Chapter 3



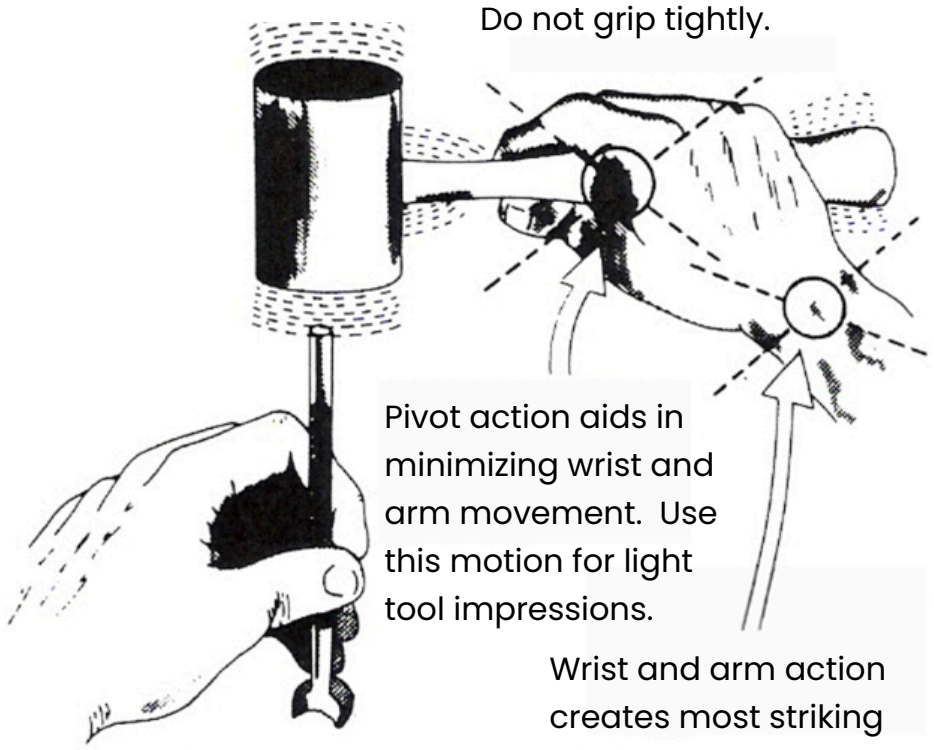
Using Creative Stamping Tools

Basic Beginner Stamping Tools

Refer to Colorado 4-H Leathercraft Episode 1: Workspace and Stamping Tools video at https://vimeo.com/873782312 for information and instruction.

The Mallet

The mallet is used to strike the top of a stamping tool to obtain its impression in the leather. A leather mallet should be rawhide or wood. NEVER strike the top of the stamping tools with metal hammers. This will damage your tools.



1. The mallet should be held in the most comfortable position for you. Don't grip it too tightly. Hold the mallet in the center of the handle with your fingers rather than the palm of your hand.

2. Hold the mallet in the most comfortable position for you!

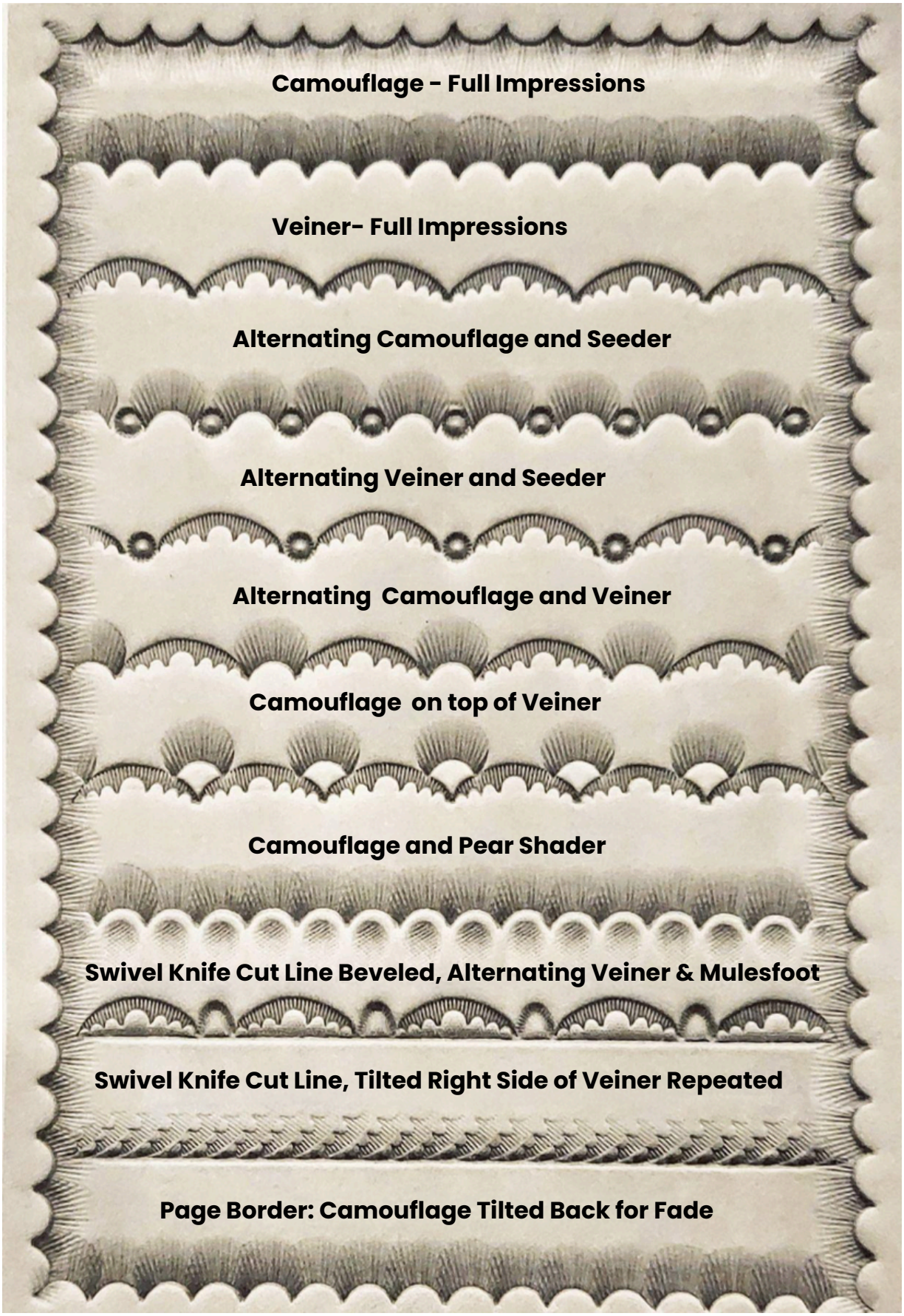
3. For deeper impressions, use the wrist as the pivot point. Hold the handle more tightly toward the end.

