

The Brazos Jack Series
Presents

Making the Cowboy Holster



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Productions
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Tools & Materials List

Tools

Pencil	Size 7 Maxi Punch
Ruler	Size 12 Maxi Punch
Scratch Awl	1" Oblong Punch
Stabbing Awl	1/2" Oblong Punch
Utility Knife	1/4" Oval Punch
Super Skiver	Mallet
Scalpel Blade #1212	Framing Square
#2 Edge Beveller	Slicker
Size 4 Mini Punch	Strap Cutter #1215

Hardware

3/4" Center Bar Buckles
1/4" Chicago Screws

Materials

8/9 ounce vegetable tanned leather for the Holster
2/3 ounce vegetable tanned leather for the Liner

Recommended Dye and Finish

Fiebing's Oil Dye (Your choice of color)
Fiebing's Resolene

Introduction

The following Instructions will take you step-by-step through the process of making the Cowboy Holster from patterns you have acquired or made from any one of Holster Making books currently in publication. Included are instructions on how to add a Liner to the Holster and will demonstrate how to form and shape the Holster while adding the Liner - *without* having to wet mold the finished holster.

That being said, it's of the utmost importance to have a Holster Template made specifically for the pistol the holster is intended for. Now, if you don't have any existing holster templates or books, don't worry – I thought of everything, I hope.

I realize that some of you will want to carve a Design on your new Holster, and that's a good thing. However, once the carving work is complete, allow the leather to dry and then dye and finish the leather as you usually would. At this point, it will be possible to complete the Holster without having to wet the leather again, thereby preserving the details of your work.

The methods shown in this Tutorial require that all the Stitch Placements be transferred to the leather *from* the Template. This is a relatively new concept and is not widely practiced in certain circles of Leatherwork. But not having to “punch & sew as you go” will save a lot of time and effort in the end. The accuracy of the Pattern Template is critical to the assembly process, so be sure that everything on the Templates is marked correctly. The instructions will give tips to ensure accuracy of the layout.

An important issue to consider when making Gunleather is the use of Quality Materials. I highly recommend the heavier 8/9 ounce Vegetable Tanned Leather for the Holster and I recommend using the lighter 2/3 ounce Vegetable Tanned Leather for the Holster Liner. Hermann Oak Leather is my first choice for both. I realize that this brand of leather is rather expensive, but keep in mind that Quality Gunleather is an investment that will last for many years to come.

The Tools needed for this project are listed on the Tools and Materials List. Of course you will need a couple of size 1/0 Harness needles and a quality thread of your choosing.

I hope you enjoy the following tutorial as I have made every effort to make it as complete and informative as possible.

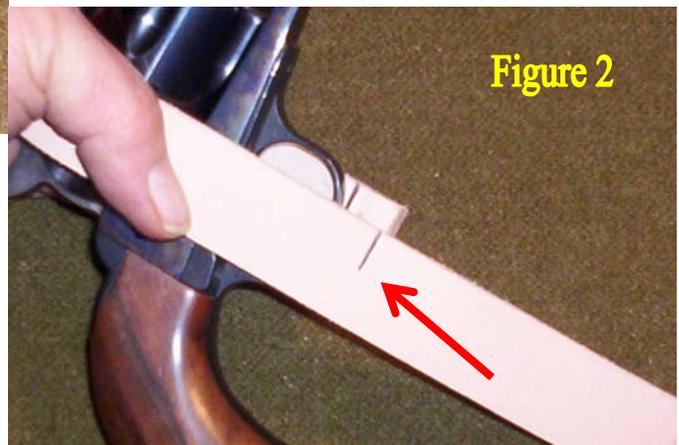
Enjoy!

Alrighty then, let's get started. Go get you pistol and take the bullets out! Then, fetch a pencil, a ruler and a 1" leather strap of the same leather you're going to use for your holster. I recommend 8 ounce. Take a strap of the 2-3 ounce lining leather and glue it to the 8 ounce strap so the thickness of the "Strap" will be consistent with the weight of the finished Lined Holster. If you're not going to line the holster, then omit this step.

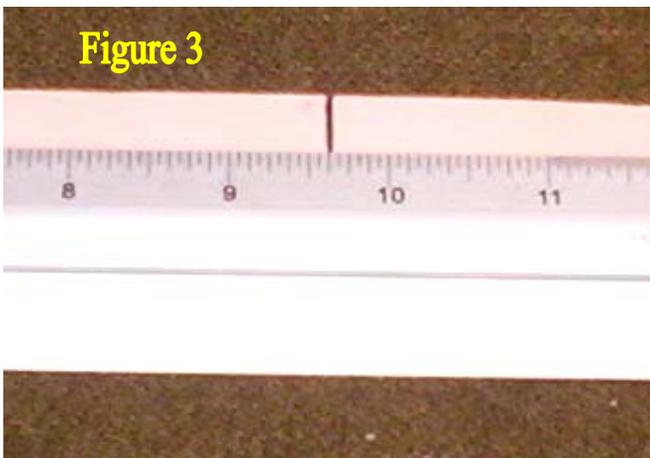
Now, measure 1/2" from one end and draw a line on the inside of the strap with a pencil. This will be used as a reference line here in just a minute.



Now, lay the strap on the bench and then place the pistol on the strap so the trigger guard lies right on the reference line you made, as shown in Figure 1.



Wrap the strap around the pistol and make a pencil mark where it touches the other end, as shown in Figure 2. This mark will determine the overall width of the Holster Template.



Use the ruler to measure from the end marked with the 1/2" reference line to the mark you just made. If the line happens to fall on a 1/6th of an inch, mark the next highest 1/8th to keep things simple.

Write the measurement on a note pad so you don't forget it while you're up getting another cup of coffee or something.

Now that you have established the overall width for the holster template, let's put it to use. Start with a 14" x 22" piece of white poster board. Forget butcher paper, it's too flimsy and harder to work with!

If you don't have one, get a large Framing Square from your local Hardware store. I'll wait.

Okay, you back; let's get going.

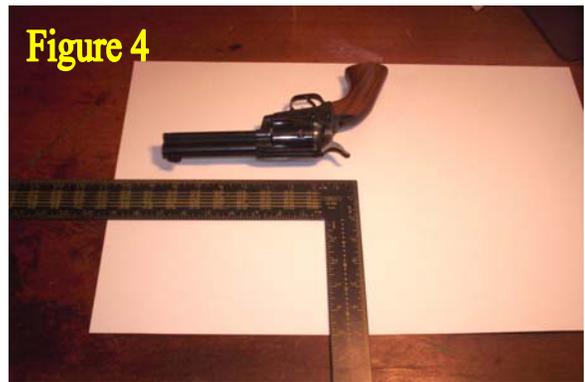


Figure 4

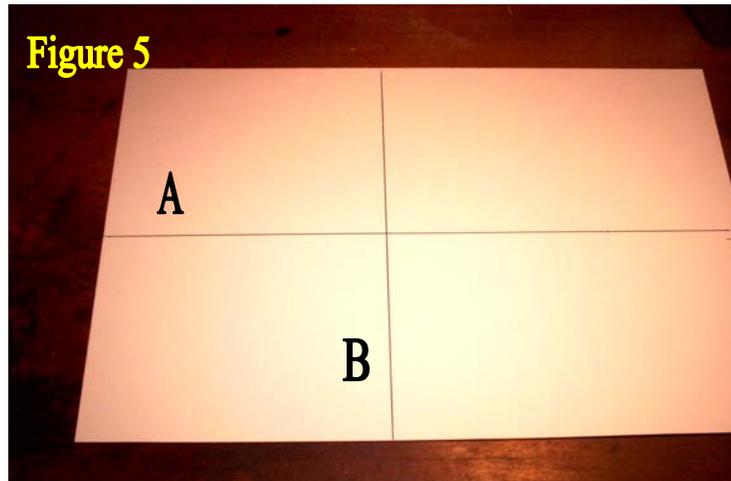


Figure 5

Draw a line in the center of the poster board and then use the framing square to draw another perpendicular to this one. (That's 90 degrees.) Draw this line in the center of this side also to allow plenty of room for the holster pouch and back skirt.

Line "A" is the Center Line and Line "B" is the Top Reference Line for laying out the template.

Okay, remember that measurement you wrote down? Well, now's the time to use it. Divide the measurement in half and place the ruler on the Center Line at half the overall width. For example; if say your measurement is $9 \frac{5}{8}$ " then you will place the ruler on the center line at $4 \frac{13}{16}$ ".

Make a mark on the Top Line to give you a reference for the next step.

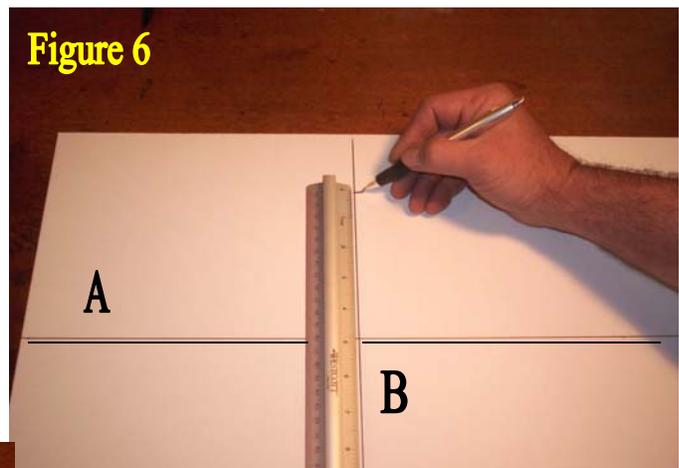


Figure 6

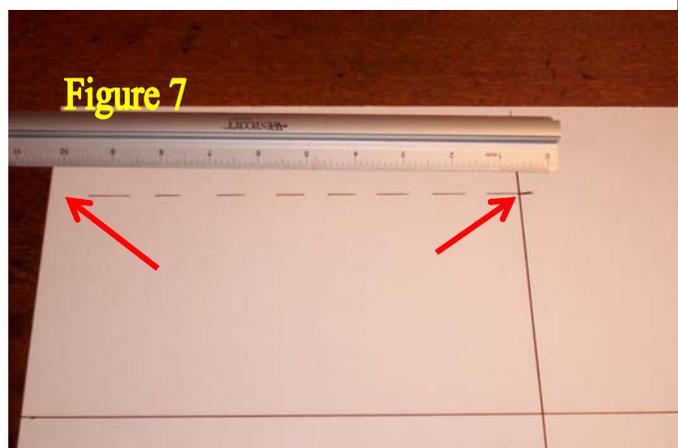


Figure 7

Mark the same distance on the bottom edge of the poster board and then draw a dashed line from the mark on the center line to this point, as shown in Figure 7.

