

# Hobby Leather Crafting

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# Acknowledgments

We are presenting today on the traditional territories of the Mississauga, Erie, and Kaskaskia first nation peoples.

Leather working has a long history dating back to the first nations people and we thank them for the opportunities presented to us today.

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I have a service dog, please don't be alarmed if he barks, or wanders he is still very young and fresh out of training. I will unlikely need his assistance while presenting but in such a case please bear with me we will be back shortly.

You may say 'hi' to him after the presentation.



# Acknowledgments

Fashion is largely binary, however, people are not. Please understand I will try my best to use terms that are more generic such as “for people with breasts” and “for people with flat chests” instead of “male/female” clothing labels. The terms traditionally masculine/feminine are for reference only and in no way saying what you can and can’t do with your identity.

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Everyone is welcome! If at any time you are uncomfortable or just not getting what you want out of this presentation I will not be offended if you exit.



# Agenda

Goal: To present you with the tools and techniques you need to make your first harness!

Buying Leather

The Tools

Techniques

The Harness

Beginner Projects

Make your Own cockring or bracelet



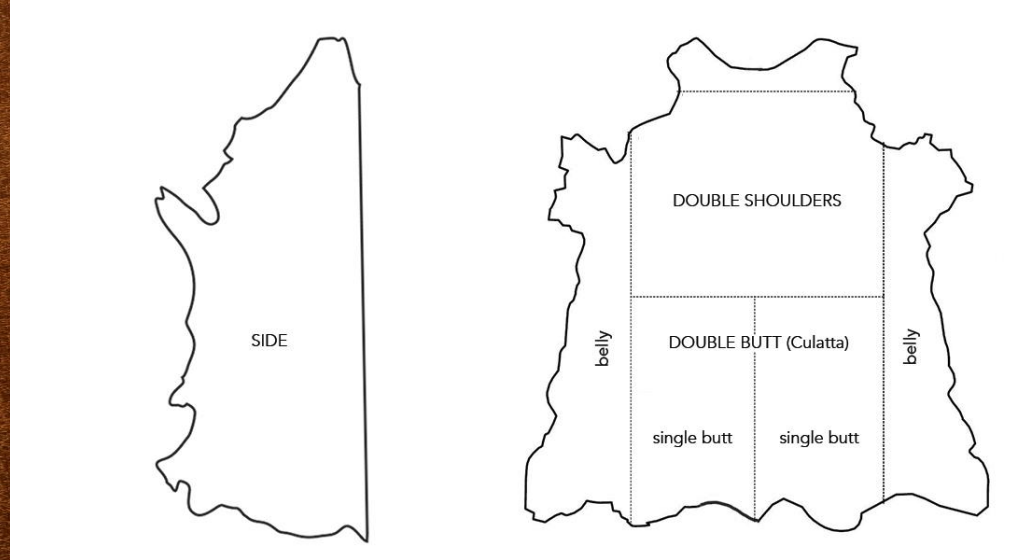
## *Some Definitions of Course*

- Leather that comes from a large animal like a Cow or Horse is called “Hide”
- Smaller animals produce “Skins”
- Tanning is the process of converting the raw product into leather to use
- Lot's of chemicals are involved in the process, however, if your leather smells like chemicals that is a sign that is of cheaper quality and could affect your skin so be careful!
- Non-Chemical process are available those are called “Veg Tan” leathers



# Buying Leather - The Cut

- Hides are the full cut of the animal
- Sides are a half cut of a hide
- Other misc cuts exist
- Most all leather is sold by Square Foot





# Buying Leather - The Weight

- Different weights for different types of projects.
- Sold by Oz, but relates to how thick the leather is.
- Most leather you see around this venue is garment leather which is 1-2 oz not pictured here.
- Upholstery leather is not garment leather.





