

Achievement Course: Leather Workmanship
Recommended Ages: 10-18 years of age
Approximate Completion Time Frame: 1-3 months



Saints Crispin and Crispinian, pray for us!

Saints Crispin and Crispinian are the patron saints of leatherwork and cobblers. They preached by day and made shoes and leather items by night to support themselves. They were martyred in the third century and their feast was immortalized by William Shakespeare's Saint Crispin Day speech in his play "Henry V".

Objective: To learn the basic art of leather crafting and demonstrate the knowledge through leather projects.

Leatherwork is not something that many of us have experience with, but as recently as 100 years ago in the United States of America, men had to be able to make clothes for themselves. Using animal hides was the best way to make a set of clothes or shoes that would stand up to the rugged life they led. While the convenience of today's clothing manufacturers make this need obsolete, the skills learned can prove to be very useful.

1. Steps for the different types of Leatherwork

a. Stamping

- i. With a slightly wet sponge, moisten the piece of leather.
- ii. Make sure to position your piece of leather over a piece of hard stone or a steel anvil.
- iii. Using hand stamps and a wooden mallet, position the stamp on the leather piece and firmly hit the stamp on top with the mallet. If hit too lightly, it will not impress the shape into the leather and will fade out over time.
- iv. Repeat this process over the area of your leather as often as you want the image stamped in to your piece of leather.

b. Carving

- i. With a slightly wet sponge, moisten the piece of leather.
- ii. With a Swivel Knife, make bold cuts in the leather to half the thickness of the leather. Keep the knife in a vertical position at all times to allow for proper stamping later on.
- iii. Then, shade the cut on one side with a Pear Shader, using a mallet to press and shade one side of the cut at a constant color.
- iv. A Beveler is used to create a curved surface on one side of the cut to help create the illusion of a depth to the cut fabric.
- v. A Veiner or Shell Tool is used to create closely spaced lines for the look of a curved line.
- vi. A Seeder is used to create small circular impressions that look like small seeds.
- vii. Remember not to hit too hard or it will puncture through the leather.

c. Molding

- i. Submerge the entire piece of leather in warm water until it is soaked all the way through.
- ii. Once the leather piece is soaked all the way, bring it out of the water and start molding and pressing it into the shape that is desired.
- iii. The leather surface is very malleable at this time, and as it cools down and starts drying out, it slowly loses its flexibility for molding.
- iv. Make sure not to impress anything into the leather surface at this point, as it will make a lasting impression on the leather.
- v. Make note, each time the leather is submerged in warm water and dries, the leather will shrink in size.

d. Shaping

- i. Submerge the entire piece of leather in water and get it completely wet.
- ii. Once the leather piece is wet, pull it out and wrap it around the desired object or form.
- iii. Make sure that the form is not metal, as the form will rust and stain the leather.

- iv. Attach non-painted or stained leather thongs or strings around the leather to keep it pressed to the desired molded shape. Tie these off, but do not leave impressions in the leather, then let sit until leather is completely dry.
 - e. Staining/Dyeing
 - i. Stain the leather with a rag, dipping it into the stain and applying it evenly to the leather surface.
 - ii. With a clean rag, wipe down the entire leather surface after finishing staining.
 - iii. Let the leather piece dry.
 - iv. Once all the different color stain and dying paint has been applied and dried, spray with a special lacquer for leather. This will seal the stain/dying paint in so it does not rub off easily.
 - f. Painting
 - i. Use water based acrylic paint and thin out with water for desired intensity.
 - ii. Brush on or apply with a rag or other utensil for smaller detail work.
 - iii. Once all the different paints have been applied and dried, spray with a special lacquer for leather. This will seal the paint in so it does not rub off easily.
 - g. Lacing
 - i. With a hole punch, punch out holes evenly spaced along the two edges that are being stitched together.
 - ii. Thread a large sewing needle with lacing and tie to the end of the lacing so that it does not slip through the first hole.
 - iii. Start at one end, and choosing from one of the many different decorative stitch patterns, sew the two pieces of leather together with the leather lacing.
 - iv. Tie the leather lacing off at the end so that it does not slip back through the last hole and trim excess lacing off with scissors.
 - h. Riveting
 - i. Riveting is used instead of lacing to attach two pieces of leather together for stronger and longer durability.
 - ii. Rivets come in several different sizes, and for each size, there are two different ends.
 - iii. When put through the holes punched in the two pieces of leather, the inside, non-decorative end, of the rivet is hit with a hammer and pressed into the flat headed end of the other rivet piece. Thus the two pieces of leather are securely riveted or crimped together.
- 2. Tools for Leatherwork
 - a. Spray bottle of water
 - b. Wood mallet
 - c. Steel anvil or hard stone
 - d. Leather stamping tools
 - e. Alphabet/Number/Shapes stamping set
 - f. Swivel Knife
 - g. Pear Shader
 - h. Leather Hole Punch
 - i. Crimping Hole Punch
 - j. Leather sewing kit
 - k. Leather

3. Requirements

- a. Discuss the process by which you go about making a leather object using the different methods from above.
- b. Be able to identify and explain use of the tools needed to complete each process.
 - i. Be able to discuss safety precautions when working with leather and the appropriate leatherworking tools.
- c. Discuss where leather comes from, hair on or off, and what the best type of leathers to use are dependent on project.
- d. Discuss the process of stamping, carving and molding leather.
- e. Discuss how to paint, stain and dye leather.
- f. Discuss the process of lacing leather together.
- g. Discuss the process of riveting leather together.
- h. Demonstrate cleaning and shining a pair of dress shoes with a shoe polish kit.
- i. Visit a local leather shop or store to review the many creative items that can be made with leather.

4. Leatherworking Projects

- a. Using what has been learned from above, make two projects from below.
 - i. Rosary pouch
 - ii. Wallet
 - iii. Knife/Sword Sheath
 - iv. Belt
 - v. Missal/Bible Cover
 - vi. Arrow Quiver
 - vii. Hatchet Sheath
 - viii. Luggage Tags
 - ix. Moccasins
 - x. Any other project approved by troop leadership

Resources

Leathercraft ABC's (www.tandyleatherfactory.com)

Leather Crafting Supplies (www.tandyleatherfactory.com)

Leather Stamping (www.tandyleatherfactory.com)

Leather Carving (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Leather_carving)

Leather Molding (www.ehow.com/way_5724471_leather-moulding-diy.html)

Medieval Leather Techniques (www.personal.utulsa.edu/~marc-carlson/leather/plwt.html)