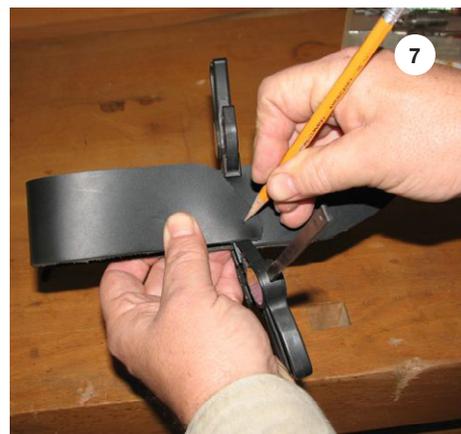


MAKE A LEATHER KNIFE SHEATH

BY BILL CARROLL



This sheath is a simple, fun way to try your hand at working leather. It fits the drop point knife featured in the July 2007 issue of *Woodcraft Magazine*. You can change the dimensions to fit whatever knife you own by simply tracing around the knife and leaving ample space for your stitches. This is what I did when I first made this sheath (Fig. 1). However, I've provided a pattern to make it easier for beginners who wish to fit Woodcraft's drop point knife.

Leather is available in a range of thicknesses, measured in ounces. One ounce

equals approximately $\frac{1}{64}$ ". I suggest you purchase leather somewhere in the range of 7-10 oz., or around $\frac{1}{8}$ " thick. Leather in this thickness is also sometimes called harness leather. You can buy leather – and any of the supplies you need to make this sheath – from leathercraft wholesalers or even from eBay. Half the fun is shopping around.

Leatherwork has many characteristics in common with woodworking. I've substituted some common woodworking tools for specialized leatherworking tools, and you can too.

Draw the pattern onto the leather with a pencil and cut out the largest piece with a leather cutting tool – or a utility knife (Fig. 2). Use a straightedge to guide your cut on the long, straight portions.

Trace around the tip of the first piece you cut out and cut two shorter pieces $4\frac{5}{8}$ " long (Fig. 3). On one of these pieces, trace the profile of the blade (Fig. 4) and cut it out. This piece is called the welt, and when sandwiched between the other two pieces, it should accommodate the thickness of the blade and prevent the blade from cutting through the stitching.

All three pieces are pictured in **Fig. 5**.

Glue the welt to the longer piece using a leather glue or all-purpose adhesive (**Fig. 6**). Now you will locate the position of the brass snap. Clamp the whole assembly together, knife and all, and mark with a pencil where each half of the snap should be installed for a good fit (**Fig. 7**). Disassemble the parts and drill a small hole in each spot.

You'll need an anvil, a setter and a hammer to install the snaps (**Fig. 8**).

Fig. 9 shows the installation of the bottom half of the snap in the corner of the short piece of leather. You can glue a small piece of felt or leather to the back of the snap to avoid scratching or dulling the knife blade.

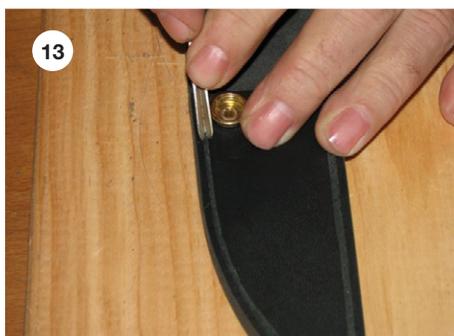
Once you've installed both snaps, glue the entire assembly together and sand the edges even with a belt sander (**Fig. 10**). Shape the sheath to your liking just as you would a wood project.

A rolling device called an overstitcher will create evenly spaced holes for stitching the sheath together (**Fig. 11**). The effect is shown in **Fig. 12**.

At this point, you can use a leather-working tool called a groover to create a flat-bottomed channel for the thick waxed thread you will use. I substituted a V-parting tool with decent results (**Fig. 13**).

Next, I used a leather awl, which has a triangular head, to further open up the holes for stitching (**Fig. 14**). You can also use a small drill bit for this chore (**Fig. 15**).

Stitch the perimeter of the sheath with a leather stitcher (**Fig. 16**). You can also add a belt loop as shown in **Fig. 17**.



Drop Point Knife Sheath Pattern - 50% actual size
(reproduce at 200%)

