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Leathercraft 101 – Essential Tools for Beginners

So you are likely here as you have watched our leathercraft 101 mini series episode all on the essential tools for beginner leathercrafters.

This document contains information, about each of the tools I talk about in the video as well as a supplier guide where you will be able to purchase most of these tools from. Whilst I have done my best to add in as many suppliers as I can from around the world, there are many more and if you need an extra bit of help finding a supplier near you, then we may have the answer in our [Discord](#) server which you are welcome to join.

Essential Tools

Cutting Mat	Available in a range of sizes, these protect your work surface from your knives and other sharp tools. I got mine on eBay, or you will be able to get them easily in craft stores and some hardware stores
Scratch Awl	Use this like a pen to mark out your leather, these are relatively cheap to purchase at all leathercraft tool suppliers
Set Square	Used to ensure you have straight lines on your work these tools are easy to get hold of and are cheap. Make sure you get an engineer's set square as these will be much slimmer than their woodworking counterparts. I got mine on eBay and it is a 3" Silverline tools one.
Rulers	You will need one of these for measuring out your work. I like the metal ones as they are much more durable. Ideally, you should get a standard 12"/30 CM ruler which are available online and in hardware stores and I would also look at getting a safety ruler for using with a knife. The one I have is a Maun branded 12" safety ruler.
Knife	Whilst you can get a single head knife like the one that I use the most, when you are getting started, as the leather you will be using will be quite thin, a craft knife, retractable knife or scalpel are all good options.
Rotary Knife	Great for when cutting straight lines in thinner leather and available in a range of sizes. My preference is for the 60 MM Olfa one. You can easily change the blades when needed.
Edge Beveller	To remove the sharp edges of your leather project you will need an edge beveller, also known as an edge tool. The one I recommend when starting out is a 1 MM option as this is a great size for a range of leather projects. Each brand/supplier will have different sizes, so double check the sizes first. Available from leathercraft tool suppliers.
Dividers	To mark out your stitch lines you will need some dividers. You can get some standard engineer's dividers in most hardware stores and online very easily, if you can, get some with chunky legs as they will be more solid. You could also look at some leathercraft specific dividers, usually these are wing dividers. They are usually more expensive, but it is an option should you wish to upgrade a current set or just want the best ones. These will be available from leathercraft tool suppliers.

Mallet	<p>When starting out in leathercraft, you can easily use a standard carpenters mallet that you can pick up at a local hardware store. This is what I used every day in my leatherwork for more than 10 years and the mallet I used was very cheap.</p> <p>If you are looking for something more specialist, then a polymer mallet or maul are a great option, but these can be more expensive depending on the brand. These would need to be purchased from a leathercraft tool supplier.</p>
Stitch Markers	<p>You have a couple of choices here, you can choose a set of Diamond Chisels, which are made to be punched all the way through your leather and are a great option for beginner crafters. I would recommend around a 4 MM size when getting started.</p> <p>Another option is the Pricking Iron. This is made to be used with an awl when stitching and is what is traditionally used in leathercrafting. The stitches (in my opinion) look better with these irons, but this could be something that you can work up to once you have been crafting a while.</p> <p>For both options there are many price points, the ones that I show in the video are from Abbey England, but you will be able to pick up a set from most leathercraft tool suppliers.</p>
Snips/Scissors	<p>For cutting your threads you are going to need a pair of snips or scissors. These can be picked up from most craft stores as well as online at leathercraft tool suppliers. The benefit of the scissors, is that they should be able to cut thinner pieces of leather.</p>
Needles	<p>My preference is for blunted needles, and these are likely to be listed differently by different brands but the ones I specifically use are the John James Harness Needles. The blunt ends mean that the thread is less likely to be damaged should you accidentally stitch through the thread. I use a mix of the 004 and 002 needles depending on what I am stitching.</p>
Thread	<p>When getting started I recommend a wax polyester thread like the Weixin option from Pro Atelier Plus here in the UK. If you are unable to get this specific brand, then look for a waxed polyester thread which is cabled, as this will be round and will give you a better overall look than if you used a flat thread like the tiger thread branded polyester threads.</p>
Edge Finishes	<p>When it comes to staining the edges of my threads, I use a water based stain as this is nicer on the leather as it doesn't contain anything that could effect the oils that are in the leather. These are available from a range of brands and in a variety of colours and sizes.</p> <p>I also use a product called Tokonole on the edges of my leather. This gives the edges a brilliant smooth and shiny finish. These are both available at most leathercraft tool suppliers.</p>
Stain Applicators	<p>To apply the stain, you can use an array of tools. I like to use a wool dauber as this can be reused many times. Another option is to use cotton buds, and if using these I like to go for a bamboo option as this is recyclable. The wool daubers are available from most leathercraft suppliers and the cotton buds can be purchased online.</p>
Burnishing	<p>There are a few options here when it comes to burnishing or polishing the edges of your leather. I like to use a stain cloth and the material I use for this is</p>