This will be the construction area of the template.

Now, go get your unloaded pistol and lay it on the poster board as shown in Figure 8. You will need to place the pistol so the trigger guard is 1/2" from the outer mark on the Top Line. See the arrows in the photo.

Follow up by making a series of marks about 3/4" to 7/8" from the inner frame of the pistol in the areas shown in the photo.

Then make a mark at the end of the barrel for future reference.

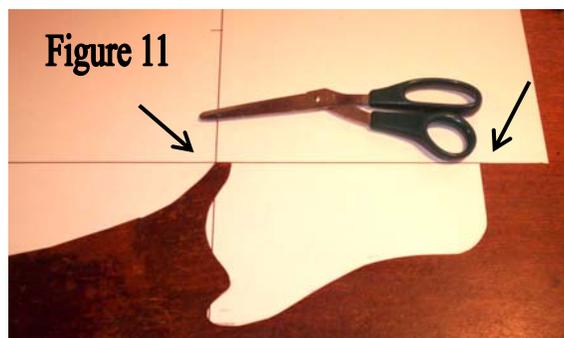
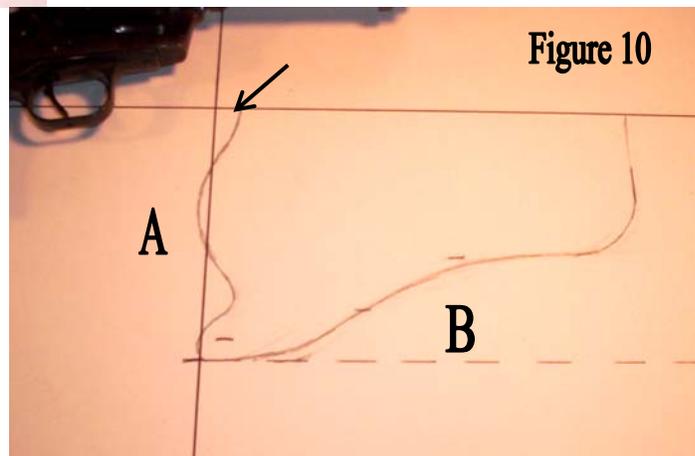


Okay, use the pencil to sketch a light outline of the holster using the reference marks as a guide. You don't have to get the outline right on the reference marks as they are only there to keep you from making the profile too narrow. Feel free to experiment with some re-curve in the outline to add a little flare to your holster. When you're happy with the look of it, re-draw the outline so to make it darker.

In Figure 10 you can see the drawn outline of the holster pouch (B) as well as the outline for the top of the holster (A).

You will notice that the center edge of the top dips below the Top Line a bit. I recommend giving this at least a 1/2" dip.

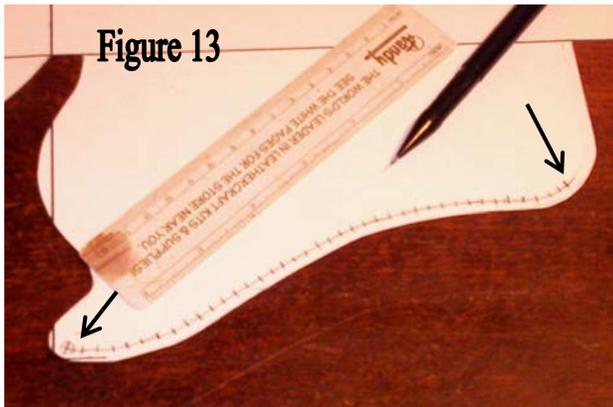
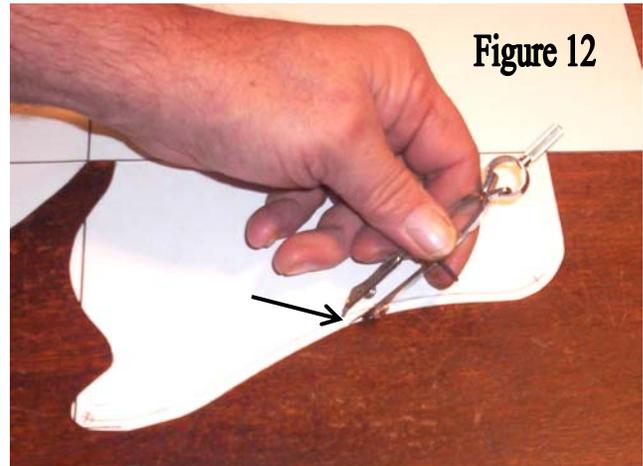
Now, look it over to be sure you're happy with the look of the profile because however the template looks so will the finished holster.



From here, use your scissors to gently cut out this side of the template only. Notice that I stopped cutting right on the Center Line at the bottom and at the top while leaving a lot of room at the top for the shape of the Back Skirt. It's best to leave as much pattern material on as possible wherever possible so you don't run out of room and have to start over.

You remember that Compass you had to use in art class back in the Third Grade? Well now you get to use it again.

Set the compass to $\frac{3}{16}$ " and then carefully follow the outer edge of the holster profile to mark your stitch line, as shown in Figure 12. If you wish to add a Liner to your holster draw the stitch line all the way around (as far as you can at this point). As the Liner will need to be sewn on around the edges, this stitch line will be necessary later on.



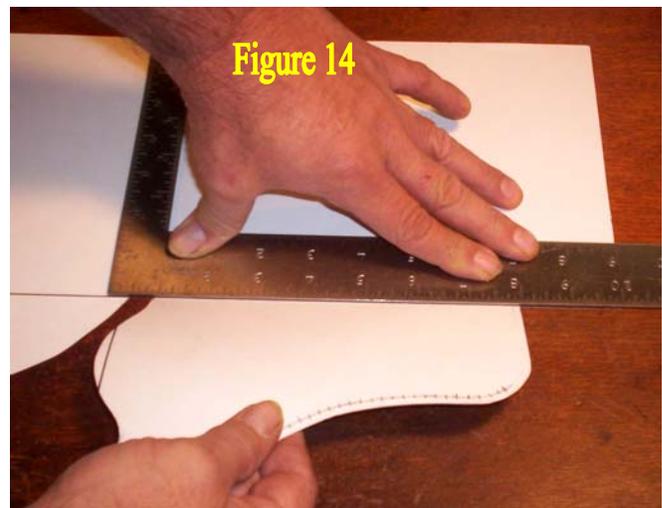
Looking closely you can see where I made Stitch Placement Marks from the top and all the way along the stitch line. Now in this photo I was making an un-lined holster so the stitch line is not shown all the way around. But it does give a good reference of where to stop the stitch marks for the Main Seam. The Top Stitch Mark and the Bottom Stitch Mark will need to have a small circle drawn around them for future reference when you add the Liner.

Mark the Stitch Placement Marks at $\frac{3}{16}$ " all the way around. When you come to the center line at the holster's toe you may have to "fudge" the distance between three or four marks to get them to come out even. Believe me, when you come to this it will become quite clear what I'm talking about.

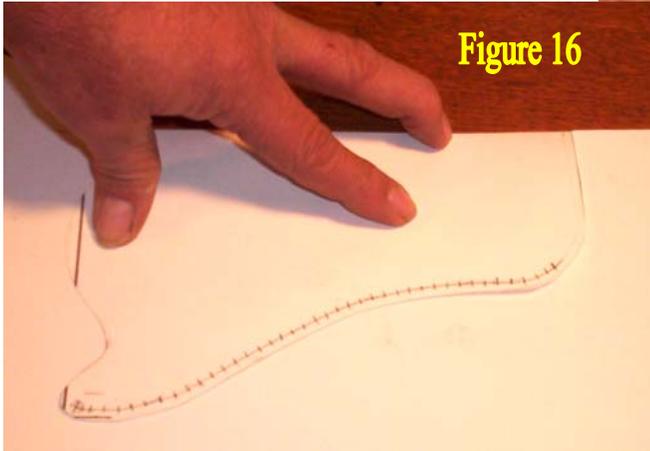
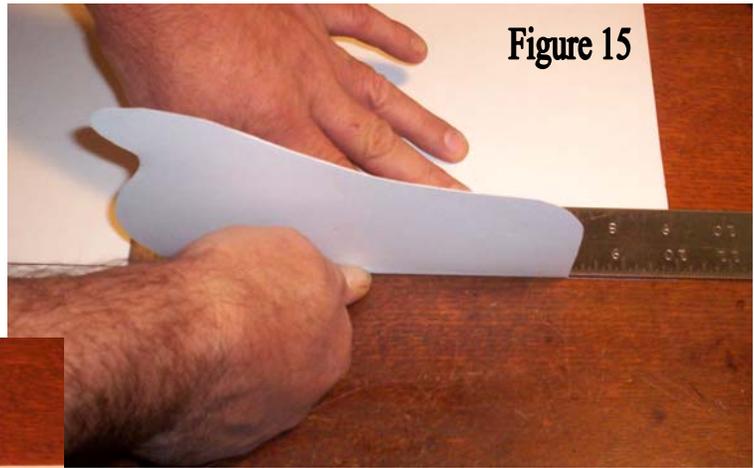
By now you're probably saying to yourself "Self, how he hasn't drawn the other side of the template yet?"

Answer: I'm, going to show you how to do this so it will be perfectly matched on both sides!

Place your small framing square directly on the center line and hold it firmly in place with one hand. Use the other to lift the finished side, as shown in Figure 14.



