



## Pathfinder Honour: Trainer's Notes

# Leather Craft 1



### Instructions to Trainers / Instructors of this Honour

Thankyou for being involved with this Honour. These notes have been developed to assist in teaching / instructing this honour. We recognise that there is much more information available and we are grateful that you should share your expertise.

Please remember that Honours are designed to develop our Pathfinders in many ways; their interests, their knowledge and their relationship with their Saviour and Creator. Your enthusiasm and creativity will have a huge impact on those doing the honour.

To complete an Honour, the following (where applicable) must be completed satisfactorily:

- Physical and Practical Requirements.
- Honour Workbook.
- Honour Assessment Sheet. (*On SPD Honour Website but Leader's level access is required*)

### Additional Reference Material

Please see REFERENCES AND LEATHER CRAFT SUPPLIERS on the last page of these notes

### Acknowledgements

Based on: [http://en.wikibooks.org/wiki/Adventist\\_Youth\\_Honors\\_Answer\\_Book/Arts\\_and\\_Crafts/Leather\\_Craft](http://en.wikibooks.org/wiki/Adventist_Youth_Honors_Answer_Book/Arts_and_Crafts/Leather_Craft)

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## **REQUIREMENT 1: List the necessary tools a beginner needs for Leather Craft work and demonstrate the proper and safe use of each.**

Only a few tools are needed for a beginner to make leather craft creations. Pieces of leather can be obtained from craft suppliers or those specialising in leather products and leather working tools. Please see the final page of these notes for possible sources.

A summary of the basic leather working tools is as follows. Note that the pictures are not to scale.

### **Stamping tools**

These come in a myriad of different patterns. Shown are just three. A pattern is made by placing the stamp on the leather in the chosen location and giving the shank of the tool a sharp blow.



The Aussie icon, the kangaroo, has been made using a kangaroo stamping tool.

Safety: Be careful not to hit fingers or any other body parts of yourself or others

### **Mallets**

Mallets are used for hitting stamping tools etc and for shaping leather. The top mallet has a timber head, while the lower one is comprised of a roll of heavy duty leather.



Safety: Be careful not to hit fingers or any other body parts of yourself or others

### **Knives (ie Swivel Knives)**

Professional leather workers use a range of knives similar to the one shown. These knives are kept extremely sharp.



Safety: Be careful not to cut fingers or any other body parts of yourself or others. The direction of travel when cutting should always be away from the body as shown in the picture

### **Leather punch**

If you wish to lace leather and do not have pre-punched leather blank, you will need a leather punch. Single-size punches are available. The tool shown has several punch sizes. These are often arranged in a star-shape. The required size is obtained by rotating the star wheel.



Safety: As per the stamping tools and mallet.

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## Tracing Wheels

These are similar to tracing wheels used for sewing.

A pattern is made by running the wheel directly over the leather surface (ie freehand) or running it over a pattern that is placed on top of the leather. The marks can be seen in the picture. These are used as a guide for cutting or hole punching for binding and lashing.

Safety: As per other tools listed above



## **REQUIREMENT 2: Know how to distinguish different kinds of leather such as calf, goat, and imitation leather. What leathers are most suitable for tooling?**

### **Calfskin**

Calfskin is a soft leather with dense grain. The hair follicles are tightly packed in a random pattern.

### **Goatskin**

Goatskin is softer and generally more stretchy than calfskin, but it too has a dense grain. The hair follicles are arranged in rows. Tanned leather from goatskin is considered extremely durable and is commonly used to make rugs (for example in Indonesia) and carpet binding. It is often used for gloves, boots, and other products that require a soft hide. Kid gloves, popular in Victorian times, are still made today.

### **Imitation leather**

Imitation leather can be distinguished from genuine leather by its appearance, odour, and feel. The flesh side of genuine leather is fuzzy, whereas the "flesh" side of imitation leather is either smooth, or even cloth-backed.

Do not be fooled by the term "top grain leather." Top grain leather is not, as its name implies, the top layer of the animal's hide. Leather, in its natural form is quite thick, so it is split into layers. The outermost layer is called "full grain." Top grain leather is the next layer beneath.

The only type of leather suitable for tooling is vegetable tanned, full grain leather. This is because the vegetable tanning process allows the leather to absorb water, which is used to soften the leather before the carving process, and the grain of the leather is necessary to allow the leather to hold the shape after the carving process is complete. Other leathers lack these two essential qualities.