# *Buying Leather - The Animal*

- Cow is the most common, but if you want softer and less porous try Calfskin
- Sheepskin, Lamb, and Deer are also very soft alternatives but much smaller
- Pig is very porous and not great for strength makes nice decoration
- Cordovan is horse, you likely do not want this for making the kind of leather you wear around these types of events, this is more for saddles and belts.
- Exotics look cool but tend to be much smaller, and tougher to work with.



# *Buying Leather - The Quality*

- Full Grain - This is has had very little processing done to remove imperfections like bug bites, barbed wire etc.
- Top Grain - Softer more consistent look to the hide
- Genuine or Corrected - Refers to a hides that have undergone a lot of work
- Split Grain - lower down grain area, is less dense and tight



# *Buying Leather - The Tan*

- Veg Tan - uses non-chemical methods of treating the animal skin, results in very thick and less colour options.
- Chrome Tan - uses chromium sulfate throughout the process and produced that shiny smooth leather we all know and love.
- Latigo - treated largely for outdoor use
- Oil Tanned - used oils instead of chemicals
- Other names you see on large will largely just be for marketing and not indications of what the leather is.



# Buying Leather - Where?

- Search for a leather wholesale, be careful about upholstery leather this tends to be 2-3oz and full grain.
- Perfect Leather Supply in Toronto
- Weaver Leather, Tandy Leather
- Online Retailers List:  
<https://www.libertyleathergoods.com/leather-buying-guide/>
- Be careful when buying online, check where the leather is coming from, cheap leathers tend to be very chemical heavy, North American and European leathers are well sought after.



# The Tools - The Basics

- Large healable cutting surface
- Very sharp cutting utensils
- Various measuring devices
- A square measuring device
- Cork backed or non-slip rulers
- Bristol Board/Thick Paper for making patterns
- Alligator/Binder clips





## *The Tools - Smashy things!*

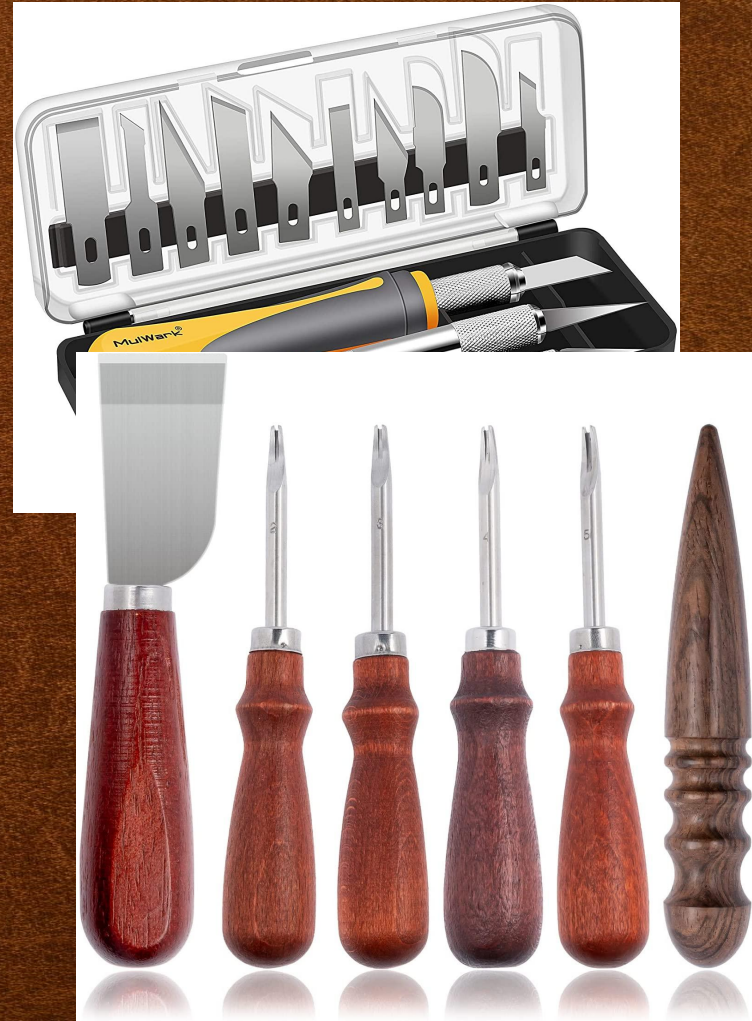
- You will be picking up a few different things you need to hit and they are metal and pricy
- Don't use a regular hammer get a Nylon hammer, this will protect your tools.





