

INSTRUCTIONS FOR MAKING A BELT

These instructions were copied in part from Belts Galore Book NO. 42 by AL STOHLMAN. Also they are written with the acknowledgement & full understanding that some people do not proceed according to these instructions & many times produce excellent belts!

1. Skive belt blank to thickness wanted, or if the flesh side looks bad or uneven.
 - A. Make sure skiver opening is wider than thickness of belt blank before starting.
 - B. Also belt blank can be lightly coated with Lexol on flesh side for easier skiving.To skive, set middle of belt blank in the middle of the skiver, then turn thumb screw on skiver C.C.W. till blade is just snug to leather, then turn it $\frac{3}{4}$ of a turn tighter, & pull belt blank through skiver. Reverse belt blank in skiver to skive the other half. If still too thick or uneven, adjust thumb screw another $\frac{3}{4}$ turn & repeat procedure as above till satisfied.
2. At the billet end, cut tongue with tool from tool room. (mark a center line dot on the belt blank to line up tool tip & keep back skirt of tool even on each side of belt) & hit it on the **"END SIDE OF A WOODEN BLOCK WE HAVE FOR THIS!!"**
(DO ALL THE FOLLOWING STEPS ON THE BACK OR FLESH SIDE OF THE BELT)
3. Measure back 5 $\frac{1}{2}$ " from tip of tongue & punch a small locator hole in the center of the belt blank. This is the middle of 5 holes for the buckle latch or pin.
4. With the buckle to be used, measure down the belt blank from locator hole with a tape measure, to the inside end of the buckle the actual waist size, & mark on the belt blank.
(For correct waist size, best to have an old belt & measure from inside end of buckle tip to the hole now used. This is the waist size now)
5. With the buckle still on the belt blank, mark the location of the buckle bar on the belt blank (this is the bar the buckle latch is mounted).
6. Set aside buckle, & measure 3" up belt blank from buckle bar mark towards locator hole or billet end & mark across belt blank
7. From buckle bar mark, measure 2 $\frac{7}{8}$ " + 2" (for shrinkage) toward other end of belt blank & cut off. Retain this short end to make the keeper. From the buckle bar mark, measure towards billet end 3" & make heavy pencil mark across belt.
8. Now at this 3" mark, skive at least $\frac{1}{3}$ off, toward cut off end for fold over buckle bar to reduce thickness in this area.
9. At this time if you want a gouged outline around your belt, now is the time to do it. If want a creased out line, you do it when the belt is damp. Both tools are found in the tools room to do this.

1. At this time I bevel the upper & lower belt edges for future rounding on the electric wheel. I use a #2 beveller for the top & a #3 or #4 for the bottom or flesh side, both from the tool room.
11. Now soak belt blank with either water or water & Lexol real good & wiping excess before sealing in a zip lock plastic bag to store the refrigerator for 24 hours to case it.
After 24 hours or so, remove from plastic bag & either hang up belt blank or lay on side on flat surface to dry for 2 or 3 hours or till face side of leather looks almost natural, but still feels cool to the touch from the moisture, now it is ready to tool as the moisture should be in the middle of the leather.
12. The belt blank is now ready to trace a pattern on or start tooling with a stamping pattern.
13. When finished working for the day, but not done tooling, spray the back or flesh side of the belt lightly with water or water & Lexol, to keep up moisture content lost while tooling, then seal in zip lock plastic bag & store in the refrigerator till needed.
14. When done tooling let dry for **"24 hours."**
15. Now put in the rest of the holes in the belt. Two on each side of the locator hole at the billet end, $\frac{3}{4}$ " inch apart & large enough to accept the buckle tang or pin. At the other or buckle end, if the buckle has a tang, use a slot cutter centered over the buckle bar mark & cut a slot for tang, or no slot if it has a pin attach like on a trophy buckle.
16. Now we are ready for the finish or dying. If only finishing the front & sides, with a narrower separate masking tape, tape over the holes & slot first on the back or flesh side. Make sure you seal the holes good by working the tape around the holes & slot with a stylus blade. Then stretch masking tape on the back from one rounded edge to the other, then roll it good with a roller in the tool room, so it's tight!
17. Always put the dye on a wool pad, then rub that into the leather. Never pour the dye directly on the leather as it will leave splotches. Rub the dye in good, especially in the tool marks, wipe off excess, then buff for a nice sheen. After this, take the masking tape off right away, **"CAREFULLY"**, & not in an hour.
If your dying both sides, there is no need for masking tape, just dye the back side first, then the front & sides. Check then for missed spots & the holes not completely dyed. **"LET DRY FOR 24 HOURS"**
18. Buff the front & back with lint free cloth. Now smooth the back flesh side nap with either GUM T. or ATOM WAX, dabbing either one on with a dabber, 6" at a time, then slicking it shiny with a bone slicker from the tool room. When that's finished, slick the edges on the electric wheel on the bench using your liquid again with the dabber, also 6" inches at a time to make a shinny edge. Let this dry for 24 hours also
19. Buff again, then spray with Leather Sheen or Super Sheen a couple coats. Don't forget to put a couple bucks in the chemical can for supplies.
20. Now assemble buckle & install snaps either glove snaps or dot 20s or 24s & keeper if made.