



## How to Make a Leather Guitar Strap

**Project Summary:** We'll show you how to make a beautiful leather guitar strap with supple water buffalo leather, ¼" nickel spots and a crisp belt buckle set. Complete with beveled and grooved edges and an extension piece on the back, this is a leather guitar strap that combines both form and function.

**Approximate Time to Complete:** 2 hours

### What You'll Need:

- Water Buffalo Bend, Crazy Horse Gray, 8/9 oz., ([11-1250B-B7](#))
- 4' Straight Edge ([65-3033](#))
- Steel Square, 12" x 8" ([3608](#))
- Silent Pounding Board ([3461-02](#))
- Poly Cutting Board ([65-2916](#))
- Quartz Tooling Slab ([3238](#))
- Cushion Grip Snap Off Knife ([65-2860](#))
- #Z1894 Western Floral Buckle Set, 1" ([Z1894-1](#))
- #D5038 Chicago Screws Nickel Over Brass, Plain, ¼" ([D5038-P-NB-1/4](#))
- #202 Spots, Nickel Over Brass, ¼" ([00202-NB](#))
- Wooden Strap Cutter ([3080](#))
- #4 Heavy-Duty Scratch Awl 3 ½" ([CSO4-2](#))
- Economy Punch ([CSO223](#))
- Rawhide Mallet, 11 oz. ([65-2520-11](#))
- Polyhead Mallet, 9 oz. ([65-2521-9](#))
- #245 Belt Punches in sizes ⅛" ([CSO245-2](#)), 3/16" ([CSO245-6](#)) and ¼" ([CSO245-9](#))
- Master Tools Oblong Punch, 1 ¼" ([00072-11/4](#))
- 1" English Point Strap End Punch ([00078-1](#))
- Master Tools Round Strap End Punch, 1" ([00076-1](#))
- Master Tools Edger, 1/16" ([00080-2](#))
- Stitch Groover ([8069](#))
- Heritage® Individual Spot Setter, ¼" ([65-6215](#))

- #2200 Double Cap Rivets, Nickel Plated, ¼" ([02200-NP-1/4](#))
- Deluxe 4P Snap & Rivet Setter ([65-6275](#))
- Fiebing's® Leathercraft Cement ([50-2124](#))
- Skife Knife ([3025](#))
- Paper
- Pencil

**Step-by-Step Instructions (with pictures):**

1. To make the **buckle strap billet** pattern, start with a piece of paper cut to 1" x 14". Using a pencil, draw in a center line lengthwise and make a mark at the center of that line (7" from both ends). This line will be the center of the keeper.
2. On the center line, make a mark at ⅝" to the left and ⅝" to the right of the keeper line.
3. Starting with either mark, measure away from the keeper line 2 ½" and mark. Make a second mark 1 ¼" past this mark. These four holes will be rivet holes to secure the buckle and keeper.



4. Draw in a 1 ¼" oblong shape between the two center rivet holes (center in the 2 ½" spread), and draw in a rounded end on one side or the other roughly ¾" away from the last rivet hole.



5. Working away from the rounded end, make a mark at 5" from the last rivet hole and mark this as a "Pin Hole  $\frac{1}{4}$ " on the pattern so we know we need a specific size hole. Draw in a rounded end 1" further on this end of the pattern, which gives us a tab on the outside of the pin hole).



6. To make the **tongue strap billet** pattern, take a piece of paper cut to 1" x 12", and draw a center line lengthwise. From one end or the other, make a mark at  $\frac{3}{4}$ " in from the end of the pattern paper and one more mark at  $1\frac{1}{4}$ " further in. These will be the rivet holes to secure the strap to the main body.
7. From this second rivet hole, measure 2" and mark. This will be the first of five "size" holes, so mark four more holes at 1" increments, working away from the two rivet holes.



8. For the last mark on the tongue strap, make a mark  $1\frac{1}{2}$ " past the last size hole. This will be the center mark for the buckle tip.