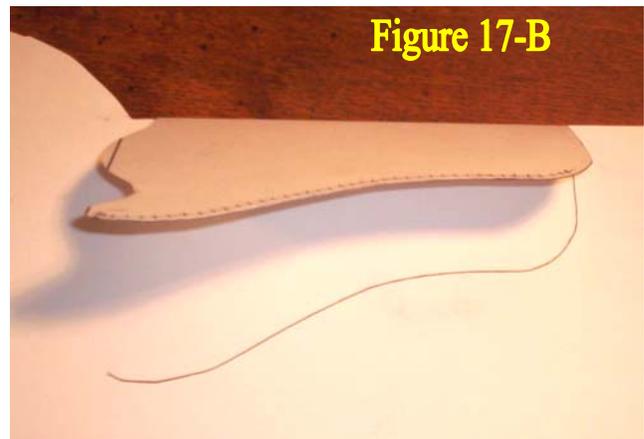
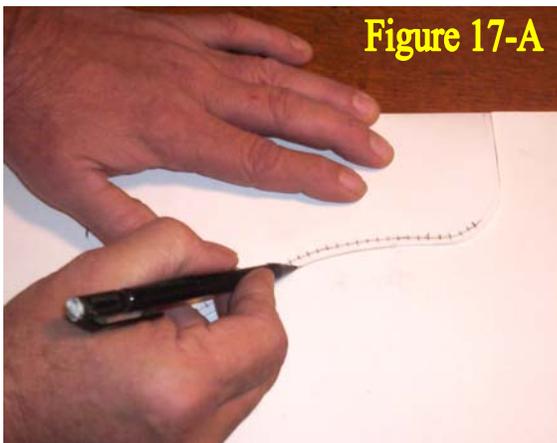
Gently pull this side over to flush it with the edge of the square and then use your thumbnail to crease the fold against the edge of the square, as shown in Figure 15.



Now, fold the finished side of the template over to the other side with the marked stitch line showing, as seen here in Figure 16.

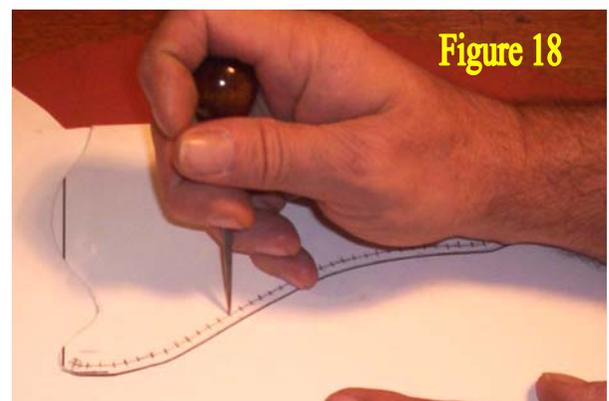
You're starting to see where I'm going with this, aren't you?

While you hold the finished side down; use a pencil to trace this outline to the other side as shown in Figure 17-A. Figure 17-B shows the outline drawn on the other side.



Now, place the template on a rubber punch pad and use your trusty scratch awl to mark the stitch placements by gently pushing through both sides of the template at one time.

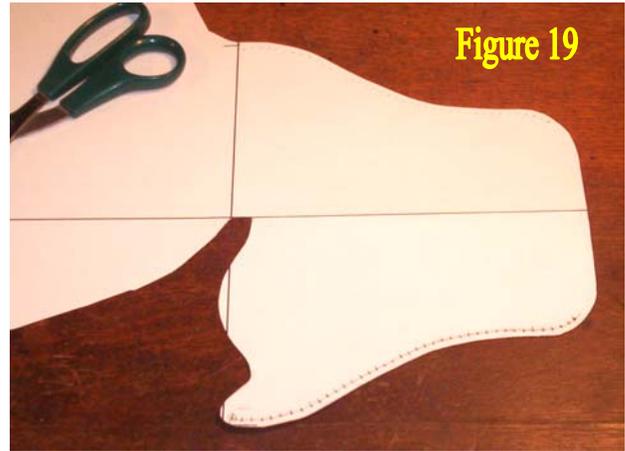
Push through just enough to make a small little hole in the poster board. You will use the scratch awl to transfer these marks to the leather so they don't have to be very big.



Use the scissors to cut out the other side and this is what you'll have so far. Cool huh?

Now you can move on the drawing out the back skirt.

I would like to note that the holster being made here is going to be a Mexican Loop Holster. The Lining Instructions coming up are for a Solid Panel Skirt. You can go either way you choose on this from here, I just wanted to clarify this so you know why the instructions change from one to the other.

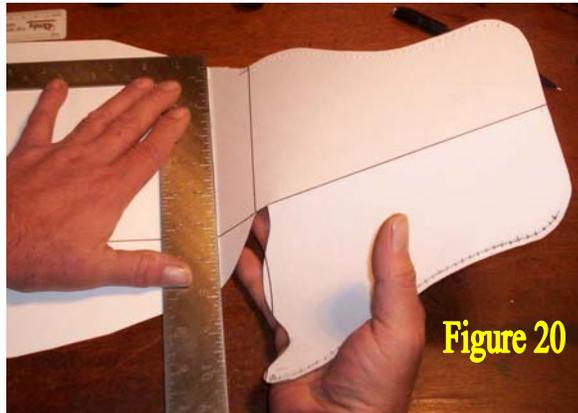


With either style of back skirt you choose, they both start out the same way, so let's get at it.

Draw a dashed line about 1 1/2" up from the Top Line making sure it's parallel. This will be the holster skirt's Fold Line.

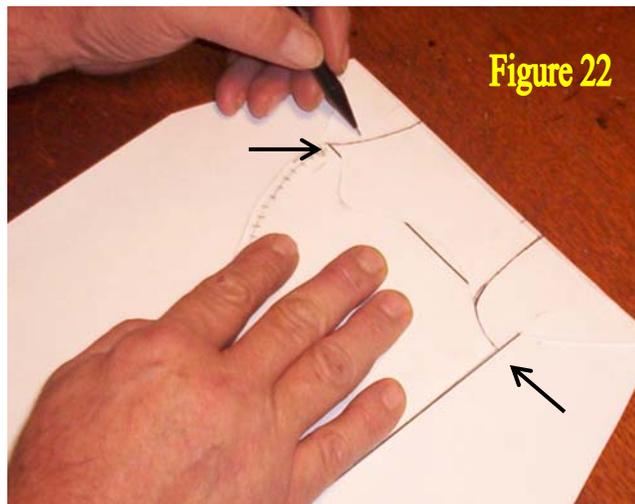
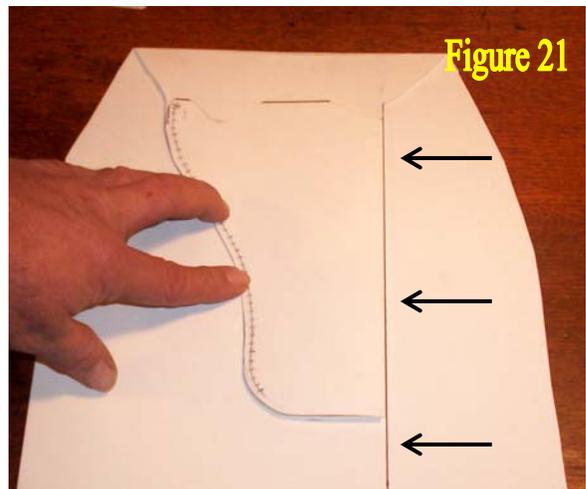
Place the square on this line and then fold the finished end of the template over using the same method as before.

Note: The distance between the Top Line and the Fold Line can be as much or as little as you desire, but this will work to get you through the first holster to show you how this works.



Okay, with the template folded over as shown here, draw a reference line along the folded edge of the holster, see the arrows.

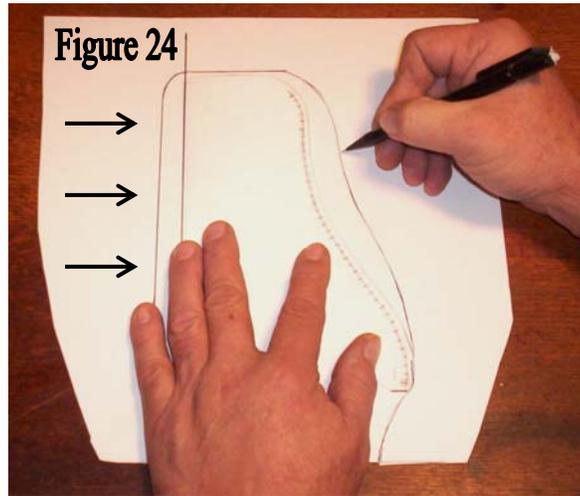
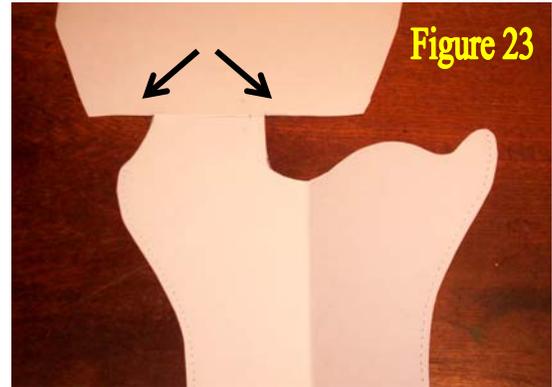
This line will only be needed if making the Mexican Loop Holster. If you're making a Solid Back Skirt, you can skip this part for now.



Trace the outline of the upper part of the holster stopping at the points indicated by the arrows.

Now, cut straight across and then cut out down to the finished side, as shown here in Figure 23.

Note: You will follow the examples for ALL styles of Back Skirts, or until I say not to.

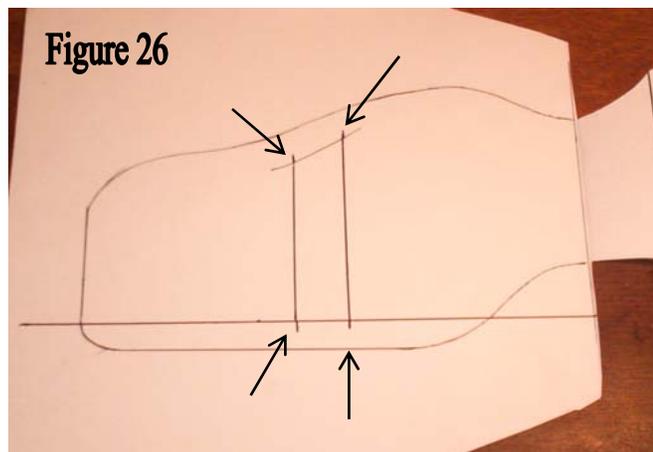
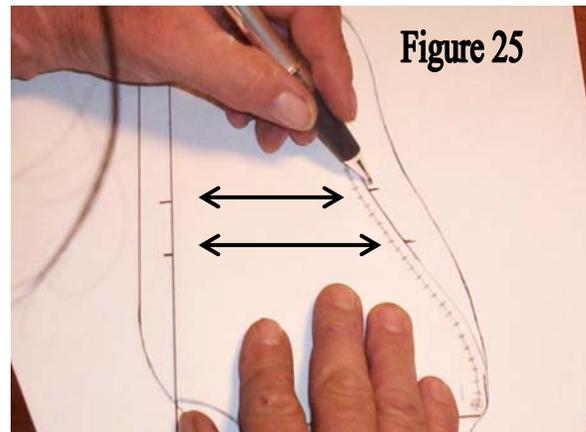


Now, sketch a light line out from the holster at least 3/4" on both sides, as shown here. The Skirt can extend below to toe of the holster or may be flush with it. That is a matter of taste on your part.

