS, as the name implies, are cuts you make to decorate or make your design more attractive. Before attempting them on your carved design, familiarize yourself with their nature by practicing the cuts with your swivel knife. Decorative cutting is done after all other carving and stamping has been completed. It is normally the final step in adding ornamental detail to your design. Good decorative cutting adds greatly to the attractiveness of a carved design. Decorative cuts should "flow" with the design, providing grace and beauty.

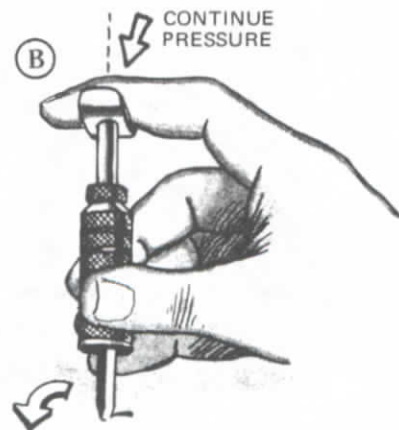
Decorative cuts are usually begun much the same as when cutting half circles. One of the prime differences is that once the cut is begun, it turns sharply, but gracefully and gradually diminishes in depth, fading into a hair line as the knife blade is withdrawn from the leather. These cuts are usually made in a series, one succeeding shorter than the next. The tail end of these cuts graduate towards a common center, where they would eventually meet were they to be continued to that end. Follow the instructions below and practice the exercises presented. Case more practice leather pieces; have them ready to cut. Proper moisture content is very important for good decorative cutting. It may be necessary to slightly dampen the grain surface of the leather to achieve correct results with decorative cuts. Avoid the tendency of applying too much moisture at this point.



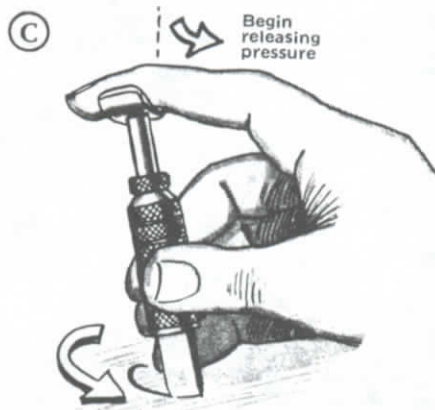
As indicated on the PRACTICE EXERCISES above, make the long cuts first. Practice rights and lefts, first for motion and flow to get the feel of decorative cutting. Then practice for control, to make the cuts successively shorter, and gracefully graduate towards each other at the ends of each cut.



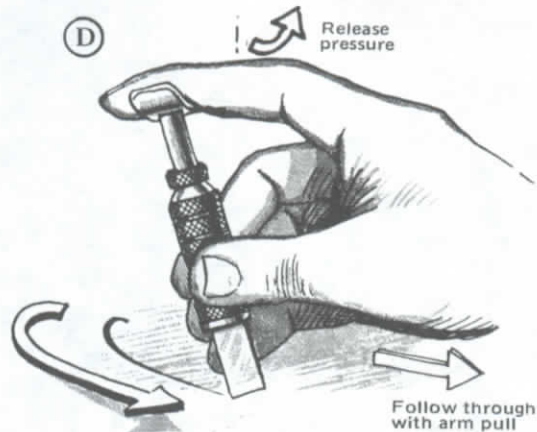
Your hand must be rolled to the right (for right cut) to bring the blade into proper cutting position. Begin with heavy downward pressure to make the cut "pop open." The blade should be pointed at 10 o'clock as illustrated.



Begin the turn immediately, straightening your hand to almost normal position as the blade turns toward your body. Continue heavy downward pressure.

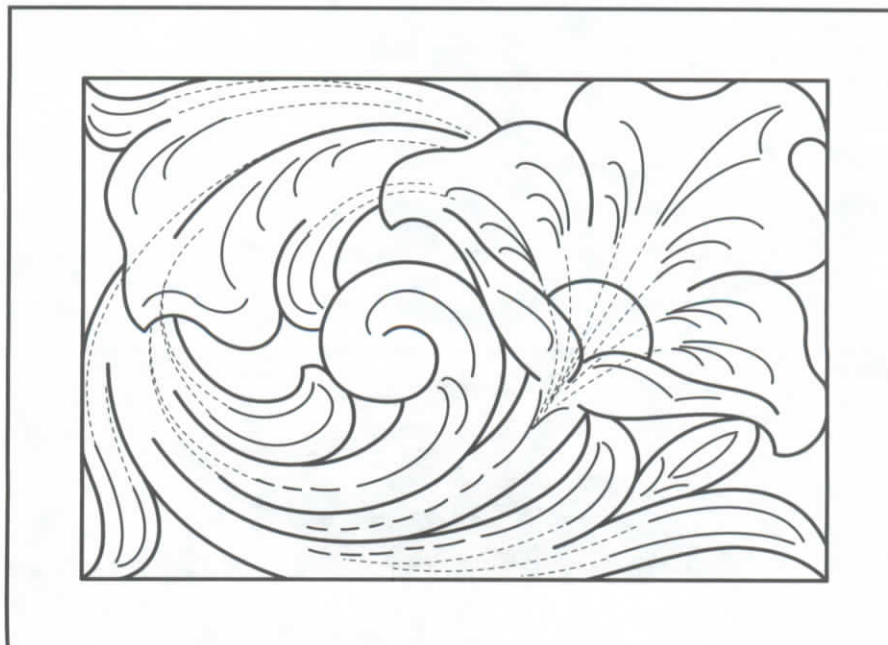


As the cut begins to straighten, pull your hand and arm toward you to steady and control the cut. Gradually diminish the pressure on the yoke.



