

Relief Carving

Austin School of Furniture & Design



About This Class

Relief Carving - Popular in 1600 and 2020, this ancient carving method is showing up all over the contemporary furniture field - so come jump on the bandwagon and learn the essentials of this old technique! We will cover tools, technique, grip, pattern design and jigs for holding your work and for sharpening your tools. I will also demonstrate how to make punch tools and a depth gauge. The relief technique is an ideal introduction to carving and looks gorgeous on furniture and smaller projects like boxes, bowls, plates and trays. This stay-at-home-friendly process requires simple tools, no expensive vices or grips, and no power tools. Patterns and tools lists will be provided so you can carve along or just sit back and enjoy this introduction to the craft.

Materials

- Straight grained maple OR white oak. The instructor will be using maple, since it's much easier to source in their location (6.5" x 20.5"). Maple is a little bit more beginner friendly.

Pattern

- The provided patterns fit on 6.5" x 20.5" blanks
- The pattern can be downloaded and applied to your wood
 - [Pattern Dimensions](#)
 - [Pattern Sweeps](#)

Tools

Carving Mallet

- There are a million options, plus homemade ones are nice too. The striking surface shouldn't be metal (like a hammer) or rubber (too bouncy). Wood mallets are best.
 - [Rockler](#)
 - [Rockler II](#)
 - [Narex](#)
 - [Wood is Good](#)
 - [Blue Spruce](#) - beautiful but pricey
- A note on gouges: I find most of these sweep gouges very useful so you wouldn't be wrong to buy them, but they are not a specially formatted "essential starter set" - they are just what is needed for this pattern. During the demo I will talk about how I resize patterns to fit the gouges that I have, rather than always buying new gouges to fit my patterns. I will also talk about "walking" your tool which can help you use your current tools in lieu of new ones.



- Essential sweep gouges for this pattern:
 - 8/7
 - 8/13 or 8/14 (mine is from a yard sale so it's a little smaller than an 8/14 but that's the closest modern size)
 - 7F/16
 - 9/15
 - 7/25
 - 7/20
- Recommended sweeps:
 - 6/30 (cambered)
 - 11/7
 - Cleaning up: you can use what you have for setting in, but I like to use a 7F/6 - it's generally very useful and very helpful for this carving especially. I also use my 5F/8 and my 1s/5
- Carving brush (small, cheap steel wire brush works well)



Pattern punch: Technically optional, but very helpful - I'll be demoing how to make one

- Scrap steel - an old file or rasp works very well. Even a very thick framing nail can work. I collect little pieces of steel from the iron studio here at Penland.
- Triangular or square edge file to create points

Pattern Transfer Options

Pattern application is an important skill to learn - Students will need to learn to draw patterns or how to print and transfer their patterns onto wood. This will need to be done prior to class if you wish to follow along.

- Carbon paper & a pencil/toothpick/scrap of wood sharpened to a point like a pencil
OR
- Super 77 or similiar spray adhesive