The edge of the skirt on the front of the holster may be straight or curved out somewhat if you wish. (See the arrows.)

Mexican Loop Holsters Only – to mark for the Holster Loop(s) on the skirt, you will make some reference marks on both sides of the holster as well as a short trace of the seam, as shown in Figure 25.

You can make the Loop as wide as you want, but I recommend at least 1-1/4" wide to allow for the width of the slots. This will become clear here in a minute.



Looking closely you can see where I drew lines across the skirt at the reference lines, as well as a tracing of the holster's outline between them. These four points will be needed to correctly locate the Slots for the Loop here in a minute.

Once you like the way skirt looks, cut it out and this is what you'll have so far. As you can see the template is really taking shape.

At this point, if you want to add a full liner to the holster, you will need use the compass to mark a stitch line all the way around the template. Follow up by marking out the stitch placement marks at 3/16".

Be sure that the Top and Bottom Stitch Marks on both sides of the holster's Main Seam are marked with a small circle so you don't lose them in the shuffle. This will become clear as I get into the Lining Instructions.



Figure 27

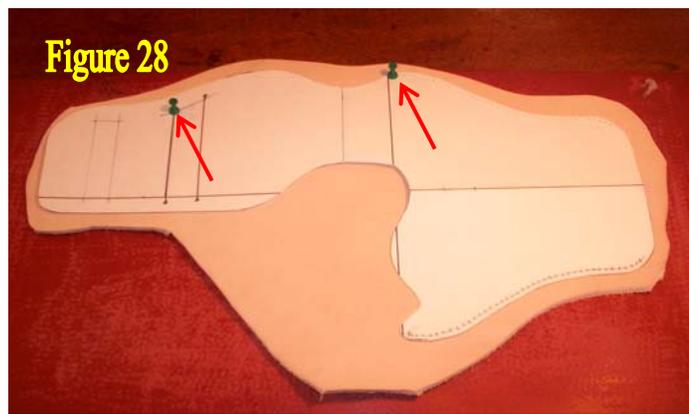


Figure 28

Alrighty, for an **Un-lined Holster** place the new template on the leather and insert Push Pins into existing hole placements to secure the template to the leather as shown here in Figure 28. Use at least two of these, but three is better to keep the template from moving around while it's being traced.

Use the scratch awl to trace the outline of the holster to the leather and then pre-mark every one of the stitch marks, as shown here.



Figure 29



Figure 30

After you make sure that everything is marked on the leather, I recommend using a utility knife to cut out the holster leather. This type of knife gives a very clean and even cut and reduces the need for a lot of trimming after it's cut..

A simple and relatively easy way to cut out the slots for the holster loops is to start by using a Size 12 Maxi Punch to cut a hole where you marked the ends on the leather. Follow up by using the utility knife and a metal straight edge to carefully cut out the leather between the holes, as shown in Figure 31.

Figure 31

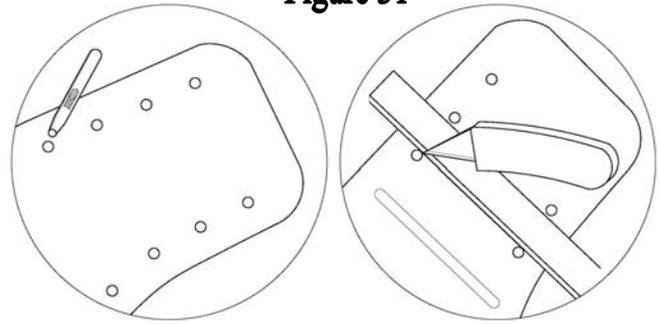


Figure 32

Remember I said to draw the lines for the slots at 1-1/4" apart? Okay, when you use the methods described the slots will be 1/4" wide and the loop will be about 1" wide. This is a good width to have for the loops so they won't look too wimpy.

I would like to point out that when making the Lined Mexican Loop Holster, you will not be marking the stitches all the way around the skirt. Lining the entire skirt will cause more problems than you want because the lining will show on the inside of the loops when finished. It will also stiffen the leather significantly and make it difficult to insert the holster pouch through the loops. So, end the Lining about an inch or better from the top loop. Mark and punch the stitch holes along a line as shown in Figure 32, as well as along the rest of the leather towards the holster pouch. When you add the liner to this area, follow the instructions coming up, but stop the gluing at the line of stitch holes in the back skirt and trim the liner as needed.



Figure 33

Okay, let's go ahead and finish the unlined holster first. Fold the back skirt over the holster pouch and press down on the fold to flatten it, as shown in Figure 33.

Roll the holster up a bit to give the leather a sort of pre-rolled effect, as shown in Figure 34. DO NOT fold the leading edge of the holster. The whole idea of this process is to make the holster so it will stay opened up for the pistol to be readily inserted without it flattening out when withdrawn.



Figure 34

Take your Size 1/0 Harness Needle and some thread and tie the Main Seam in a couple of places to hold it in place for stitching. “Hey, why don’t I just glue the two sides together and then sew it?” you might ask. Well, it’s because gluing the seam is unnecessary when you have pre-punched stitch holes.



Use the Saddle Stitch to sew the seam and then do any needed trimming. Follow up by re-applying some oil dye to the edge of the seam and rub to a shine while it’s still wet. This will help smooth out the leather and leave it neat and clean.

Pull the loops open a bit as shown in Figure 37 to allow some room for the holster pouch to slide through. When you get to this point you will see what needs to be done to fold the pouch and insert it through the loops to complete the holster.

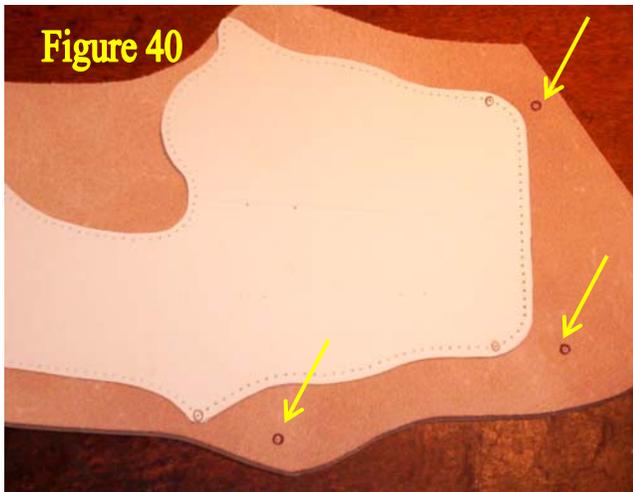
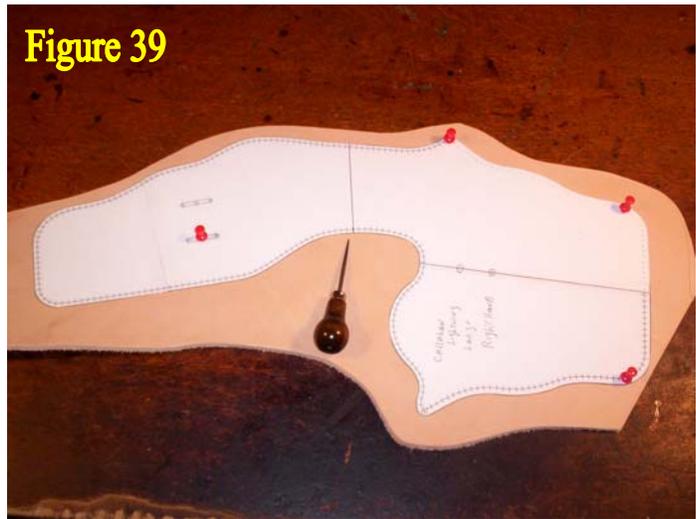


Here you see the finished Mexican Loop Holster. All there is left to do is insert your pistol and go try this thing out.



Now we come to adding a full liner to your holster. The process for tracing the template to the leather is the same as before. The only difference here is that you will insert the Push Pins through the holes marked with the little circles. These are the Start and Stop points for the main seam of the holster.

Pre-mark all the stitch placements with the scratch awl as shown earlier.



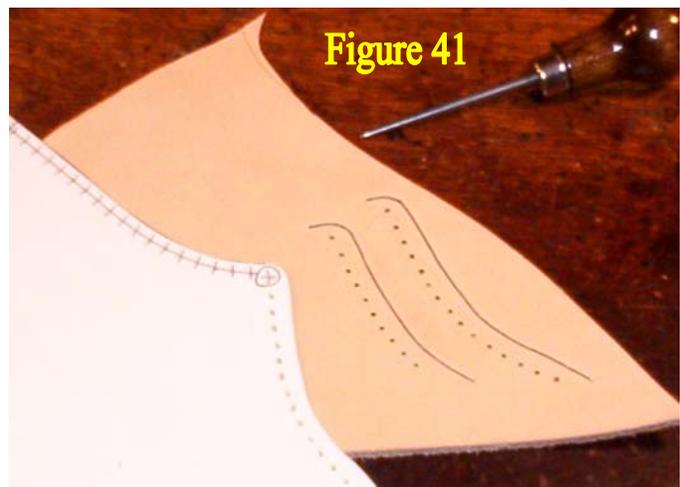
Then, turn the leather over and you will be able to see the three holes in the leather left by the push pins. Use an ink pen to draw a circle around each of these for future reference, as shown in Figure 40.

Note: the photo shows the Suede Side of the holster leather. DO NOT draw the circles on the Grain Side.