Continue the cut in one graceful flowing movement, simultaneously lessening the depth of the cut with each motion of progress. Fade the cut to a hair line and continue the follow-through motion as the blade is lifted from the leather.

A good floral design is composed of graceful, flowing lines. Flower stem leaves, scrolls, etc. should all originate from these flowing lines. Decorative cutting further enhances or accents these flowing lines. The drawing below is presented to illustrate the correct use of decorative cutting. The decorative cuts shown have been extended (by dashed lines) to better illustrate their proper flow of direction. You will note that all lines eventually converge into the center of the stems and become a part of the flow of the design. When properly executed, decorative cutting becomes an integral part of the design . . . pleasing to the eye and professional in appearance. By thoroughly understanding the purpose of decorative cutting, your diligent practice should rapidly develop a professional quality. Always keep in mind the flow of the design while cutting.





← FIGURE 1
Transfer Pattern

FIGURE 2 →
Swivel Knife Cuts



← FIGURE 3
The Camouflage Tool Impression



FIGURE 4 →
The Pear Shader Tool Impression





← **FIGURE 5**
The Beveler Tool Impression

FIGURE 6 →
The Veiner Tool Impression



← **FIGURE 7**
The Seeder Tool Impression

FIGURE 8 →
The Background Tool Impression





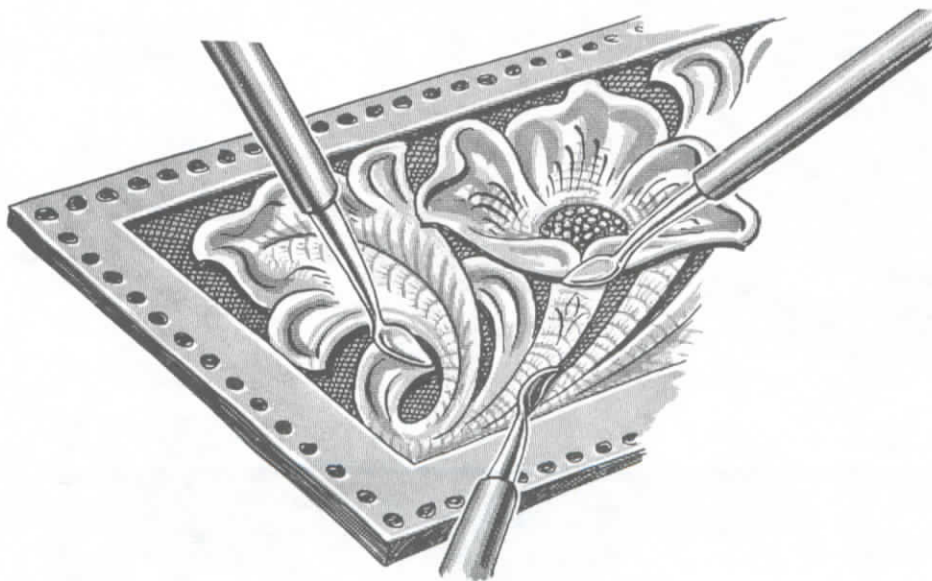
FIGURE 9
(Optional) The Veiner (Stop) and
Mulesfoot Impressions



FIGURE 10
Decorative Cuts With Swivel Knife

THE MODELING TOOL

This following technique should be used with all carved designs and is especially important when background dye is to be used.