9. When going to the main body and extension patterns, we'll need a  $2\frac{1}{2}$ " round and English point; however, those sizes of tools are not readily available, so we'll make a template. Take a  $2\frac{1}{2}$ " wide (same as main body width) piece of paper approximately 8" long and draw a center line lengthwise. Fold this in half lengthwise, and on the edge away from the fold make a mark  $1\frac{3}{4}$ " in from the end on both ends.



10. On the first end, draw a line in from the end of the pattern on the center line, or fold, to the point  $1 \frac{3}{4}$ " on the outside edge, and make this line similar to half of an arrowhead. This will create an English point. Cut this while still folded to get a symmetrical point.
11. On the other end, draw a rounded line in from the end of the pattern at the center line, or fold, to the  $1 \frac{3}{4}$ " mark on the outside edge and cut while still folded. You can use a can of paint or glue to make this as circular as possible. This will be the round end punch on the template.

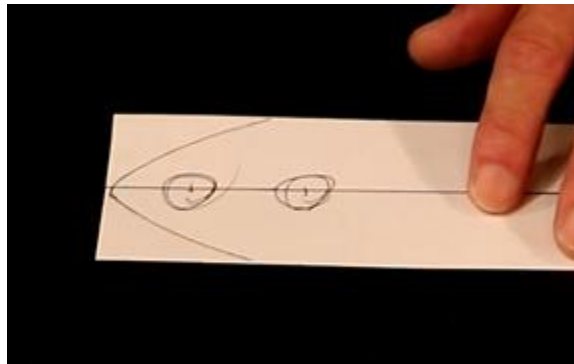


12. Before moving to the main body, we need a size for the full length of the guitar strap. To get a good measurement, take a tape measure and wrap it around you or the recipient and measure from, roughly, 4" above the waist line, over the shoulder and around to the bottom of the back pocket. These instructions are for a 51", but, when following these instructions, any length can be made easily.





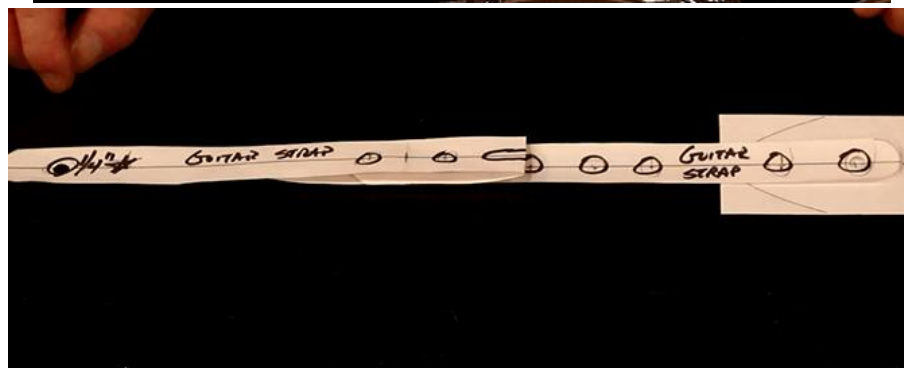
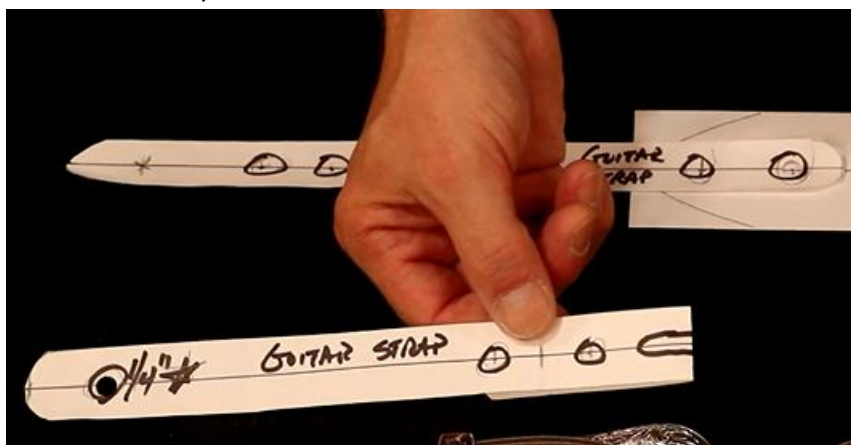
13. To make the **main body pattern**, take a piece of paper 2 ½" wide by roughly 48" long (more than enough for this size strap) and draw in a center line lengthwise.
14. Starting on either end lay the English point side of the template on the end of the pattern and draw in the English point.
15. From this end of the pattern, make a mark at 1" and then at 1 ¼" beyond that hole on the center line. These will be the rivet holes to secure the buckle tongue onto the main body.