I would like to take a moment to show you an added feature to your holster called Welts. These will open up the Trigger Guard area to allow the pistol to slide in and out of the Lined Holster with greater ease and reducing the wear on the Bluing.

Welts take a little extra time to make but are well worth the effort. After all, you want the holster to be as functional and easy to use as possible.

Place the Template on another piece of 8 ounce leather and use the scratch awl to mark down the edge about 3" for the first welt. Move the template over a bit and trace out another one just a bit shorter. Once these are traced, mark the stitch placements in the welts, as shown in Figure 41.



Once the Welts are marked, cut away the outline of the first welt and then set a pair of Wing Dividers to 3/8" and mark the inside of the welt, as shown in Figure 42. This will make it wide enough so the stitches are in the center of the welt.

Once marked, cut out the welt and do the same to the shorter one.

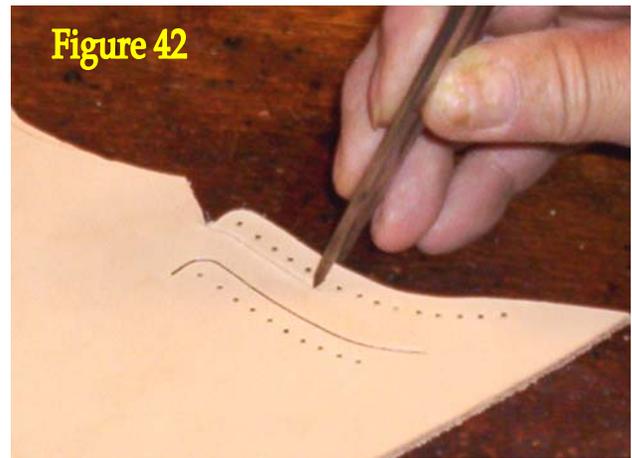


Figure 42

Pre-punch the Stitch Placements in both welts and then use a Super Skiver to skive the ends down to a fine edge, as shown in Figure 43-A.

This way, the welts will taper into each other [as shown in Figure B] to create a nice even flow down the seam of the finished holster.



Figure 43-A

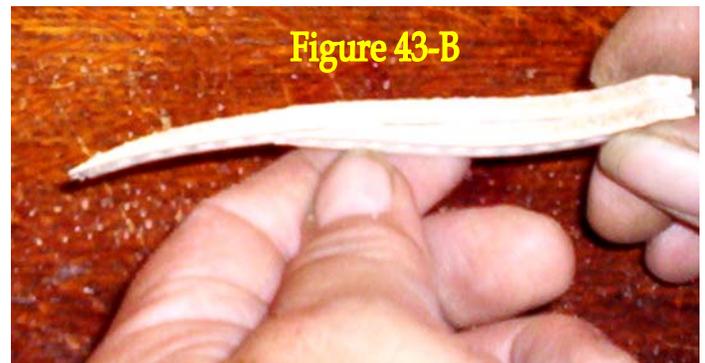


Figure 43-B

It's a good idea to pre-dye the welts the same color as the edge of the holster leather, so when sewn into the Main Seam, it will take less time to finish the seam.

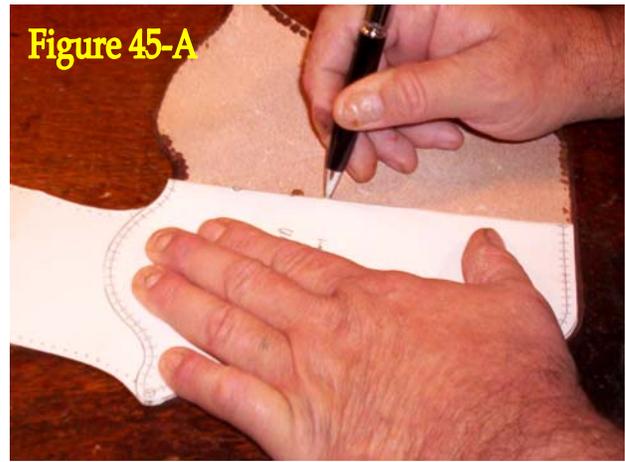


Figure 44

Figure 44 shows the cut out Holster Leather and the two welts.

Pre-punch the stitch placements all the way around the holster leather before dyeing the leather. This will eliminate the possibility of having "white spots" in the finished seam. Always dye and finish the leather prior to assembly.

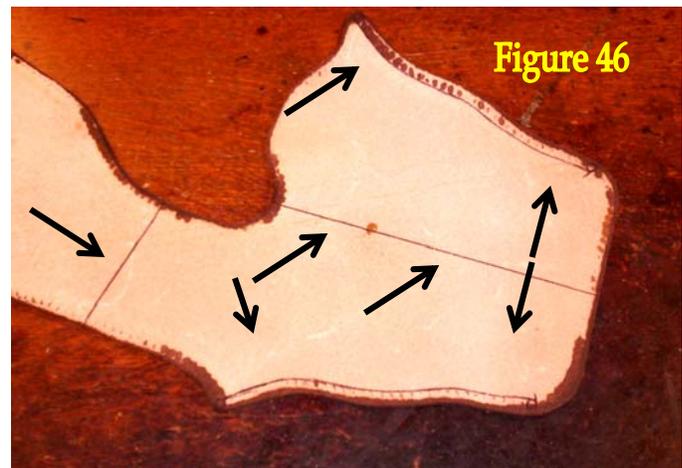
The following steps will help make adding the Liner to your new holster a relatively painless operation. The first step is to mark a Center Line on the **Suede Side** of the holster leather by folding the template on the center line, match it up to one side of the leather, and then use it as a guide to draw the line on the leather, as shown in Figure 45-A.



Fold the template on the Fold Line of the Back Skirt and draw a line at this point as well so you will have a reference of where to fold the leather as well as where to stop the contact cement when bonding the Liner, as shown in Figure B.

In Figure 46, you can see the Center Line as well as Lines drawn down the edge of the stitch lines of the main seam starting and ending at the Three Marked Stitch Placements marked on the Suede Side.

Here in just a little bit, I'll show you another little trick I learned that will help a lot when trimming away the excess liner material from the edge of the holster.



Next, place the holster leather on the liner leather **Suede Side to Suede Side** and use it as a guide for the overall shape and size of the Liner leather, as shown in Figure 28. Cut the Liner leather oversized to allow plenty of room, especially for the back skirt. Trust me, you *do not* want to run out of leather during this process.

Using the Template as a guide, mark the Center Line on the **Suede Side** of the liner so it and the holster leather can be matched up. Even though you will have some room for error, it is important to get the two pieces lined up with each other as much as possible so that the Liner will cover the entire area of the holster. [See Figure 48.]

Follow this by drawing a Reference Line around the Holster Template so that you will have a reference of how far out to apply the contact cement.

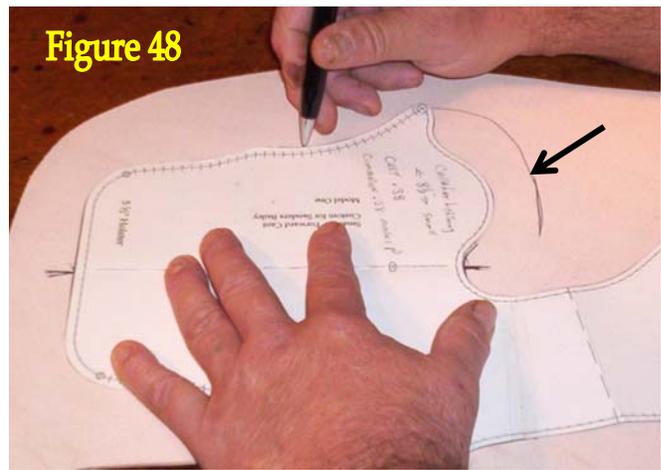


Figure 48

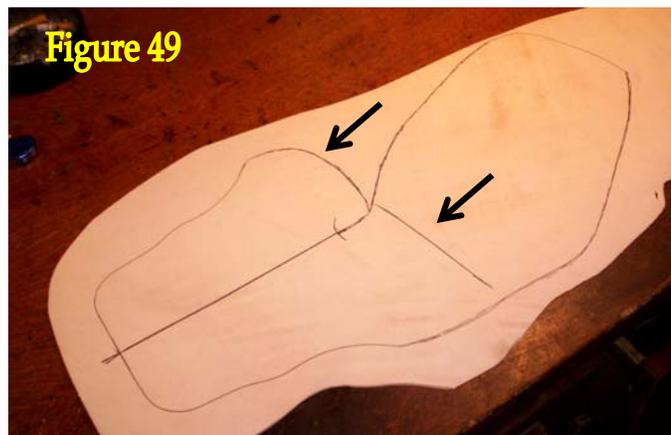


Figure 49

Figure 49 shows the Center Line and the Holster Outline drawn on the **Suede Side** of the Liner Leather.

Note the Line across the top of the Holster. Draw a “wild” line here to give a reference of how far out to apply the cement in this area. (See the arrows in Figures 48 & 49.)

Also, note the Line drawn at the Fold Line of the back skirt.

Once everything is marked on the Liner Leather, take a minute and trim away some of the excess, as shown in Figure 50. This will make things a little easier here in a minute.