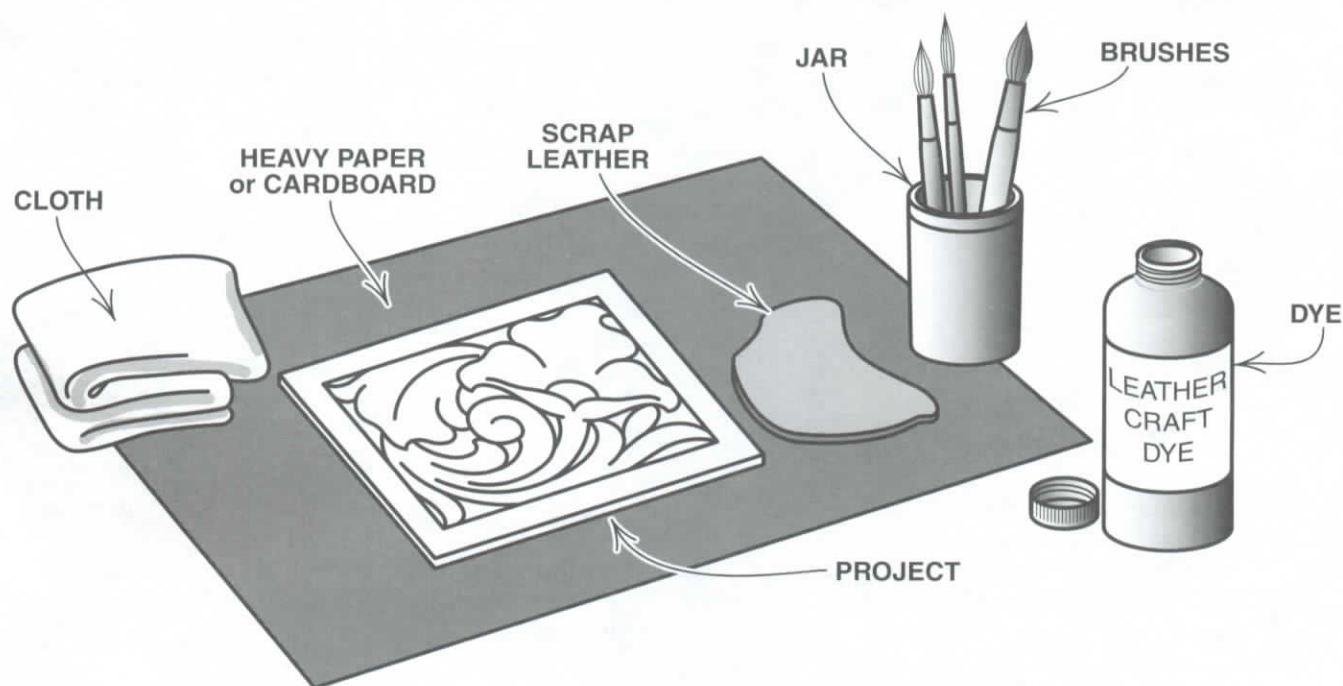
After carving and stamping, use the spoon end of the modeling tool to clean up the design. The edges of the flowers and leaves can be slightly rounded, and rough beveling marks can be smoothed out. Other "out of place" tool marks can be rubbed out, carefully. Many times the pointed background areas can be more clearly defined with the point of the spoon where the background tool has marred portions of the raised edges of the design, and overran its bounds in the very pointed areas.

DYEING, ANTIQUING AND FINISHING LEATHER

Color enhances the beauty of many decorative designs. However, color should be limited to amplifying the carved and tooled design. Too much or an overall coloring tends to defeat the use of genuine leather and detract from its value and beauty.

Since genuine leather enjoys a rustic image, spirit-based dyes or antique stains which permit the natural grain to show through produce very attractive finished projects.

The "grain layer" (hair side) of the leather consists of about one fifth the thickness of the hide. The fiber structure of this part of the leather is more closely knit than the remainder of the hide. Therefore it is more desirable for carving, stamping and dyeing. Vegetable tanned and bark tanned leathers are most suitable for carving and dyeing, and they are prepared for this purpose. During the tanning processes, the honeycomb structure of fibrous interlacings are filled with oils and other tanning agents. It is these oils and tanning agents that give "life" to the leather, and also make dyeing of the flesh side unsatisfactory.

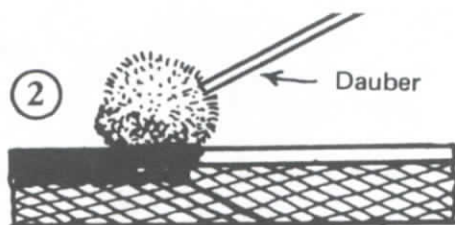


Prepare your work surface so that everything is at your fingertips; seat yourself in a comfortable position free of tension or strain.

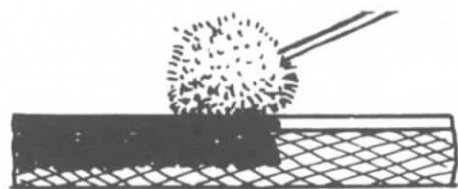
DYE PENETRATION



The first application usually penetrates only the grain layer. Swab on liberally to ensure coverage.



The second application penetrates an equal amount more into the coarser fibers. Apply liberally.