# The Tools - Cutting

- For most projects you will just need a nice sharp cutting kit, like a roller cutter, or exacto knife set, use what you can control well.
- If working with thicker leather you will want a “scive knife” to thin out the leather to make it easier to glue and sew
- You will also want an edge beveler and edging knives when working with thicker leather
- Amazon has lots of good options





## The Tools - Cutting cont.

- If making belts you will want some punch cutting dies
- You will also need a hole punch device to make the holes for fixtures, and if you're making belts for the holes.
- Strap cutter is my new fav!





# The Tools - Glue & Tape

- Make your life easier with glue and double sided tape to hold things together before you get to sewing.
- Make sure tape is for garments as you will sew through it you don't want too much "tac"
- Use glue where you won't be making a sew or will be sewing by hand.





# *Hand vs Machine Sewing*

- I started hand sewing and hated it, but some love it.
- If you are not investing in an industrial machine, you will need to hand sew anything thicker than about 3oz
- If working with garment leather and not doing too many folds I recommend machine sewing.



# Tools - Hand Sewing

- You will need more hole punches for your threads
- Need wax thread to go through said holes easier
- And of course needles, these don't need to be sharp as you already punched the holes.
- A saddle to hold the leather while you sew is also recommended.





# Tools - Machine Sewing

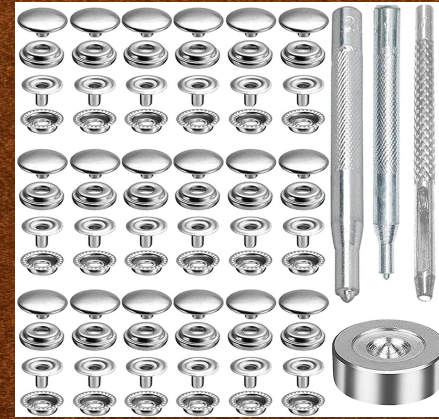
- Polyester Embroidery Thread - this is thicker and smoother than other thread so it will glide through your leather
- A Walking Foot - leather is smooth but it glides way better through a machine that has a walking foot attached.
- Heavy Duty Machine - Janome HD3000 or Singer Heavy Duty
- Leather Needles





# Tools - Fasteners & Hardware

- Snaps Kit - 15mm
- Eyelets/Grommet Kit  $\frac{1}{4}$ " or 10mm
- Rivets Kit 8-10mm  $\frac{3}{16}$ " -  $\frac{1}{4}$ "
- O-Rings & D-Rings  $\frac{1}{4}$ " x 2"
- Clasps/Belt Hardware
- Leash Hardware
- Horse Bit/Bridle/Saddle Hardware
- Find on Amazon, Hardware Stores, and Sewing Supply Stores





# Tools - Templates & Weights

- Pattern weights will help you cut better without the leather bunching
- Tailors chalks makes marking on the leathers much easier, use on the suede side
- Search online for templates, or buy normal sewing patterns and translate them to cardboard for an easier surface to put your knife against





## *Techniques - Already Mentioned*

- Use corkbacked or non-slip rulers to cut against
- Weigh down the leather, and cut with a pattern to cut easier
- Use tape and glue to hold things together before you get to sewing
- Use a walking foot in your heavy duty machine
- Keep things sharp, change knife blades and needles frequently
- Use special tools if you need help, like the strap cutter!