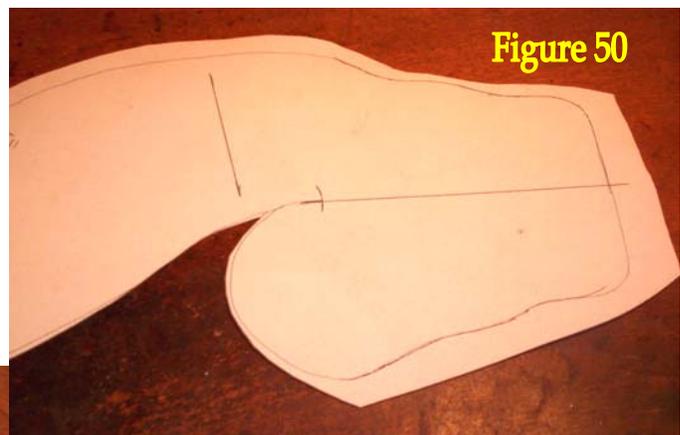


Figure 50

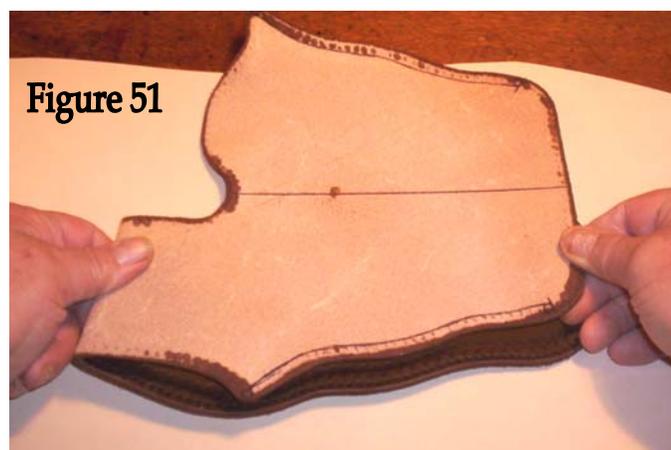


Figure 51

Now, match up the ends of the holster leather as shown in Figure 51, and put a crease in the Fold Line of the back skirt to pre-fold the leather. This will make things go a little easier when the Liner is bonded to the back skirt here in a bit.

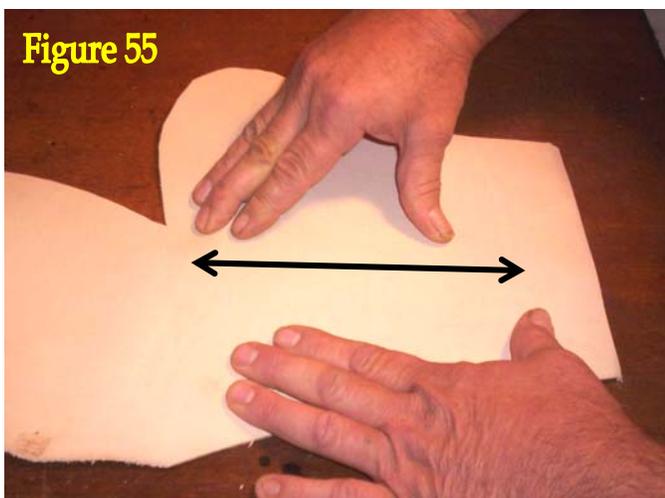
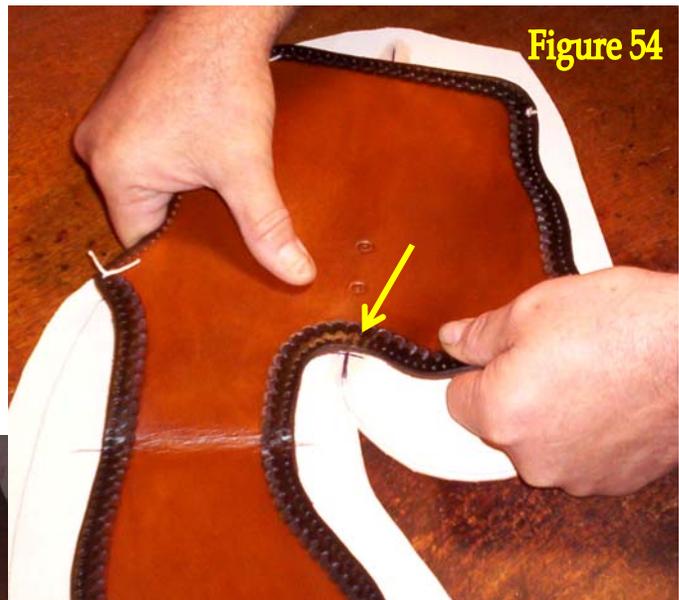
Before you go any further; insert a piece of thread into the First and Last Stitch Placements of the Main Seam, as shown in Figure 52. These threads will be used to locate these Placements after the holster is bonded to the Liner Leather so it can be trimmed from the stitch line, later on.

The following steps will demonstrate how to bond the Liner in stages so you will have better control over the process. It is very important that you do not rush this process. Take your time to ensure that the Liner gets bonded to the holster leather correctly.



Once everything is cut and marked, apply the contact cement to the Center Lines of both pieces **only**, as shown in Figure 53. Trust me on this because you really don't want to do all of it at one time.

Once the cement has set for a couple of minutes, match up the Center Line of the Holster with the Liner and press the two pieces together, as shown in Figure 54.



Flip the leather over and run your finger over the Center of the Liner to make sure the two pieces are well bonded on the Center Line, as shown in Figure 55.

Figure 56 shows the Holster Leather on the Liner Leather in its correct position. Keep in mind that only the Center Lines are bonded at this point.



Figure 56



Figure 57

Now, use the 1/4" Oval Punch to punch the holes for the Hammer Loop, as shown in Figure 57. Be sure to do this before you proceed with the rest of the bonding process! The Hammer Loop is optional, but highly recommended.

Loosen up the Holster leather by pre-rolling it a bit so that it will have a slight curl to it, as shown in Figure 58. This will leave the leather rolled a bit and will be beneficial when bonding the liner to the holster leather.

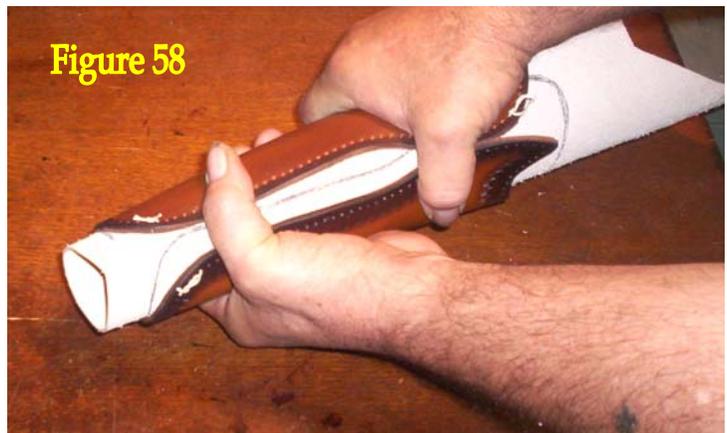


Figure 58

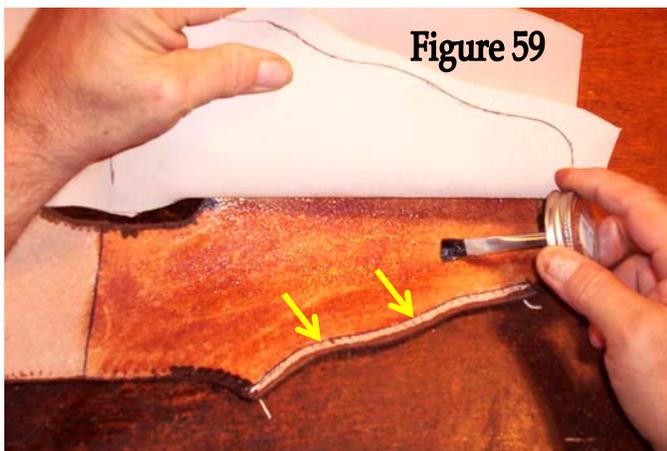
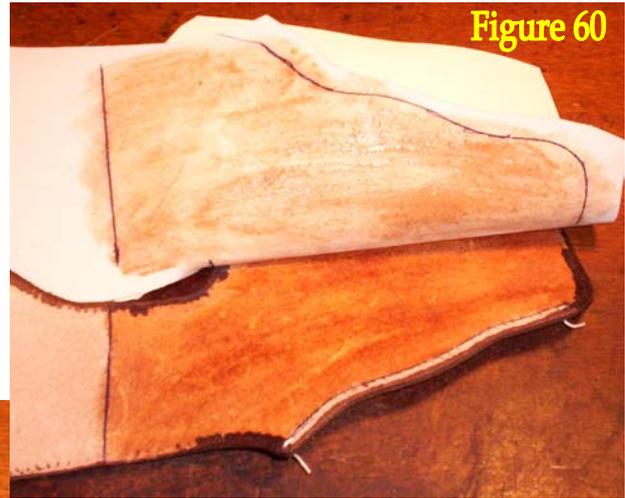


Figure 59

Apply the contact cement to one side of the Holster leather and one side of the Liner leather only, as shown in Figure 59. Go slow along Stitch Lines so not to get any cement on them, and when applying the cement to the outer edges, use **One Way Strokes** to keep the cement off the rim of the holster. Notice there is no cement applied past the Fold Line on the Back Skirt yet. That's because the cement will be applied to the Back Skirt later.

When applying the cement to the Liner, go ahead and apply it beyond the reference lines, as shown in Figure 60. This will be trimmed off in a little bit and the leather will not bond to the Stitch Lines because they don't have any cement applied to them right?

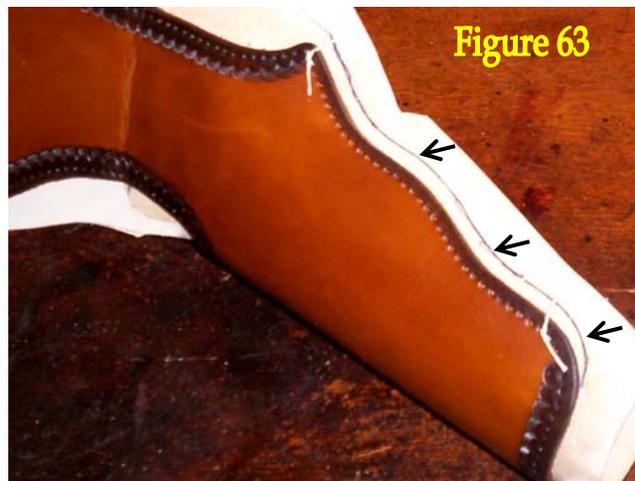


After the cement has set for a couple of minutes, hold the holster in one hand so you can keep it rolled up a bit, and then [starting at the Toe,] use the other to press the liner on, as shown in Figure 61.

While keeping the leather slightly rolled up, bond the rest of the liner by running your hand on the inside to press the liner onto the holster leather, as shown in Figure 62.



It's not easy to show this in a photograph, but believe me; when you get to this point, you will see what needs to be done to get the liner bonded to the holster leather.