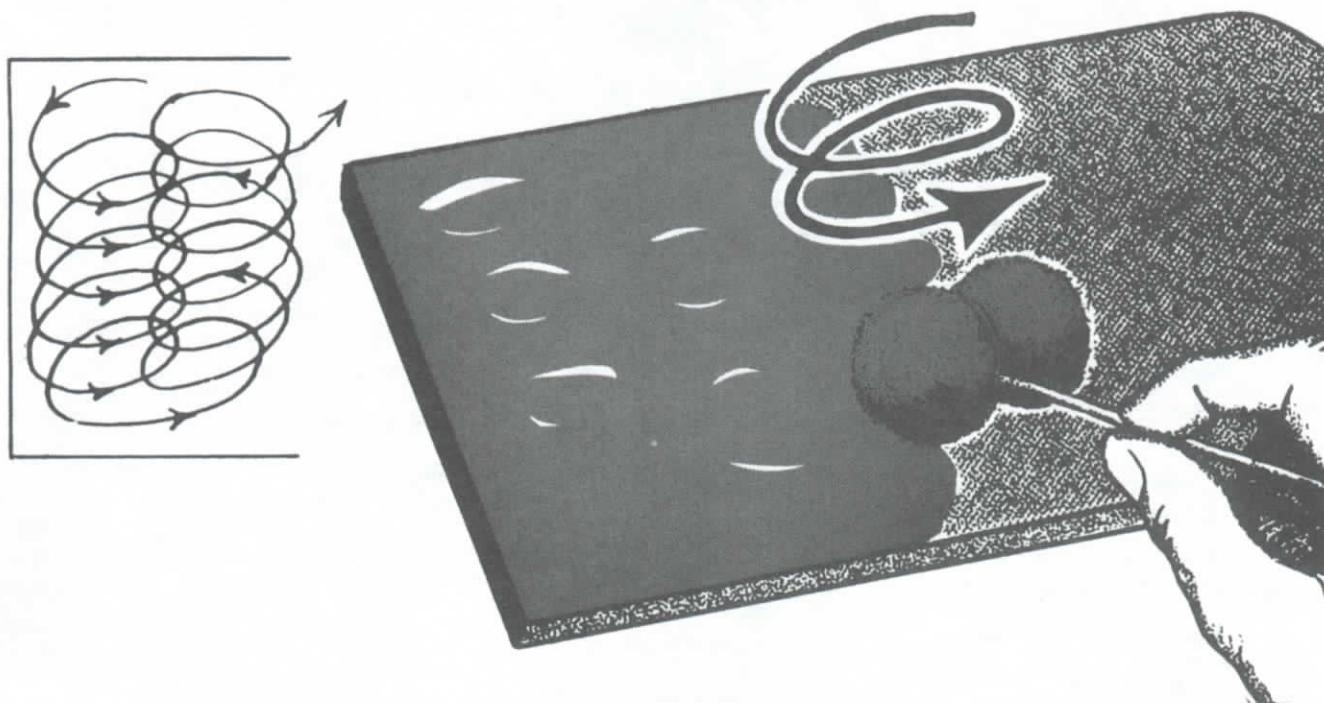
A third application will penetrate deeply, as previous applications have "opened the way" for the dye.



Foreign matter, such as wax residue, a drop of cement or oily finger marks will retard dye penetration.

SOLID COLOR DYEING

Before beginning the dye work on your project, be sure you have sufficient quantity of dye on hand to complete it. Dye formulation may vary slightly and create an adverse effect in appearance on your finished projects. Always practice on scrap leather (from project) BEFORE attempting to dye your finished product! Remember, each hide of leather may produce a slightly different shade of the same color, due to chemical changes during tanning, etc.



Dip applicator in color and begin in upper left hand corner. Move quickly in a circular motion so that each stroke lightly overlaps the last, as shown above. When strokes of color begin to thin, dip applicator into color and resume motion until entire project has been covered.

CAUTION: Protect hands from direct contact with oil and spirit solvent dyes, as stains are difficult to remove from skin.

When dry, you'll note darker and lighter spots; dye job is not even. This will be due to heavier penetrations of dye when the applicator first touched the leather. One application of dye is usually not sufficient. Go over the entire project again, in the opposite direction, with the same procedures previously described. Apply as many dye coats as necessary to achieve desired results.

HOW TO DYE THE BACKGROUND OF THE DESIGN

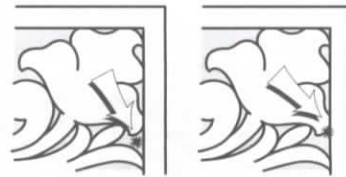
CLEAN BRUSHES
WITH DYE THINNER



Before dyeing the project,
practice on scrap leather.
Twist the brush clockwise to
point the bristles.

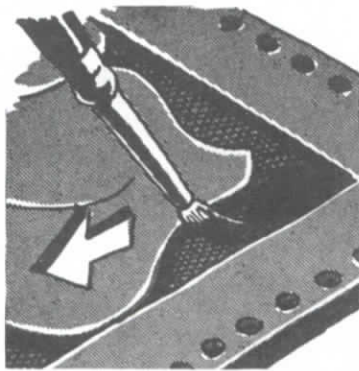


Begin dyeing in the open
areas. Always touch the
brush to the scrap leather first
to remove excess dye before
applying to the project. Too
much dye will run and "bleed"
over the edges of the design.

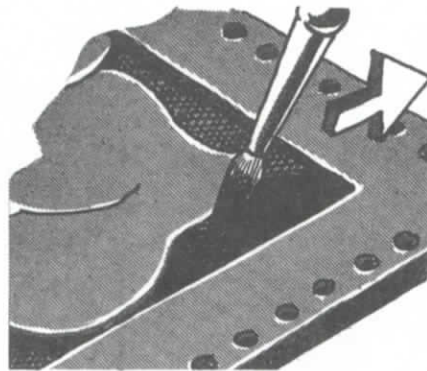


RIGHT METHOD: Here the
brush was pushed to the
center of background first,
minimizing danger of dye
"bleeding" over design.

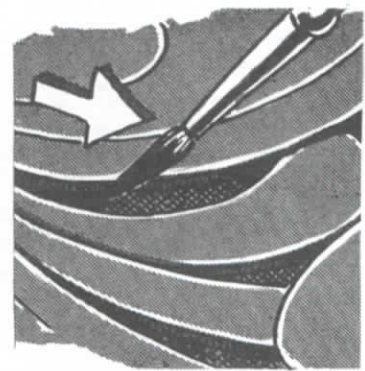
WRONG METHOD: Here
dyeing was started in small
area. Excess dye has spread
and crawled over the edges
of the design.



Begin dyeing in the open areas.
Always touch the brush to the
scrap leather first to remove
excess dye before applying to
the project. Too much dye will
run and "bleed" over the edges
of the design.