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## **REQUIREMENT 3: Give the steps necessary in the preparation of leather.**

All leather needs to be prepared before it can be tooled. The leather carver soaks the leather with water, thus making the leather easier to tool.

One point to note is that, if leather is too wet, it will not hold a sharply defined carving.

Properly cased leather should be cool to the touch, and should feel like wet clay.

A good way to test if the leather is properly cased is to fold the corner. Properly cased leather should fold smoothly and hold a crease well.

Leather can be cased by spraying it with a mist of water, or by going over it with a damp sponge.

## **REQUIREMENT 4: Design and tool some object in leather, such as a billfold (or wallet), magazine cover, or belt.**

Make (or obtain) a full-size diagram outlining the design on paper.

If you do not have a tracing wheel, place carbon paper on the leather, and then place the pattern on top of it. Trace over the pattern with a pencil, and the carbon paper will mark the leather. Be sure to trace where all cuts are to be made, as well as any holes that will need to be punched. The design may also include a pattern for stamping.

Cut the pieces out with a sharp swivel knife. Be sure to lay the leather on a surface that will not be damaged by the knife. A regular kitchen cutting board works great for this, but you can also use a piece of scrap wood.

Once the pieces have been cut out, you will need to punch holes with a leather punch to allow the pieces to be laced together. Select a punch size that is just big enough to allow the lace you have selected to pass through. Do not lace it up until you have done any tooling you intend to do. It's a lot easier to tool the leather when it is in its flat, two-dimensional form, versus having to contend with several layers in three dimensions.

After tooling is complete, you can dye or paint the pieces. When the colour is dry, you can lace the pieces together.

### **Examples**

A key ring is a simple leather craft to make when getting started. Trainers please note that a more complex item would be expected of this honour



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## **REQUIREMENT 5: Show how to use leather dye.**

There a huge range of dyes and finishes available in many different colours and sheens. See the final page of these notes for potential suppliers.

Make sure you read, understand and comply with all safety instructions that come with the products.

Due to changing environmental laws, alcohol-based dyes are no longer available in some localities. They have been replaced by water-based alternatives, though they tend not to work as well.

Leather dyeing used to involve the use of spirit or alcohol based dyes where alcohol quickly gets absorbed into moistened leather, carrying the pigment deep into the surface.

"Hi-lighters" and "Antiquing" stains can be used to add more definition to patterns. These have pigments that will break away from the higher points of a tooled piece and so pooling in the background areas give nice contrasts. Leaving parts unstained also provides a type of contrast.

Alternatives to spirit stains might include a number of options. Shoe polish can be used to dye and preserve leather.

## **REQUIREMENT 6: What kind of finish should be used on leather?**

If the leather is allowed to get wet and is then flexed, the impressions may swell and fade.

Once the colour has dried to the crafter's satisfaction, it should be sealed with a sealing agent, such as neatsfoot oil, linseed oil, or a wax paste. This will slow the absorption of water by the leather, lengthening the life of the design.

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## REFERENCES AND LEATHER CRAFT SUPPLIERS

### GENERAL

**Online Guide to Arts & Craft** <http://www.onlinecraftsites.com/>

This site is a craft directory that lists craft sites from around the world with the aim of assisting craft enthusiasts find people & sites of similar craft interest.

### AUSTRALIA

**Birdsall Leather & Crafts** <http://www.birdsall-leather.com.au/default.asp>

36 Chegwyn Street,  
Botany NSW 2019  
Sydney Australia  
Phone: +612 9316 6299

**Crispin Leathercraft Supplies** <http://www.crispinleather.com.au/>

28 Kedron Park Road,  
Wooloowin Queensland, Australia. 4030  
Phone: 07 3857 1287 (please contact us for days open to the public.)

**Mac-Lace Leather** <http://www.maclace.com.au/index.php>

5 Natasha Street  
Capalaba Queensland, Australia 4157  
Phone: 07 3245 2215

**Packer Leather** <http://www.packerleather.com/index.html>

101-107 Boundary Road  
Narangba, Queensland, Australia 4504  
Phone: +61 7 3203 1323 or +61 (0) 7 3203 1677

**Greenhalgh Tannery** <http://www.gretannery.com.au/>

Greenhalghs Rd.  
Haddon, Victoria, Australia, 3351  
Phone: +61 3 5342 4304

### NEW ZEALAND

**Lapco** <http://www.lapco.co.nz>

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