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# Modern Leatherwork For Makers: Traditional Craft Techniques Meet CNC And 3D Printing



## Synopsis

Take leather crafting into the 21st century with this complete guide that marries traditional skills to the latest CNC and 3D printing technologies. Learn how to start making your own leather creations with traditional tools, and then take them to incredible new levels with digital design techniques. Leatherworking is one of humankind's oldest skills and remains a fun and exciting way to make great-looking wearables, accessories, and cosplay items. 3D printers and even hobbyist-class CNC machines have created fantastic new opportunities for new directions in this popular hobby. The book is perfect for makers new to leatherworking, as well as experienced leatherworkers who want to understand how to integrate new digital fabrication tools into their workbench. Written by an experienced leatherworker and programmer, this is a resource that makers will turn to again and again.

**Highlights:** First comprehensive reference on applying digital design techniques to leatherwork  
Provides both a reference manual and a project guide  
Includes traditional techniques like cutting, stamping, tooling and dyeing leather  
Introduces novices and experienced leatherworkers to cutting-edge digital tools  
Every project has been real-world tested  
Opens up exciting new project areas for makers  
This book provides valuable reference and how-to information for makers interested in leatherworking but who have no prior experience, for experienced leatherworkers who want to extend their knowledge to include new digital tools, and for 3D printing and CNC enthusiasts who want to include a new material in their repertoire. Leatherworking is a hobby that is enjoyed by a wide range of people from middle school through adulthood and can be incorporated into a variety of other kinds of projects, from clothing design and costuming to carrying cases and furniture.

## Book Information

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Age Range: 12 and up

Grade Level: 7 and up

## Customer Reviews

Tim Deagan's quick tips for hi-tech leatherworking *Modern Leatherworking* is written with two kinds of makers in mind. The first audience consists of digital fabricators who own 3D printers, CNC machines, vinyl cutters, or laser engravers who are looking to expand the range of materials that they can work with. The second audience consists of leatherworkers who have been wondering what digital fabrication techniques can offer them. This book is intended to serve as a bridge to and jumping off point for both groups; here are tips that everyone can use.

Tips:

- When using a laser to cut or engrave leather, the leather can be wet or dry. Wet leather creates less charring and has less smell but the leather may shrink upon drying. Dry leather stays dimensionally accurate, but has a deeper char and produces considerable smoke.
- Hand-stitching leather is still the most versatile and useful way to assemble leather pieces, but using a CNC or laser to create the stitching holes makes it fantastically easier!
- Make your own custom-sized or -shaped double-sided tape by using adhesive shelf-liner. Stick one piece to the worktable and the other to your leather. Use spray adhesive or super glue to glue the two pieces together. When done, you can peel the leather away from the shelf-liner and the shelf-liner away from the worktable just like (expensive) double-sided tape.
- Try dying and finishing leather before engraving on it with a CNC. This will make the engraved parts lighter than the dyed parts for a high-contrast look. For the opposite effect, use a finish like Super Sheen on the leather and then engrave. You can then use antiquing gel to darken the engraved parts without darkening the rest of the leather.
- You can use *found* leather from thrift shop belts, boots, and bags to make really interesting customized projects by using digital fab techniques like CNC, laser engraving, and 3D-printed conchos. Dyeing these items can be difficult, but don't overlook using vinyl cutters to make custom stencils for painting them!

Tim Deagan has written for *Make* magazine, *Nuts and Volts*, and other technical publications. He is a licensed Texas Flame Effects Operator and the Flame and Safety Coordinator for the Austin Mini Maker Faire. After years of building flame effects, aka "booshes," in the local Burn community, Tim began teaching classes called "Propane 101" and "Build Your Own Aluminum Foundry" to help

other interested makers create their own projects. As a former firefighter in the Brent Volunteer Fire Department and captain of a Red Cross Disaster Action Team, Tim has always believed that the most exciting pursuits are at their best when safety is fully understood and becomes part of the culture. Tim is also a contributor to the open-source 3D CAD program OpenSCAD and an active member of the Handibot CNC and Printrbot 3D printer communities.

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