When most of dye is exhausted,
point brush by twisting clockwise
on scrap leather; complete
dyeing as shown.



Use short, pulling strokes to
cover the area. Turn the leather
as often as necessary to facili-
tate dyeing in the difficult areas.

ANTIQUE STAINS

The principle purpose of antique staining is to achieve color uniformity while retaining the full appearance of the leather's beautiful grain surface. Most pigment dyes tend to cover up and distort the grain surface. The image of fine leather in the mind of most people is that of rich, rustic antique tones. The potential for the individual to develop his or her own special technique with antique stains is wide open.

APPLICATION TECHNIQUE OF ANTIQUE STAIN

Using a damp sponge, apply a liberal coat of antique stain, rubbing in a circular motion until the color is even and all cuts and stamped impressions are filled. Allow to dry for 5 to 10 minutes or until "set." CAUTION: DO NOT LET ANTIQUE DRY FOR MORE THAN 15 MINUTES. Using a clean, damp sponge, remove excess antique from the surface of the leather until the desired contrast is achieved. After the antique dries, buff the surface of the project with a soft clean cloth. To protect the antiqued surface of the project, apply a light coat of Super Shene finish.

PREPARATION

Since the application of antique stains (like most all leather dyes and finishes) requires quick start-to-finish action, it is best to prepare all materials and equipment in advance. You will need an applicator (a slightly dampened cellulose sponge works best), a protective covering for your working surface such as newspaper or brown paper, a small amount of water for moistening the leather surface and plastic gloves or other protection for your hands.

RESIST ANTIQUING

Super Shene may be brushed onto areas of the project before the antique stain is applied. These areas will "RESIST" the antique, allowing the natural color of the leather to show through. Allow Super Shene to dry completely before applying antique stain.

PURPOSE OF APPLYING LEATHER FINISH

Leather finishes are applied to protect and preserve the qualities and appearance of genuine leather. These finishes should not be confused with leather dyes and other formulations which are intended to alter the appearance of the leather surface. Light, heat and atmospheric conditions have a marked tendency to deteriorate the character and appearance of leather. To inhibit deterioration and preserve the lasting beauty of the leather, we use carefully formulated leather finishes.

PREPARATION

Before applying leather finish, check the following carefully:

1. Be sure that the surface area is free from dirt, dust or other foreign matter.
2. Any final touches or clean-up work in the tooled design must be completed prior to applying finish.
3. If the leather is still damp from the casing during the application of the design, allow it to dry thoroughly before applying clear lacquer leather finish.
4. Remember when you apply the leather finish, you seal off the leather surface. Therefore, complete applying desired leather dyes before applying finish.
5. Be sure the cellulose sponge applicator is free of foreign matter and slightly dampened to ensure uniform absorption.

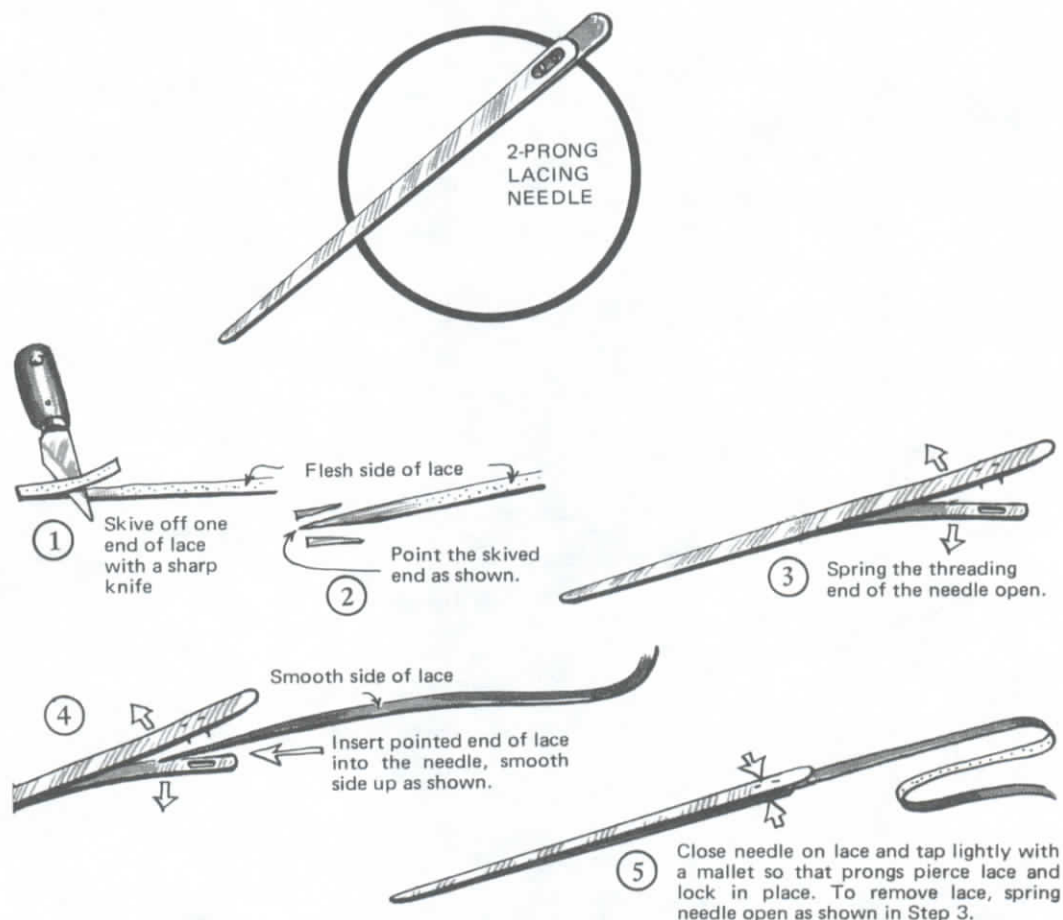
APPLICATION TECHNIQUE OF SUPER SHENE® LEATHER FINISH