## Techniques - More Tips

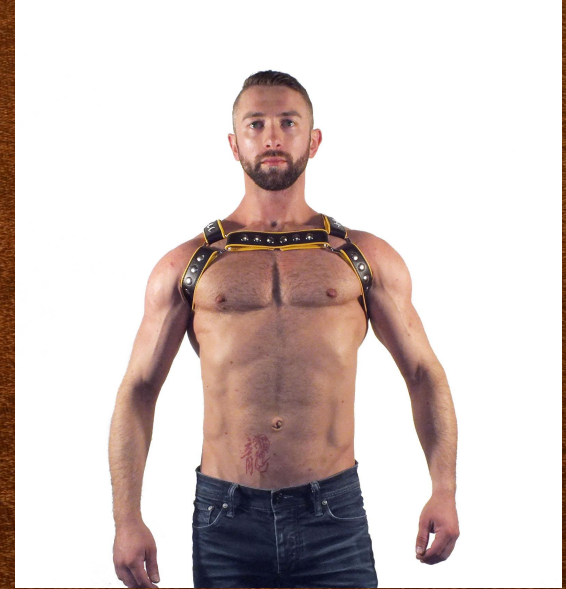
- Inspect the leather, and practice on the pieces you won't use
- Save your scraps, cock rings, bracelets, arm bands, etc don't use up a lot of leather.
- Grab the tails and hand crank your first stitch when sewing!

[https://www.tiktok.com/@jameserwilk/video/7066893741285526790?is\\_copy\\_url=1&is\\_from\\_webapp=v1](https://www.tiktok.com/@jameserwilk/video/7066893741285526790?is_copy_url=1&is_from_webapp=v1)



## *Techniques - Easy Piping*

- The easiest way to add a splash of colour to a harness is with piping, and the easiest way to pipe with a harness is having two different size straps, one slightly larger in the piping colour, and the back side of the harness colour is hiding against the models body.
- Harder piping is to take a small piece of leather wrap it around a pipe cleaner, and sew that piece in hidden.





# *Techniques - Hiding your Seams*

- Traditional sewing is done wrong side out, sew, and then fold correct side out.
- This still works with leather in some cases, in most however you will want to double up on good sides like on a harness where our strap fold would be visible, we can make two pieces of the same size and double up the strap.





## *Techniques - Machine Tips*

- Set your stitch length to around 3-4 this makes a nice strong stitch but still gives the hand stitched aesthetic
- Set your tension for the thread, using the embroidery this should also be around a 3-4 on the Janome or Singer.
- Once again test first on some of the ugly parts of your hide you won't be using like the neck.
- Always turn your leather with the needle inside the leather mid-stitch for a uniform stitch.

