



The Identity Store

Guide to hand stitching leather



www.identityleathercraft.com



IDENTITY LEATHER CRAFT

for people who make, mend or adapt things out of leather

Hand Stitching Leather














Image source: [www.highonglue.com/leather tutorial](http://www.highonglue.com/leather%20tutorial)

This guide is designed to give a brief introduction to hand stitching leather and covers saddle stitch, back stitch, and butt stitch. More detailed instructions can be found in the wonderful book 'The Art of Hand Sewing Leather' by Al Stohlman.

The tools most commonly used are listed below and are available in our store or on-line at

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	8116-00 Bone folder		11207- Waxed linen thread
	2620-01 Gum Tragacanth		1195-00 Stitching Needles
	8074-00 Adjustable Groover		8091-00 Over stitch wheel system
	The Identity Store Stitching Pony (made in Britain)		31218-01 Stitching Awl
			88045-02 Diamond Chisel 2 prong
			88045-04 Diamond Chisel 4 prong
			3446-00 Wooden Mallet

Useful video links:

Ian Atkinson— Hand Stitching Leather <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YOEL7K2NhYs>

Nigel Armitage—Saddle Stitch in Detail <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TGuiha5S2oE>

Sharon Raymond—How to Butt Stitch using the X and bar technique <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-sULdaoOuU4>

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Before Stitching

Preparing to Stitch



Rub Edge with Gum Tragacanth and burnish with a bone folder

Make a channel for stitching with an adjustable stitch groover (or wing divider) Run the bone folder along the groove to smooth

Making holes with a rotary stitch marker and an awl



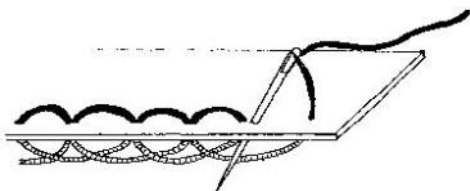
Run the over stitch wheel along the groove to mark stitch holes. Then use the awl to make holes in the leather. Putting an old piece of carpet underneath the leather and on top of a cutting mat enables the awl to go through the back of the leather and leave a more open hole. When using a diamond blade awl ensure you keep the angle the same for each hole.

Making holes with a stitching chisel



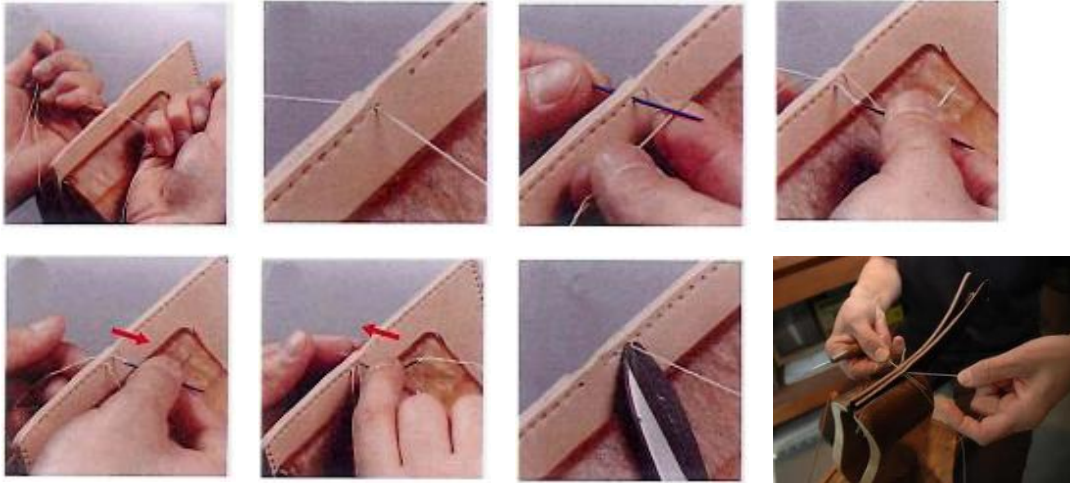
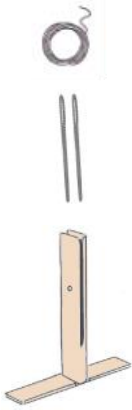
To keep tools sharp place the leather on a cutting mat or protecto (poundo) board and hit the chisel with the mallet to make the holes. Place the first prong of the chisel in the last hole to keep a regular stitch length. For going round corners use the 2 prong chisel and/or an awl. Push the chisel into a beeswax block to preserve the sharpness.