After the liner is in place on the one side, you will notice that the Reference Line you drew is now past the edge of the holster leather, as shown in Figure 63. This is normal, so don't think that something went wrong. You see, when the holster leather is rolled, it shortens the **Inside** radius of the Liner leather as it's bonded. This is what keeps the liner from wrinkling up on the inside of the finished holster.

Now, place your Cutting Board on the edge of your work bench, and then place the holster on it in such a way to be able to use a Utility Knife to cut along the edge of the holster, as shown in Figure 64.

Be darn careful not to cut into the holster leather while doing this. Go slow and take your time!



Figure 64



Figure 65

When you get down to the Curve of the Toe, use the Scalpel Blade to trim this area up to the Center Line, as shown in Figure 46.

Then, use the Scalpel Blade to trim the Liner leather from the center line at the Top up to the Fold Line of the skirt, as shown in Figure 66. You don't have to trim right up to the very edge of the holster at this point. You should only cut away enough to get rid of some of the bulk so that you will be able to make a final trim later on.

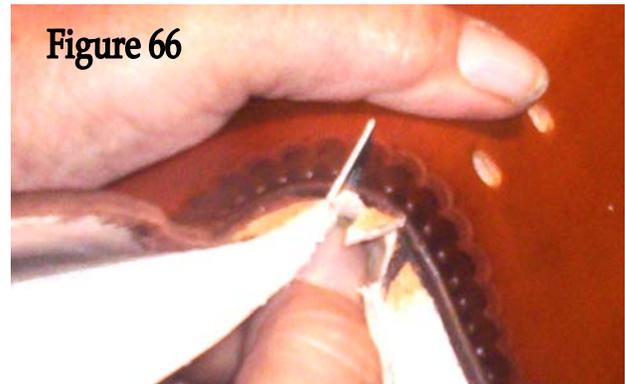


Figure 66

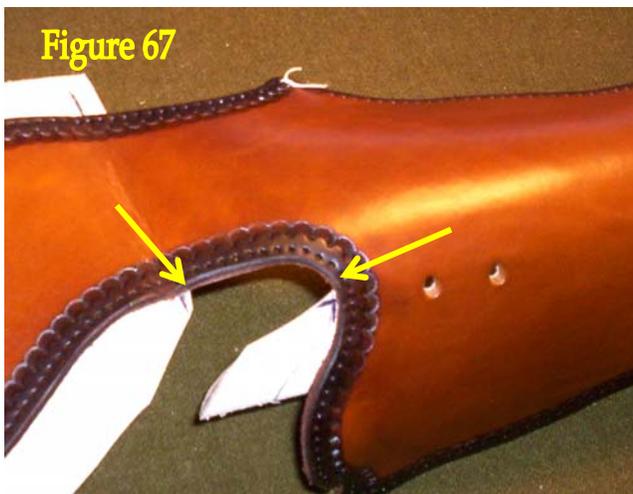
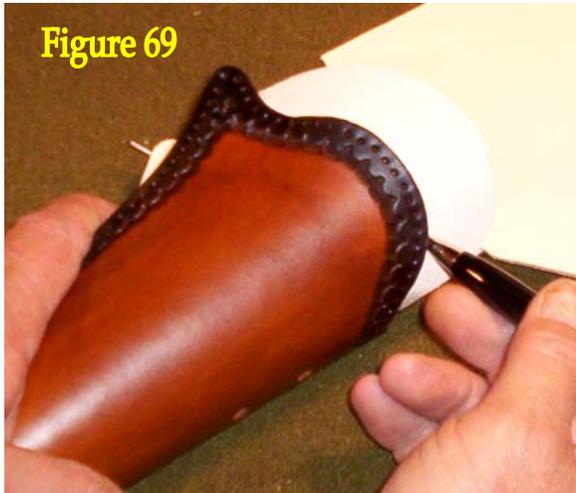


Figure 67

In Figure 67, you can see what I'm talking about. Trim the excess Liner from the Center Line up to the Fold at the Back Skirt, as shown in the photo. The rest will be trimmed after the other side of the Liner is bonded in place.

Figure 68 shows the trimmed holster so far. Notice the Marker Threads are still in place. Do not remove these threads yet.



Now, here's a little something that is not absolutely necessary when making this holster. But, some folks like to have the lip of the holster rolled out a bit for easier re-holstering. So, I'm going to show you how to add the "Gamer Curl" to your holster.

First, before you bond the liner to this side, roll the leather up a bit and trace the top edge of the holster to the liner, as shown in Figure 69.

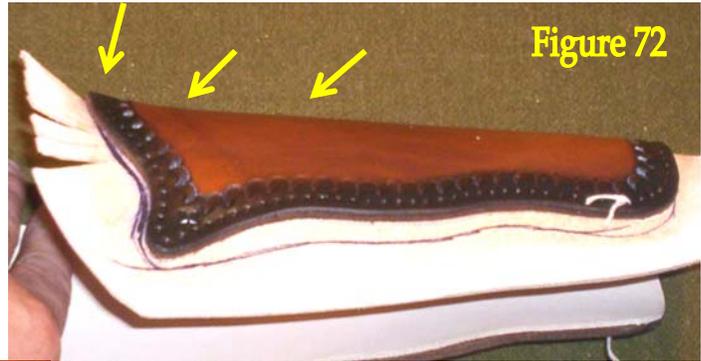
Now, apply the contact cement just like you did for the other side. Be sure the cement is applied beyond the top edge line. Then use the leather shears to cut "fingers" in the liner up to no less than 1/8" from the line, as shown in Figure 70.



Just like last time, start at the toe and bond the liner all the way up to the top, but now; use one hand to sort of roll the top edge out slightly, as shown in Figure 71.

Don't push out too hard because it will wrinkle the holster at the top and look downright tacky!

Looking closely at Figure 72, you can see how the profile of the holster curls out at the top. Believe me when I say that it doesn't take much to clear the edge from the pistol, so don't over do it.



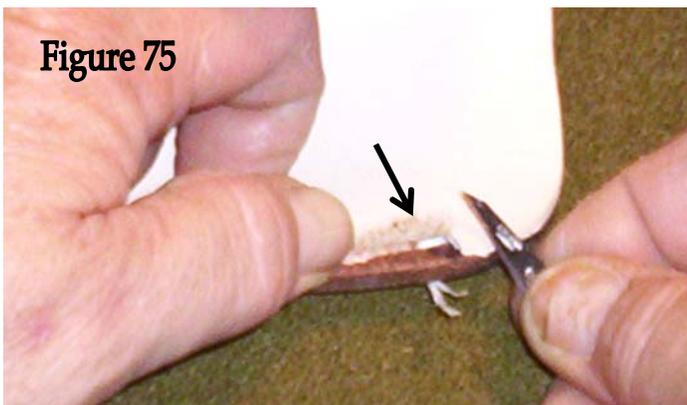
Alrighty then, let's get on with it! Trim the excess from the edge just as before, and then use the scalpel blade to gently cut away the excess liner from the top edge, as shown in Figure 73.

Like I said, you don't have to make a perfect cut on the first run. You can go back a do a final trim later.

Once the excess is out of the way, place the holster on your punch pad and then mark the stitch line along the main seam only by running the awl back through the holes, as shown in Figure 74. Start at the Top Stitch Hole and End at the Last Stitch Hole where the marker threads are.



Now you see why they're there.



Use a scalpel blade to carefully cut the Liner at the Last Stitch Placement just above the "Marker Thread."

Cut just enough to where you can lift the edge of the Liner and see the Line you drew at the Stitch Line, as shown in Figure 75.

Now, use the Scalpel blade to trim away this strip as you keep the cut right on the edge of the holes punched in the liner. Keep the strip pulled back, as shown in Figure 76 so you can see the Line as you proceed. This cut does not have to be “right on” the line just as long as you clear the Liner away from the Stitch Line.

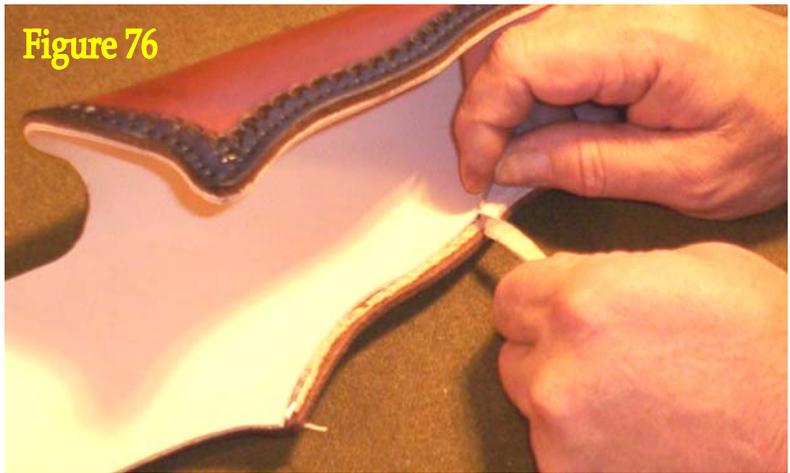


Figure 76

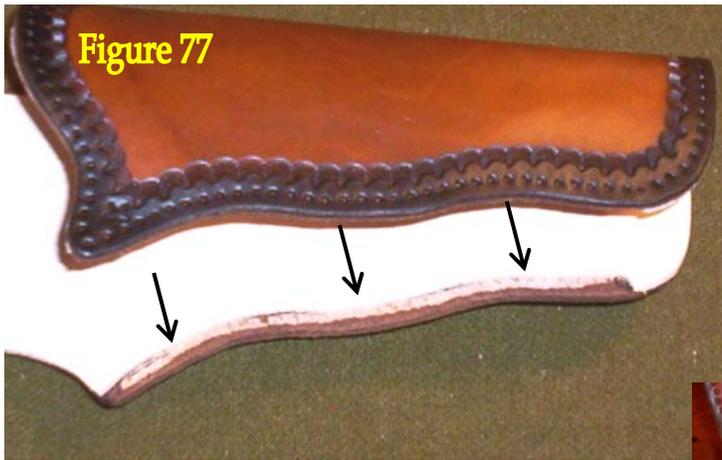


Figure 77

Figure 77 shows the inside of the Holster with the strip cut away from the Stitch Line. Repeat this process on the other side of the seam.

Now, lay the Back Skirt on the bench and trace a reference line around it, as shown in Figures 78.