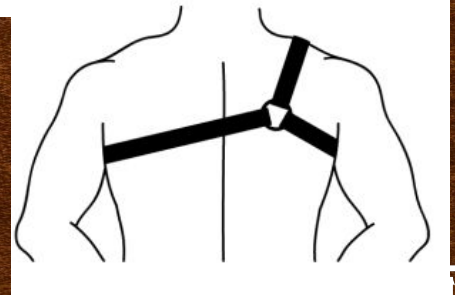
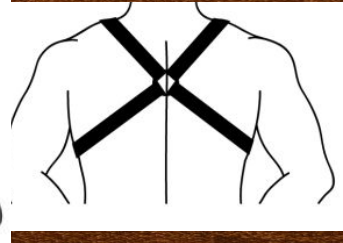
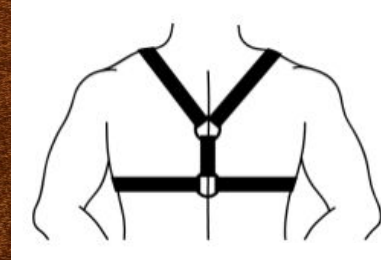
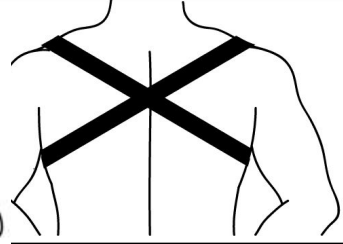
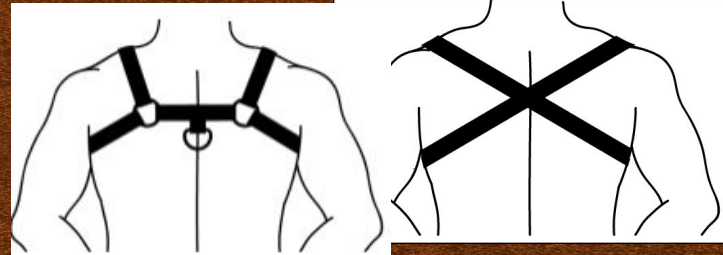
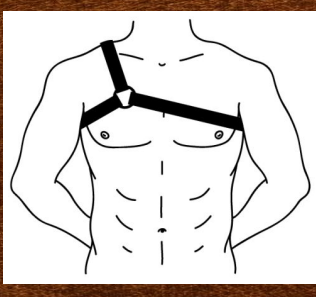
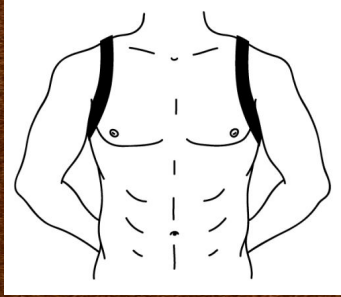
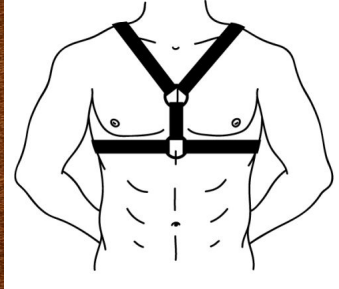
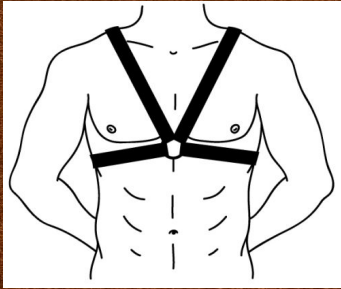
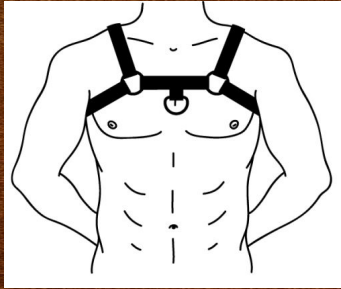


# *It's all Straps!*

- The easiest way to get started in leatherworking is making straps
- So many pieces stem from the strap!
- Harnesses - Often a 3" strip, folded into a 1.5" strap
- Arm Bands - The same as a harness, sometimes thicker to 2" after fold 4" b/f
- Wrist Cuffs - any lengths, just double your measurement and fold over!
- Add Piping with using a different colour and slightly smaller fold!
- Snaps all the way are not only easy but make your collection that much versatile to mix and match hardware, and harness designs!
- Thicker straps are traditionally masculine, and thinner traditionally feminine.



# The Harnesses





# *Making the Harness*

- Cut a straight edge into your hide
- Use your strap cutter, set to 3 inches and cut 3 straps
- Cut your straps down to size from the measure around specific areas
- Apply double sided tape to the edges of the strap
- Fold the straps in resulting in a 1.5" strap
- Glue the middle of the strap to keep the seams closed
- Sew your rounded edges for looks
- Punch in snaps
- Snap around an O-Ring
- Ready to wear!



# Great Beginner Projects

- Leather Hankys - Cut a triangle and fold over the edges to clean up the edge
- Cock Rings - you can buy scraps or get some from a leather shop!





*Demo*



*Questions*  
and puppy pets!



# Links

<https://bit.ly/claw-leather-crafting>  
@boandsir