Use a slightly damp sponge to apply a light, even coat of Super Shene to the project. Allow project to dry for at least 10 minutes, then apply a second light coat. Allow project to dry completely, then buff to a high gloss with a soft cloth. Drying time may take longer if the weather is humid.

LACING AND STITCHING TECHNIQUES

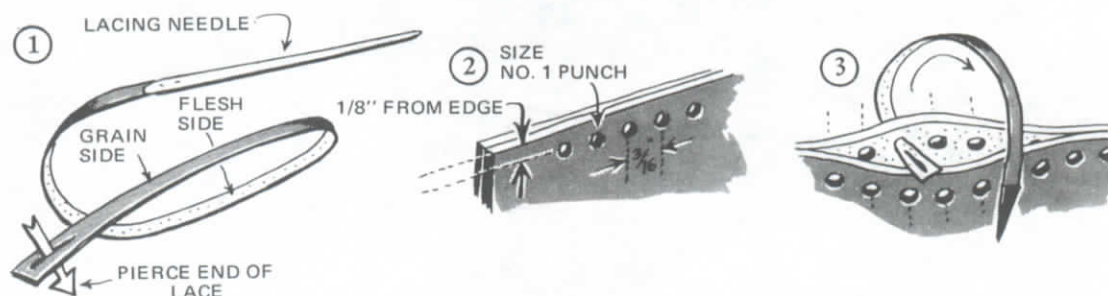
Lacing puts the finishing touch to handmade leather articles. How good the finished product looks depends very much on the lacing. Thus, how you lace, your technique and the finished look, has a great deal of importance in the appearance of the finished product. With the following instructions and illustrations,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

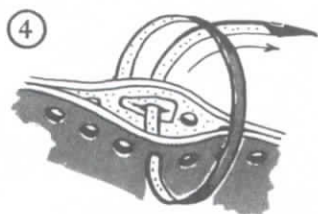
THREADING THE NEEDLE



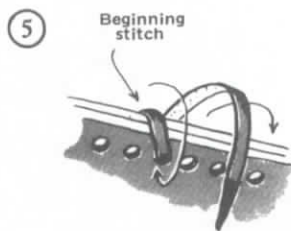
NOTE: You should load 2 yards of lace in lacing needle at a time. Working with longer pieces of lace will be difficult and can cause the lace to wear and become frayed as it is pulled through the lacing holes. When lacing, the front side of the project should face the lacer.

THE WHIPSTITCH



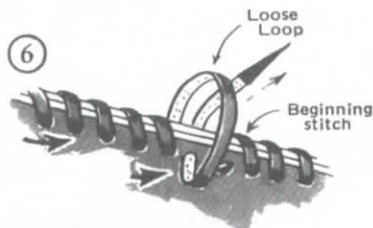


Push needle through the second hole, then thread it through the slit in the end of the lace and through the opposite hole, as shown.

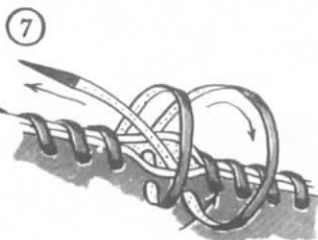


Pull stitch up tight.

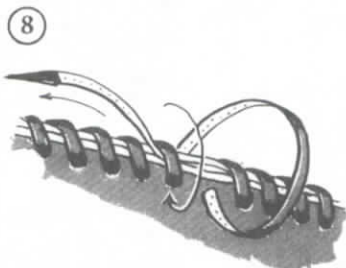
Continue lacing, tightening the lace as you go.



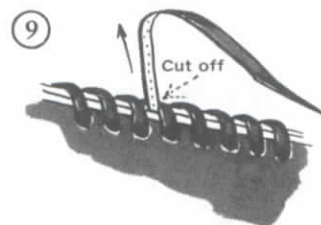
Lace around the project leaving a loose loop in the 2nd hole from the beginning stitch. There will be one unlaced hole between your very first and your last stitch, as shown.



Spread the 2 leather layers and lace through the last hole, up between the leathers and through the 1st loose loop, as shown.

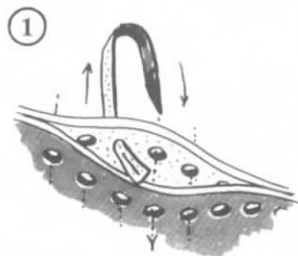


Pull the first loop tight, over end of lace, as shown.