16. Take the buckle strap and lay it on top of the main body so the rivet-hole marks coincide with the rivet-hole marks on the main body with the tip pointing away from the body.



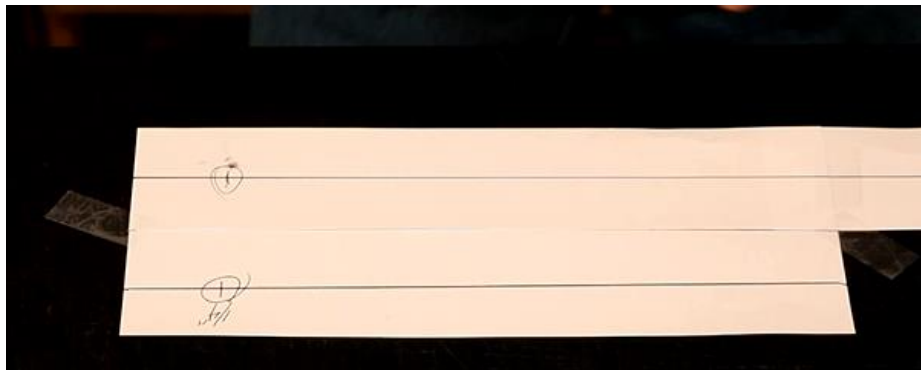
17. With the tongue strap lying on the body, take the buckle strap and fold it in the middle of the oblong just like we were adding a buckle. Lay the folded edge on the third size hole with the pin hole away from the main body.



18. With these two billets lying in place, take a Straight Edge or tape measure and make a mark 51" on the center line of the main body away from the billets/English point end. This is where the sizing is easy to measure. Just lay out the billet patterns first, and measure from the pin hole to the other end at whatever size is needed.



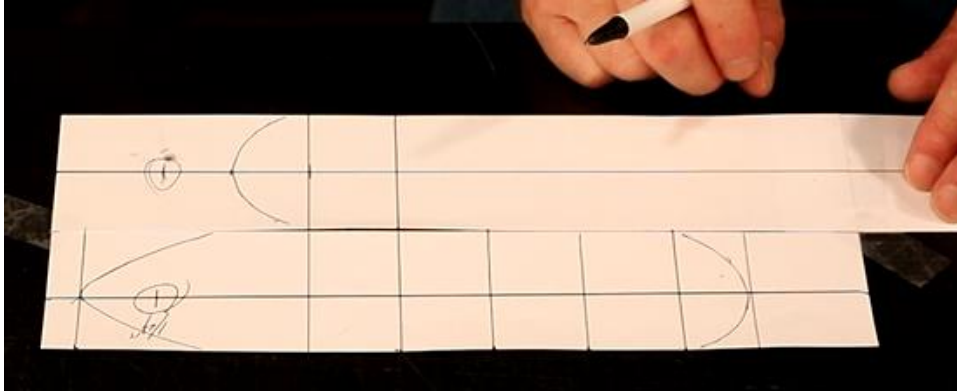
19. Circle the mark at 51" and write "¼" hole." From this mark and away from the main body, make a mark at 1 ½" out. This will be the end of the strap.
20. While still working with this end of the main body strap, cut a piece of paper to 12" x 2 ½", draw in a center line, and lay this **extension piece** next to this end of the main body pattern starting 1 ½" to 2" past the pin hole and extending towards the main body.
21. The pin hole on the main body will be cut off and replaced with the pin hole on the extension, so with a square make a mark on the extension parallel to the pin hole on the main body and circle with "¼" hole."