	<p>Irish Linen that I get from Abbey England. You can also use standard linen or canvas.</p> <p>Alternatives include a bone folder or a wooden slicker which can be purchased from a leathercraft tools supplier. In general, I like to use a combination of the three options listed.</p>
Sandpaper	Easy to pick up in a variety of grits from hardware stores. I use this to even up the edges of my project once stitched together.
Glue	For some projects, you are going to need some glue. I like to use the Ecostick 1816B water-based leathercraft glue as it is safe to use in enclosed environments. When using this, make sure to apply glue to both pieces of leather that will be stuck together.
Glue Applicators	To apply the glue we are going to need an applicator. I have a few different options that I use in the workshop but the ones I use the most are some glue spatulas that I got from Amazon and that should also be available in most craft stores. Another option is to use a small paint brush as this can be cleaned with water and soap due to the glue that we have chosen to use.

Optional Extras

Clams	<p>To hold your leather whilst stitching you are going to want a stitching clam. These come in a range of sizes and are also known as stitching clamps or a stitching pony.</p> <p>These vary hugely in price and size, but most leathercraft tool suppliers will have a few different options for you to choose from based on your budget and workspace.</p>
Creaser	<p>To fancy up your work, you can invest in a creaser. This is used to draw a line around the edge of your leather and can come in a variety of forms. My preference is for a screw crease (also known as an adjustable crease), as I can use this at any size I like by adjusting the mouth open or closed.</p> <p>There are fixed sized options which can be brought individually or if you want a really fancy option, you can purchase a heated creaser, but these are very expensive. All can be purchased from most leathercraft tool suppliers.</p>
Stitching Awl	<p>If you have chosen to use pricking irons, for stitching, you are going to also need a stitching awl. I use a diamond awl for this and get the premade option from Pro Atelier Plus as these are by far the best awls that I have used. I have a range of sizes that I use but their BS-45 option is probably the one I use most. (This has a blade size that is roughly 21 MM long)</p>

Suppliers

There are many tool suppliers around the world, and I have listed a few options below.

While I have split the suppliers up by location, most will offer international shipping so don't be put off by their location in proximity to yours.

UK Suppliers:

[Metropolitan Leather](#)

[Abbey England](#)

[Gorge Barnsley & Sons](#)

[Pro Atelier Plus](#)

[A&A Crack & Sons](#)

EU Suppliers:

[Vergez Blanchard](#) - France

[Laederiet](#) - Denmark

[Vintage Studio Shop](#) - Russia

[Leather House Europe](#) – Denmark

[Belts Productions](#) – Croatia

[Rickert Werkzeuge](#) - Germany

USA/Canada

[Rocky Mountain Leather Supply](#) - USA

[Buckle Guy](#) - USA

[Osborne Tools](#) - USA

[Weaver Leather Supply](#) – USA

[FrogJelly Leather](#) – USA

[Springfield Leather](#) - USA

[Little King Supply Co](#) - Canada

[Lonsdale Leather](#) - Canada

Rest of the world

[Dream Factory Tools](#) – Korea

[Charter Made](#) – South Africa

[Leffler](#) – Australia

[Lapco](#) – New Zealand

[AL Leather Supply](#) – Singapore