

Introduction to Leathercraft

What is Leathercraft?

Leathercraft is quite literally making items out of leather.

What is leather?

The tanned or preserved skin of an animal, usually cattle, but can be from other species. Most leather from hair species has the hair removed, however some skins are used with hair left intact for certain applications. Fur species (such as rabbit) are almost always used with the fur intact.

What type of items can be made from leather?

Clothing	Pants, Jacket, Hat, Gloves, Shoes
Assessories	Belts, Purses, Wallets, Scabbards, Holsters, Cases & Covers, Key Fobs, Buckles
Horse Equipment	Saddles, Bridles, Halters, Breast Collars, Harnesses
Furniture	Couches, Loveseats, Chairs, Car Seats, Steering Wheels
Miscellaneous	Coasters, Tags, Bookmarks, Pictures, Fireplace Bellows

The list above is just a starting point. How many additional items can you think of?

Just as there is a wide variety of items that can be made of leather, there is also a wide variety of leathers, each suitable for one or more purposes. Below is a list of just some of the types of leather available:

- ✓ Rawhide
- ✓ Saddle/heavy leather
- ✓ Wallet/light leather
- ✓ Glove leather
- ✓ Nature tanned leather
- ✓ Suede
- ✓ Hair hides
- ✓ Fur hides

Visit a leather supply store and see these types of leather and more, as well as the tools, stamps, pattern books, finishing supplies and other leathercraft materials.

This year each member will begin by making small practice projects that will allow members to develop basic leather working skills. These skills will be to learn the basic tools for carving leather and how to use them, learn how to use leather stamps, learn to case (prepare) leather for carving/tooling/stamping, learn out to transfer carving patterns to leather, learn basic methods of stitching multi-piece items together, learn how to edge/finish leather articles and how to apply protective finishes.

Your First Assignment

Write down your basic leathercraft experience. Do you have a basic set of tools, have you worked with leather before and if so, what have you made and what tools are you experienced at using?

Visit a leathercraft supply store. If you don't have the basic tools, make a list of the basic supplies you will need for this project and the approximate cost. The basic tools are listed below:

Basic tool set (beveler, veiner, pear shader, camouflage, backgrounder, seeder, swivel knife). Estimated cost (purchased as a set):

Mallet and marble slab (purchased separately):

If you acquire or already have the basic tool set, you can get scrap leather from the leather supply store for practicing using your tools. If you do this, remember to case your leather prior to working with it. Practice the following:

- ✓ Carving with the swivel knife.
- ✓ Using the beveler, veiner, pear shader, camouflage, backgrounder and seeder.
- ✓ Using leather stamps (if you have them).

By the next project meeting you should have acquired a basic set of tools. Although we will have tools available for use, a member without tools will not be able to get adequate practice with the tools at meetings alone. At the next project meeting we will practice using the tools with practice leather and have each member plan their first small project.