Back Stitch (one needle)



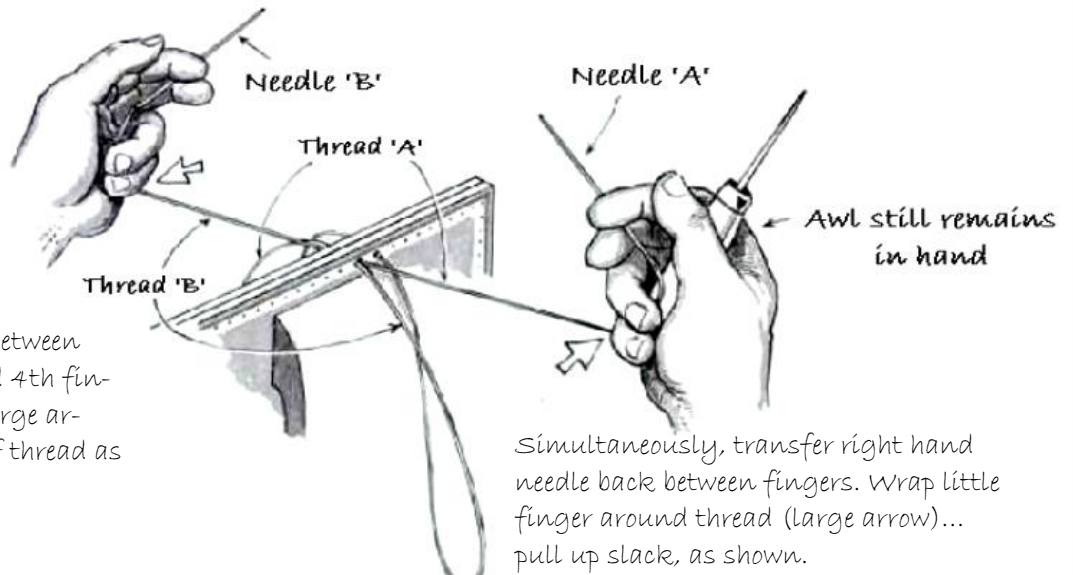
Decide which is the topside for the neat stitch. Begin the backstitch by poking the needle up through the leather on the second hole, and then back to the first to make a single stitch. Then poke the needle back up through the leather a space away from the first stitch, and poke your needle back down through the fabric at the end of the first stitch. This is the "back" part of the backstitch. Now poke your needle up through the leather a space away from the previous stitch. You will then stitch back again. Just repeat this pattern of stitching pulling your thread taught each time.

Saddle Stitch (two needles)



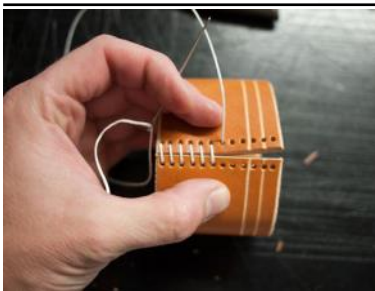
Thread a length of waxed thread with a needle either end. Push needle through the first hole and pull the thread to the middle with an even length each side. Take the left needle and push through the next hole up from the left. Then take the right needle and push back through the same hole and pull tight against each other. Continue.

After a little practice manipulating needles and awl, with each hand it will become easy to do.



Transfer needle back between fingers. Wrap 3rd and 4th fingers around thread (large arrow).. Pull slack out of thread as shown above.

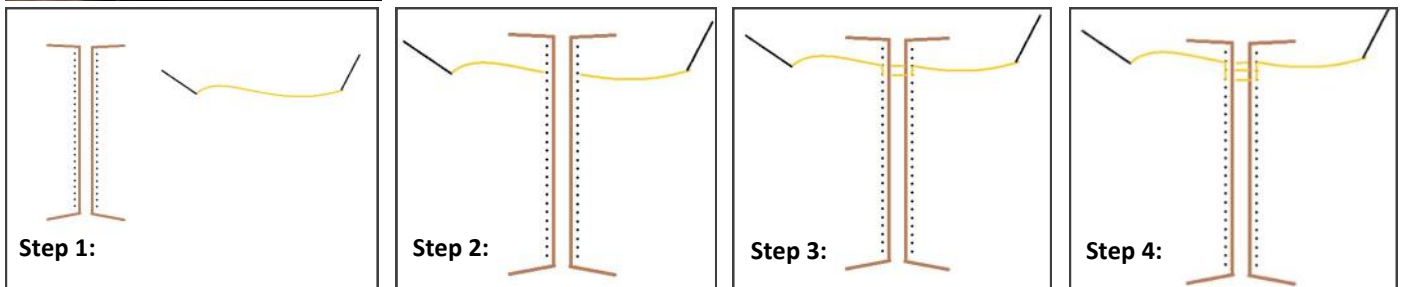
Simultaneously, transfer right hand needle back between fingers. Wrap little finger around thread (large arrow)... pull up slack, as shown.



Butt Stitch (two needles)

Sometimes you need to sew together two pieces of leather without them overlapping, most commonly used in shoe making and cricket and baseball making.

There are two methods which will give a different appearance. The illustration below give a finished stich line on the front of the leather with bars on the back. The other method using a cross stitch and bar and is shown in the video link on the first page.



Illustrations from www.instructables.com

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