Stamping Surface

To stamp leather, it must be placed on a hard, smooth surface. The best working surface is a piece of marble at least ¾-inch thick. It will stay smooth as glass for years. A tempered Masonite board provides a good surface. NEVER tool leather on a bare table. Minor slips and mishaps will scar your tabletop forever.

How to Stamp Borders

These are just a few border design ideas. There are hundreds of possible combinations.



Stamping a Design

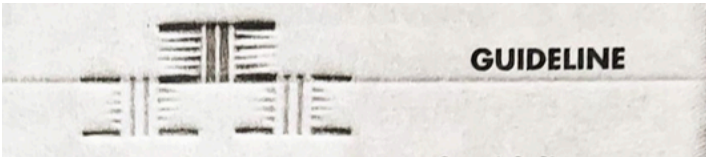
Here are a few fun designs using these basic tools:
Camouflage, Pear Shader, Beveler, Veiner, Seeder, Backgrounder, and Swivel Knife



Stamping Basket Weave

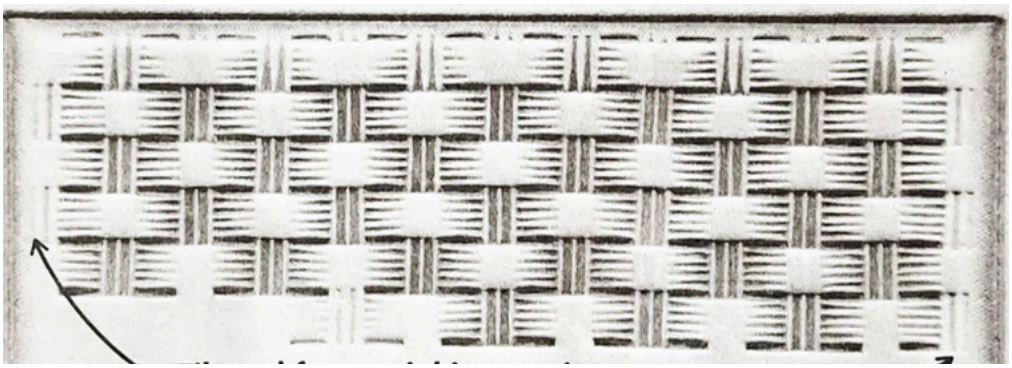
Hold the tool straight up and down. Strike firmly for best impressions.

Border lines can be cut with a Swivel Knife and beveled or left uncut and used only as guideline using a stylus.