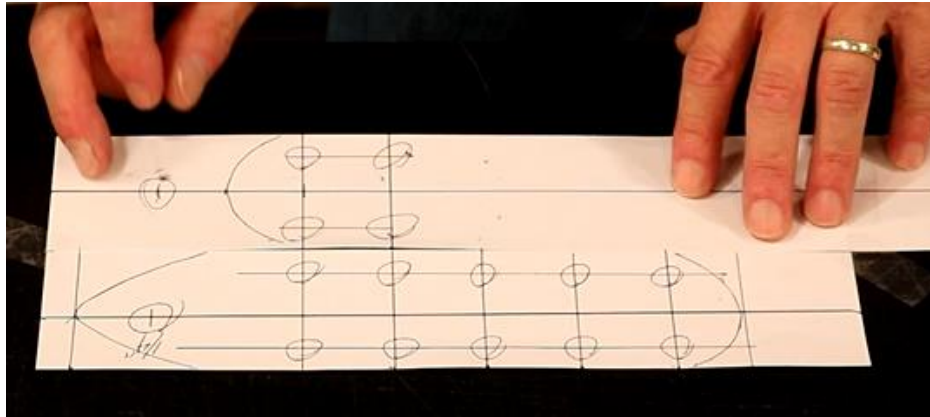
22. Working away from the end of the pattern, draw a line 2" from the pin hole across both pattern pieces. Draw a second line 1 ¼" from that line. On the extension only, draw three more lines at 1 ¼" increments. Note: You can extend the extension with more lines, but for now we should have five lines and a pin hole on the extension.



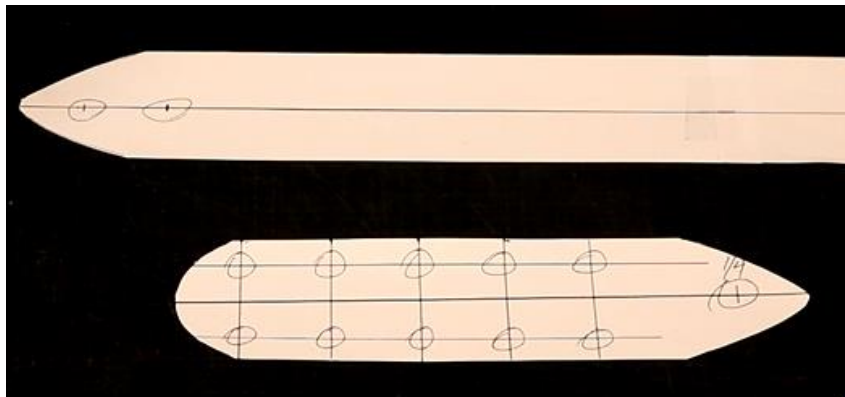
23. On the main body pattern, make a mark  $1\frac{1}{2}$ " past the pin hole and away from the main part of the body. Drop in the template and mark your round end. On the extension, measure  $1\frac{1}{2}$ " from the pin hole, away from the main part of the extension, and make a mark for an English point. On the opposite end of the extension, use the template to draw in a rounded end.



