



# *Leather Buying Guide*

When you buy leather you are buying an animal skin. Each will be unique and will have a randomness to the shape and individual characteristics to the structure of the grain. Leather is most commonly measured out in square feet using a special guide measuring tool that includes the calculation for irregular edges.

To make the leather different thicknesses, the hides are run through a splitting machine. Since animal hides are not a uniform thickness, and since they are wet when they are put through the splitting machine, the thickness of the leather will not remain the same throughout the hide. There will always be slight variations and that is why leathers are usually shown with a range of thickness - such as 2 - 2.4mm, 3.2 - 3.6mm., etc.

The hides are measured for thickness/substance over the whole piece and an average taken— be aware there will be variations across pieces, and the measurements should be taken as a guide only.

Sometimes you will still see leather referred to by weight and listed in ounces.

Thicknesses (Metric)	Thicknesses(Imperial)	Weights	
0.5-0.8mm	3/16"-5/16"	1-2oz	
0.8-1.2mm	2/64"-3/64"	2-3 oz	
1.2-1.6mm	3/64-4/64"	3-4oz	
1.6-2mm	4/64-5/64"	4-5oz	
2-2.4mm	5/64-6/64"	5-6oz	
2.4-2.8mm	6/64-7/64"	6-7oz	
2.8-3.2mm	7/64-8/64"	7-8oz	
3.2-3.6mm	8/64-9/64"	8-9oz	
3.6-4mm	9/64-10/64"	9-10oz	

Leather is so versatile and comes in an incredibly diverse array of colours, thicknesses and types. To understand the different terminology and descriptions please refer to our Leathercraft Glossary.

### Selecting Your Leather

What are you making? What is your project? What do you need to consider, does it need to be firm or soft, to gather up, for example a pouch? Does it need length for the pattern pieces, eg a shoulder strap. Will you need to wet form? What sort of thickness do you need?

What are your aesthetics? How do you want it to look? Are you going for a sleek ultra-modern neat look, or a rugged, aged look? Do you want to add colour? Are you planning to do embossing or tooling?

What properties will you need? Does it need to be heat resistant eg a blacksmiths apron, does it need to be suitable for outdoors... Do you want your leather to go through a domestic sewing machine?

Will you need more than one leather type/thickness - Are you lining your project, do you need a thinner leather for pockets or side panels? Do you want a tooled panel, or a contrast strap?

Do you already have a leather that you can alter to make it work for this project:

Could you dye it to get it the correct colour?

Could you wet and dry it to make it firmer?

Could you oil it to make it softer?

Could you back it to another piece to make it thicker

Could you skive it to make it thinner?