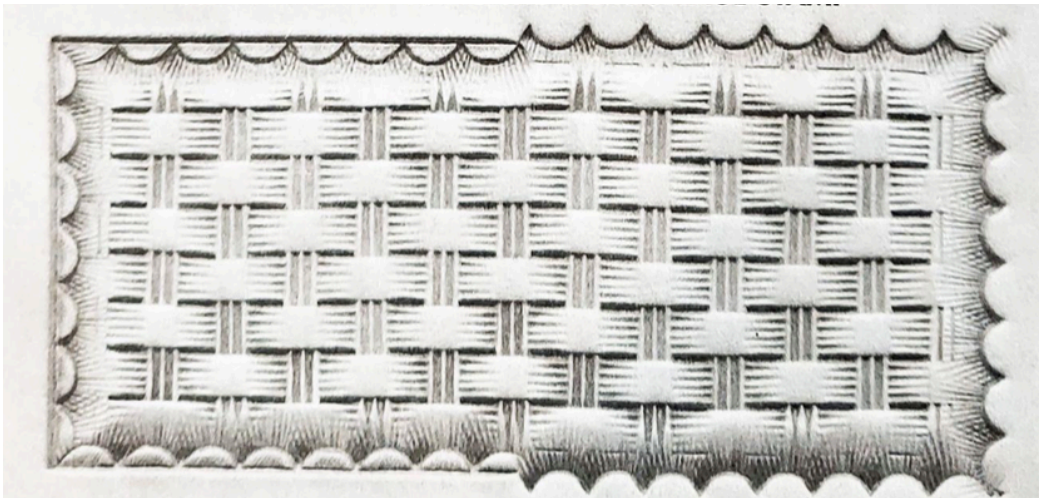
Stamp the first impression in the center on top of guideline. Stamp the second and third impressions below the guideline overlapping the first impression, as shown above.

Basket weave stamps come in many different sizes and shapes.



Tilt the tool for partial impressions so as not to damage the border lines and to give the design depth.

Add a border using the camouflage stamp.



Cut, Beveled & Stamped Border Uncut Stamped Border

3-D Stamping Tools

Materials that are helpful to create a stamping design:

- Water spray bottle
- Polymer mallet
- Wing dividers
- Ruler
- 3-D stamps and handles
- Letter stamps
- Stamping tools
- Tracing tool
- Marble slab



Handle fits into stamp





Handle fits over stamp

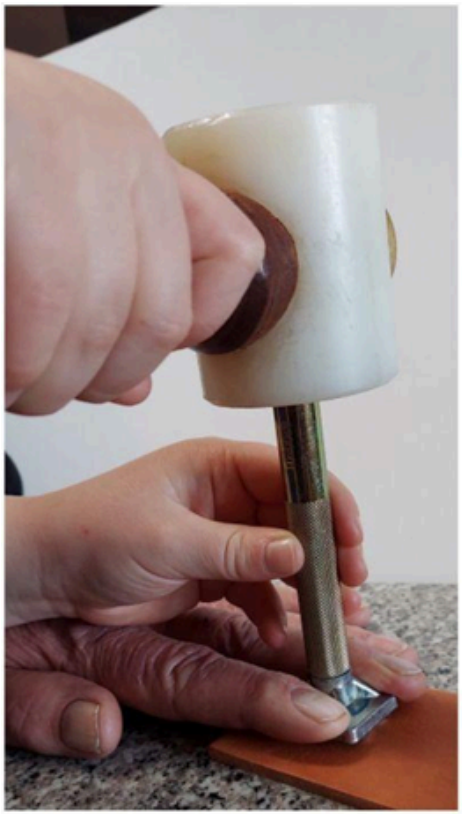


Most 3-D stamps come with a handle. The stamps pictured above show how some handles fit into the hole in the stamp and some handles fit over the hole in the stamp.

There are many kinds of stamps and tools available to stamp a design on leather. One kind of stamp is a 3-D stamp. Most 3-D stamps are larger in size than the stamp used to tool a realistic flower, animal, or scene. 3-D stamps are three-dimensional and when stamped into the leather, the stamp makes a realistic looking impression. There are many alphabet stamp sets available. Some are 3-D and some are a stamp of the outline of the letters.

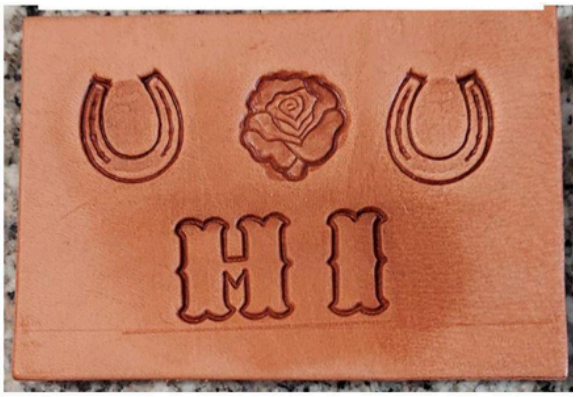
Using 3-D Stamps in Stamping

When using 3-D stamps and large stamping tools there are several extra details to pay attention to!



Because of the larger size of 3-D tools, you have to hold the tool down very tightly. The tool likes to jump a little each time you hit it. Below you can see the shadow on the horse head on the left. Try to hit it only once. Most young people have a hard time hitting hard enough. A good way for the tool to make a better impression in the leather is for an adult to help hold the bottom of the tool down (like in the picture to the right) while the young person holds the tool and hits it several times There are also machines that the stamp will fit into, where the machine will press the stamp down. Using a heavy mallet will help too.





Be creative with your tools. Experiment on some scrap leather first. For the best results, plan out your design and practice it on scrap first.



3D Stamps and Handle



Scribe a light line to keep letters lined up.

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