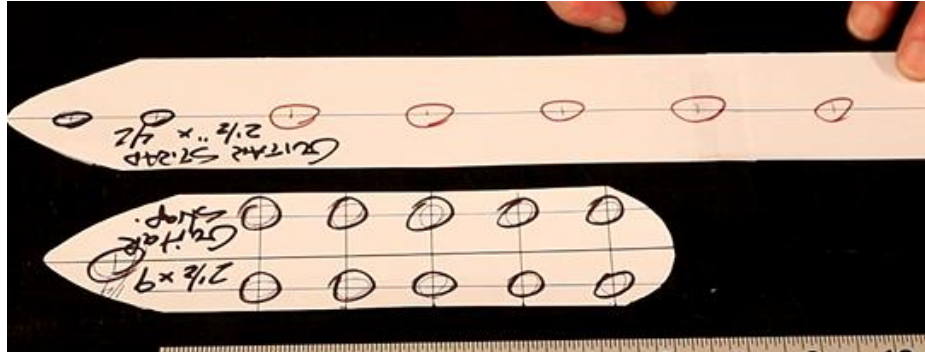
24. To mark for the Chicago screws, draw in a line  $\frac{1}{2}$ " in from each side to cover the two lines on the main body and the five lines on the extension. Circle these intersections. We should have four circles marked on the main body and 10 holes plus the pin hole marked on the extension.



25. Cut the round and English point ends on the main body and the extension patterns.



26. To mark for the  $\frac{1}{4}$ " nickel spots, return to the main body pattern and, on the center line, make a mark 2" from the inside rivet hole on the end with the English point. Continue to mark at 2" increments along the center line, and stop just short of the Chicago screw holes on the other end. For good pattern maintenance, mark these holes in red to denote that we "mark" the leather and do not punch a hole.



27. With a Wooden Strap Cutter, or by hand, cut a 2  $\frac{1}{2}$ " strap for the main body and extension, and cut two 1" straps for the billets to match each pattern length.



28. With an Awl, mark from the pattern to the leather for the pin holes, Chicago screw holes, oblong hole, rivet holes and the end cuts. Punch and cut each of four pieces on your Poly Cutting Board using your English Point Punch, Round Strap End Punch,  $\frac{1}{8}$ " Belt Punch for rivet holes,  $\frac{3}{16}$ " Belt Punch for Chicago screw holes,  $\frac{1}{4}$ " Belt Punch for pin holes, Oblong Punch and Rawhide Mallet.



29. To make the slit for the pin holes, remember to cut away from the stress. Using your Knife, on the buckle strap cut an approximately  $\frac{3}{4}$ " slit from the pin hole and away from this end/towards the buckle and keeper. On the extension pieces, make the cut away from the English point and towards the Chicago screw holes.



30. With your Edger and Groover, set at  $\frac{1}{8}$ " to  $\frac{3}{16}$ ", bevel and groove all sides on all four pieces.



31. From the main body pattern, mark the main body strap for spots. On your main body strap, set a Spot at each mark using your Spot Setter. Gently bend the Spot tines that poke through the back of the leather inward, flip the leather back over, and tap each spot with a Polyhead Mallet on your Tooling Slab.



32. Assemble the buckle strap with the Keeper and Buckle with two Rivets.



33. To add the Buckle Tip, lay the tip on the end of the buckle strap and make a mark with an Awl on the strap at the left and right side of the top of the tip (away from the point). Trace the edges of the tip to the point. Using your Knife, make a  $\frac{1}{8}$ " cut in the left and right edge of the strap where we have marked for the top of the tip. From this cut, make a cut  $\frac{1}{8}$ " inside of the line we have traced for the tip edge. You may have to trim further to make the Buckle Tip fit snugly, but, that's what we want. Tightly screw in the one, or two, screws that come with the buckle set into the back of the tip. Sand off the excess. Note: If the leather is too thick, skive down the tip area with a Skife Knife until the tip fits tightly.





34. Using the two rivet holes on the main body, use your Rivet Setter to set two Rivets to connect the tongue strap to the main body.



35. On the opposite end of the main body strap, add four Chicago Screws in the four holes inside of the pin hole.



36. With the main body strap lying face down on your work surface, place the extension piece onto the Chicago Screws face down and with the pin hole away from the middle of the body.  
**IMPORTANT:** When the proper adjustment is found, add a dab of white glue to the screws. (A light glue is best. We just need these to stay where they are, but we also need to be able to remove them to adjust the sizing.)





37. Your guitar strap is now complete!



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