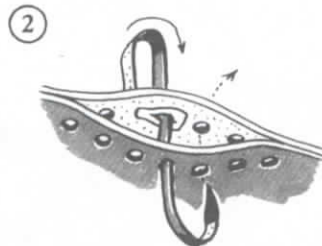


Pull end of lace tight to take slack out of last loop. Cut off the end of the lace with a sharp knife and tap all lacing flat with smooth-faced mallet.

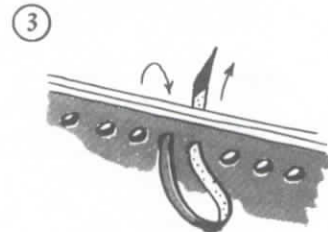
THE RUNNING STITCH



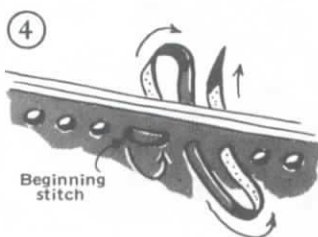
Begin lacing just as you did for the Whip stitch.



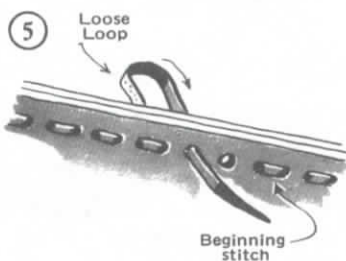
Push needle through the next hole from the back, through the slit and out through the opposite hole in front, as shown.



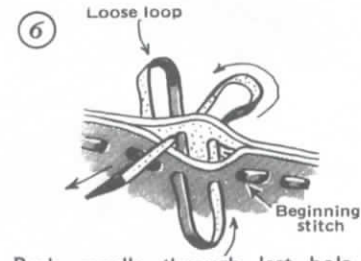
Pull stitch up tight to lock the lace. Continue lacing the rest of the project.



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



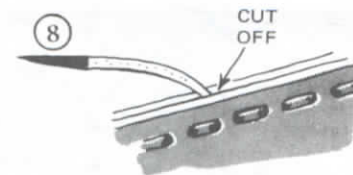
Lace to the last hole and leave a loose loop in the second to the last hole.



Push needle through last hole. Spread leathers; push needle through next to last hole bringing needle up between leathers.

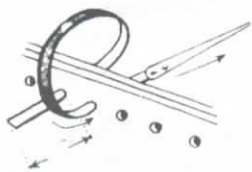


Pull the loose loop tight and continue pulling all the slack out of the lace.

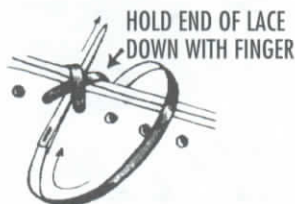


Pull all stitching up tight and pull end of lace tight. Cut off the end of the lace close to the leather and tap all lacing flat with a smooth mallet.

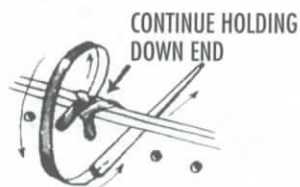
DOUBLE LOOP STITCH



1: Beginning on front side of project, pull the needle and lace through the first hole. Leave about $\frac{1}{4}$ " of the lacing end and go on to lace the next hole.



2: Pull the stitch tight, lacing over the end you left free. This forms a cross or "bight."



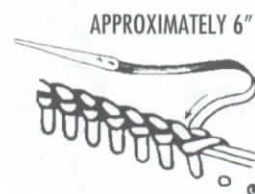
3: Pull the stitch under the bight. Pull it snug, but not tight. Lace through the next hole.



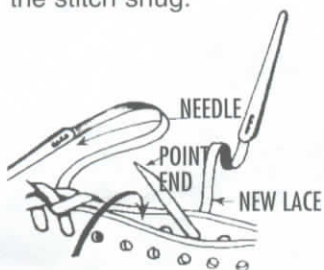
4: Follow the same procedure as in Steps 1 and 2 making a cross or bight. Once again go under the bight and pull the stitch snug.



5: When lacing a corner, stitch through the three corner holes (twice each). Be sure to go through bight on corner stitches.



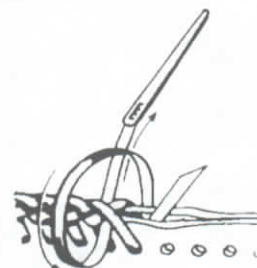
6: Lace until only 5" or 6" of lace remains. You will have to splice with a new length of lace.



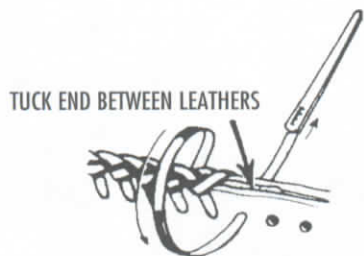
7: Insert new lace down between leathers, four holes from lacing. Pull out back side. Leave $\frac{1}{4}$ " of lace between the leathers.



8: Tuck end of lace between leathers and continue lacing your project with the old lace.



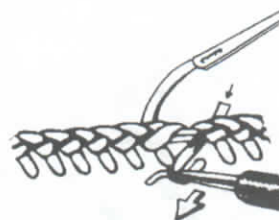
9: Pull the old lace up tight. Cut off the end at an angle, allowing about $\frac{1}{4}$ " to remain.



