



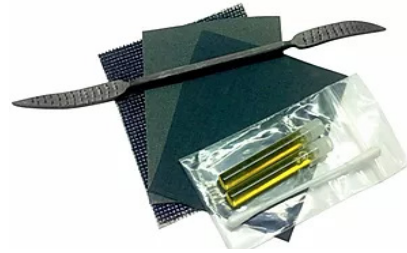
Medium & Large : Carving a Bear

Introduction

Congratulations! You have an opportunity to produce your own work of art. As you carve your personal soapstone animal, you must remember to have fun.

Tools

- Rasp
- 100 grit wet/dry sandpaper
- 320 grit wet/dry sandpaper
- 600 grit wet/dry sandpaper
- Tung oil (food grade)



Prep

Think of what kind of carving you would like to do, is it going to be realistic or more of a stylized carving? There are many different ways to carve the same animal. Look at pictures in books or on the internet, even if it's one for the head and separate images for the body. Looking at a toy model of the same animal can also be helpful. It is good to find pictures with multiple angles.



Set up a bucket of water to carve/sand in, or dip the carving in as you go. Water keeps the dust down, making clean up much easier.

Shaping

Look at your soapstone animal and decide which large areas need to be removed. Using a rasp, begin to file these areas away. Start with the areas that require the most material to be removed. If a textured finish is preferred, I start using my rasp in a controlled direction from bottom to the top.

If a textured finish is preferred, I start using my rasp in a controlled direction from bottom to the top, this way that texture will flow down the carving. You may want to re-texture after your oiling process to help add contrast in the finished piece.





Feet: Look at the feet of the animal; begin to file in between the legs to make them less blocky. For feet details I use the pointiest rasp I have and “draw” in the individual toes and claws. Remember not to make them too thin in detailing or they will be prone to chipping. Rounding out the belly between the front and hind legs will help give the bear more definition and also get rid of the “blocky” appearance it has to start.

Head: Look at the head; usually animal bodies are larger than the head so file the head down to be more to scale with the body.

Ears: Ears are usually small and tapered. Do these parts at the end as they are easy to snap/file off if they get too thin.

Nose and Eyes: For the scale of the nose, I usually use the width of my rasp on either side of the snout and carve material away flush with the “brow” ridge. I then round it slightly and add some definition to the eyes and ears.

Keep looking from different angles as you carve. It is easy to get carried away on one section and remove too much material. If this happens, you will have to make the whole sculpture smaller to retain proper scale.

There are natural fractures in stone and it can be easy to drop your piece while carving.

If a breakage occurs, don't panic!

Let your piece to dry, then use superglue to repair the break.

Allow time for the glue to cure, and continue carving.



Sanding

Once satisfied with your animal's shape, it is time to begin sanding. Starting with the coarsest mesh of sandpaper, sand away all the unwanted tool marks, sandpaper 1 will still leave small scratches behind, this is ok. Follow with the next coarsest to remove any unwanted scratches from sandpaper 1, your carving should start feeling much smoother now!! ALL unwanted scratches should be removed before sandpaper 3 as it just smooths out the existing surface. Continue until the sculpture is nice and smooth. This is an important step! The better your sanding on stage 1 the easier stage 2 will be and then stage 3 will be easier and faster as well, the more attention to proper sanding the better the sculpture will look when oiled. Sanding in water is a must, because frequently dipping it will show you where more sanding is needed. Leave your sculpture overnight to dry, or warm it on the stovetop on low until the stone is completely dry.



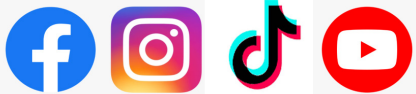
Oiling

Included in the kit is a food grade tung oil. Apply the oil with a thin rag, wiping excess approximately an hour or so after applying. Allow 24 hours before applying a second coat. Tung oil leaves a more matte finish. With soapstone varying a little in hardness due to the metamorphic process, some will absorb more oil than others. If you want your carving to be super shiny, spray with an aerosol water-based wood varnish available from most local hardware stores. Traditionally, carvings are heated up and beeswax is applied to the surface.

Breakage

Sometimes stones get dropped or seams in the stone let go and break while carving. When this happens, the first thing to do is stop carving.

Rinse off any dust on the carving and let dry. Do not rub the pieces together, as this may alter your contact points making the breakage point more noticeable. Once dry, apply a medium viscosity superglue on one of your contact points. Place the two pieces together, squeezing them together until excess glue weeps out the sides. Place your carving in a spot where it will sit undisturbed until the glue sets, you may wipe off the excess glue that has been pushed out now, depending on glue this may sit 15-30 minutes or overnight if you want to be sure its dry. Once cured, use a rasp to remove any exposed excess glue, and continue carving. If there is a big gap missing when you break it you can make a filler by mixing with extra dust with an epoxy glue.



For more carving information and how to videos check out our social media! Rubble Road Soapstone