



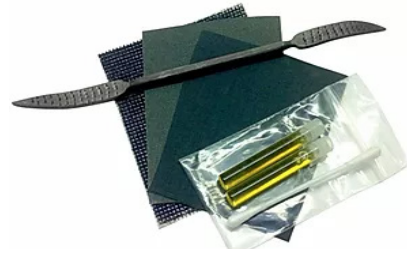
Medium & Large : Carving a Wolf

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 wolf and decide which large areas need to be removed, any areas you want to stand out must be left as you are only removing stone, not adding any. 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, 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: For feet details I create the front leg first, remembering to leave room for the hind legs. When the front leg groove is there I make the back foot the same height as the front. Creating the curve for the hip next so I can see the definition of both front and hind legs. You may want to look at the bottom of your carving when trying to maintain symmetry in the feet as you can mark the carved side across to the opposing side for a closer match. You will now want to mark which side of the body the tail will sweep over too, I typically scribe this detail in with the point of my rasp and then carve into the thigh so it will add some dimensional depth for the tail. Round the back off as well, making sure to go all the way up and under the ear ridge that is there, I will remove more on the upper half so the back hips can flare out a bit, as well as adding extra dimension to the ears. Rounding out the shoulders and the belly between the front legs will help give the wolf more definition and also get rid of the “blocky” appearance it has at the start.



Head: With the wolf's head I like to start by narrowing the snout and cheek area while trying to leave the ears so they can flare out from the body. Making sure to really put the neck line in as that will help with creating the distinction between head and torso. Make sure not to make the snout too narrow as this will be prone to breakage, you can always carve with the rasp to get it close and then finish it with the sandpaper stage 1. Once I've narrowed the head enough to help give the shoulders some depth I start narrowing the snout even more so, as explained below to help give the cheeks some depth.



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, plus if you've carved your head slightly askew it will be easier to carve them symmetrically .

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 to where I want the cheeks to be. Then rounding off square edges, perhaps hollowing the mouth a little as well.

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 smoothes 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