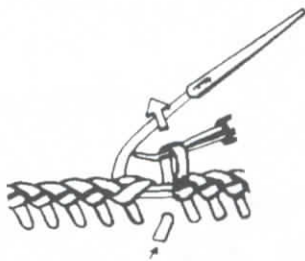
10: Tuck the end of the old lace between the leathers and lace over it with the new lace so that it is caught and won't show.



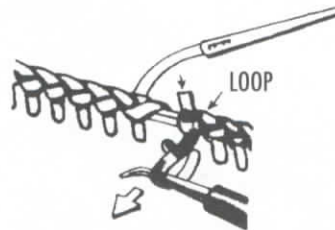
11: Continue lacing to starting point.



12: To tie off lacing, pull the end of the beginning lace free of stitches.



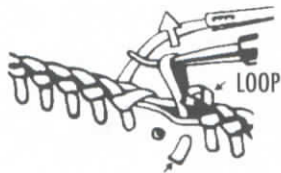
13: From back side, pull the end of the lace out of the hole.



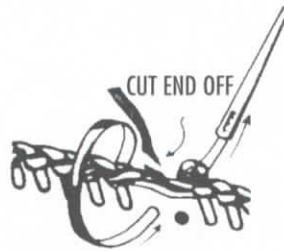
14: From front side, pull end of the lace out of the loop.



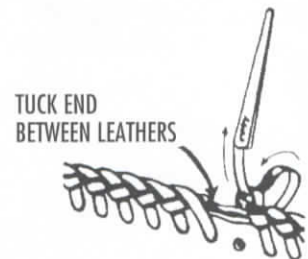
15: Push tool or needle down between the leathers and hook it over the lace.



16: Pull end of lace out of hole and up between leathers. Two empty holes should appear on the front side and one on the back.



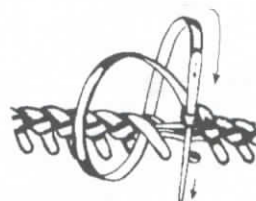
17: Cut off the end of the lace you have pulled out and tuck the end of the lace between the leathers. Lace through the next hole.



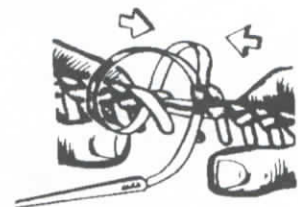
18: Pull stitch tight and lace up through loop from the back side. All holes on the back side should be filled.



19: Lace under the bight. Do not pull this stitch tight.



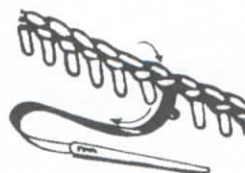
20: Carefully cross over as shown and push needle down through the loop.



21: Pull needle through. Push laced edges together to adjust starting loops for easier completion.



22: Pull any slack out of the first loop and adjust lacing with fingers to make all your stitches appear equal.

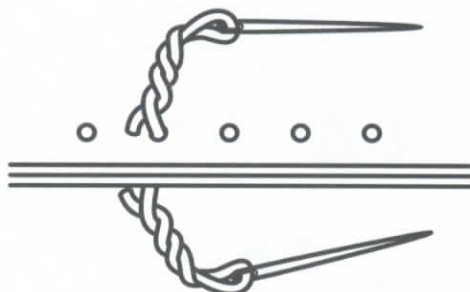


23: Pull the end of the lacing down tight. Make sure all stitches appear even and equally spaced.

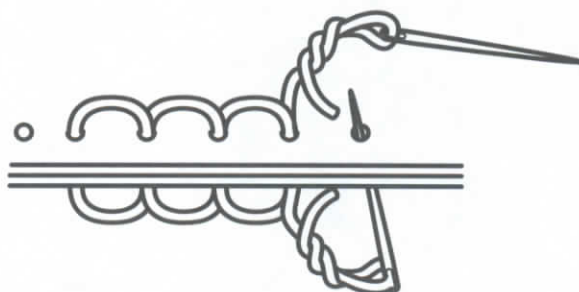


24: Push needle through the last hole as shown. Bring it up between the leathers and out between the lacing. Cut off the excess lace.

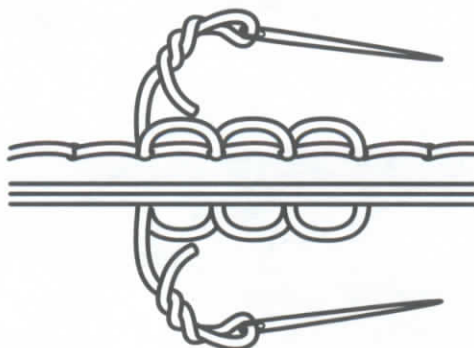
HAND STITCHING



Step 1: Thread one end of waxed thread through eye of needle and pull about 1" through. Wrap end around thread and twist between fingers. Place a needle on the other end of thread in the same way. Push one needle through one set of aligned holes on the side of the project and pull through until you have the same amount of thread on each side.



Step 2: Holding project between your knees, push needle on inside through next hole and pull through. Push outside needle through the same hole, being sure to go over the first thread. Grasp both threads and pull stitch tight. Continue stitching this way all around project, pulling each stitch tight.



Step 3: When you reach the last hole, stitch back through the preceding three holes. Trim excess thread close to the leather on the outside and tap stitches down with a mallet.

NOTES