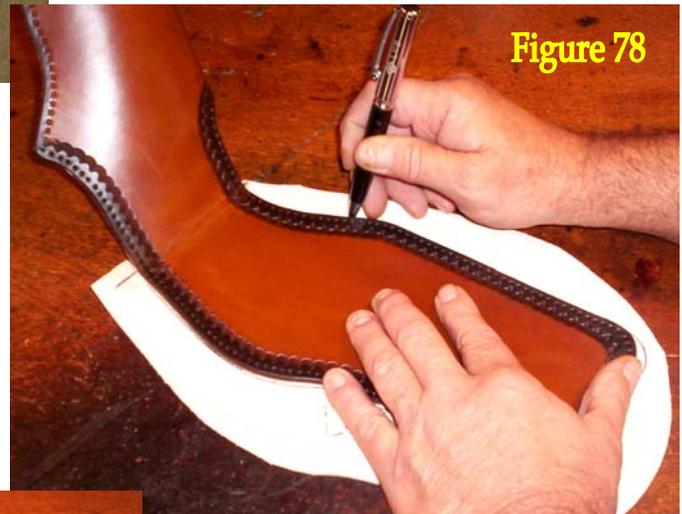


Figure 78



Figure 79

Apply the cement to the Back Skirt and the Liner, and let it set for a couple of minutes.

Are you nervous? Don't be because this part is a lot easier than the last one.

Okay, now we're going to bond the Liner to the Back Skirt in a way that will keep the holster tight on the belt.

Fold the Back Skirt over and hold it tight against the Holster with your thumbs, as shown in Figure 80.

Use your index fingers to press the Liner to the Skirt as you gently bring it over the Folded Leather.

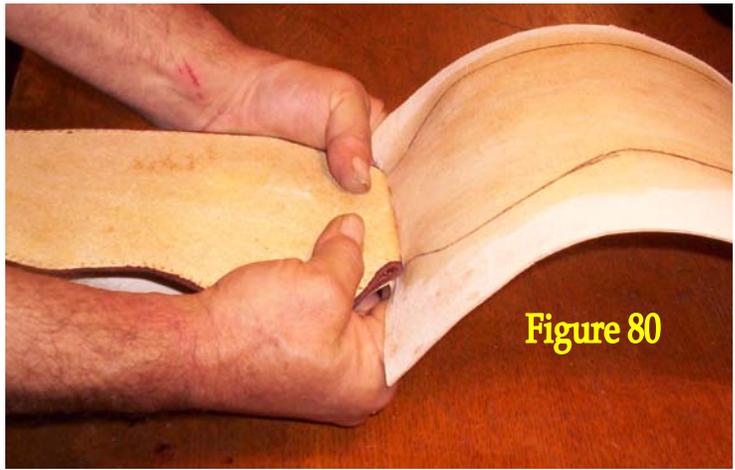


Figure 80



Figure 81

Once you get it started, grab the Fold with one hand while using the other to curl the top of the Skirt to the outside a bit as you press the Liner with your arm, as shown here.

Forming the Skirt in this way shapes it so it will contour with the body when worn.

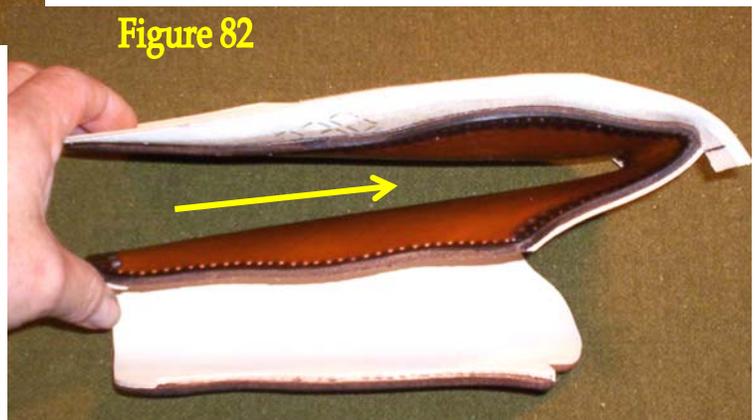


Figure 82

As you can see in Figure 82, this creates a nice tight fold at the top of the belt loop which is a highly desired feature for competition shooters. This feature helps hold the holster tight on the belt and keeps it from moving around when the pistol is drawn.



Figure 83

Alrighty then, take advantage of a flat surface again to use the Utility Knife to cut a way the excess Liner around the Skirt. And remember Oh, never mind. I'm sure you have that part figured out by now.

(Don't cut the Back Skirt!)

In Figure 84, you can see how it will look. The leather will stay rolled up like that which actually makes it easier to sew it together, not to mention the real reason for doing this, which is to make the Holster hold its shape, once completed.

By the way, be sure the Liner is trimmed away from the Stitch Lines on both sides.



Figure 84



Figure 85

Take advantage of the edge of your workbench to punch the Stitch Holes in the Liner by running the Awl back through the pre-punched stitch holes along the edge, as shown in Figure 85.

Okay, right about now you're saying to yourself, "Self, why don't I just wait and punch these all at once?" Well, there are two reasons for this. One is so that you can do away with the possibility of any "white spots" in the seam

and the other is because you will need to use a Double-layered Back-up to punch them around the Curved Areas of the holster, as shown in Figure 86.

Make one of these by pre-rolling two pieces of 8 ounce leather and bond them together with contact cement. It being curved will allow you to place it in the curved areas of the holster without having to force it in place.



Figure 86



Figure 87

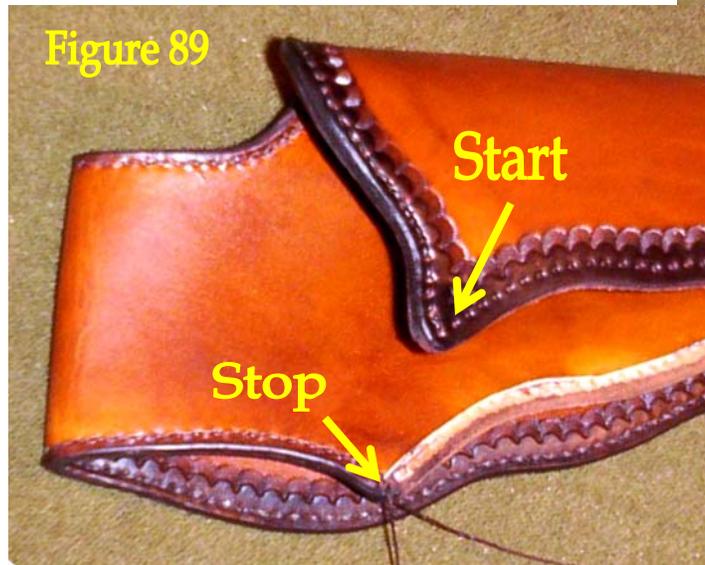
When you come to it, place the Back Skirt on a flat surface to re-punch all the Stitch Placements, as shown in Figure 87.

Right about now, I'll bet you're thinking to yourself, "Self, there sure are a lot of stitch holes."

Yeah there sure are!

Alrighty then, sew the Liner around the Toe by starting on the Front side of the Holster at the Last Stitch Placement of the Main Seam, as shown in Figure 88.

This way, the backstitch will be on the Backside which gives the finished Holster a neater appearance.



When you begin stitching the Top and Back Skirt, start on the Front side of the Holster, and then sew all the way around the Back Skirt. Stop at the First Stitch Placement on the back-side, and then backstitch at least three times, as shown in Figure 89.

Begin sewing the Main Seam by tying the two sides together with the Welts in place, as shown in Figure 90 Be sure to Count the Holes when tying it together so everything lines up the way it's supposed to!



Then use the saddle stitch to sew the main seam. Figure 91 shows the sewn seam.

Figure 92 shows the Finished Main Seam. Now, that wasn't so hard, was it?



Keep in mind that you have the option of either the Holster Loop or the Holster Strap to secure the pouch to the back skirt, so if using the Holster Loop, use a Size 7 Maxi Punch to punch the Holes marked on the Back Skirt, as shown in Figure 93.

If using the Holster Strap, you will use a 1" Oblong Punch to cut slots in place of the holes. I'll show you this in a minute.



Figure 93

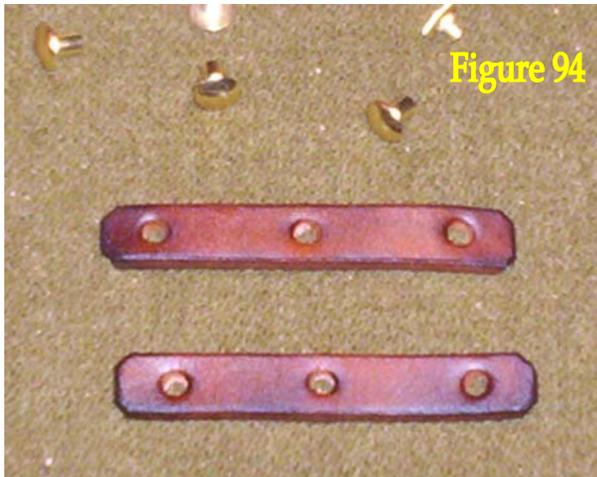


Figure 94

Now, while you're at it; here is an option for you to consider. Some Shooters like to have the Holsters secure on the belt by way of a Retention Strap. This keeps the holster from "rocking" or even riding up on the belt. These are made with 1/2" x 3 1/2" strips with three holes punched which will accommodate the Chicago Screws, as shown in Figure 94.

Very important; place the belt that will be used with the holsters against the Fold of the Skirt, then hold it in place as you raise the holster pouch. Don't let go of the belt!

Insert the Chicago Screws into the holes, and then place the Strip about 1/8" from the belt as shown in Figure 95.

It is very important that the belt does not move during this process!



Figure 95



Figure 96

While holding the belt in place, use the handle of your mallet to push down on the Screws to make an impression in the Skirt. If need be, push on the Center Chicago Screw first so you can punch this one, mount it in place and then mark the other two to ensure the correct positioning of the Strip.

Figure 97 shows the holes punched on the Skirt for the Holster Strap as well as the Retention Strap. Figure 98 shows it in place on the Skirt.



Again, the Retention Strap is optional, so it is not absolutely necessary for the holster to be functional.

Alright, add the Holster Loop by securing it on one end with a Chicago Screw, as shown in Figure 99.



Lay the holster back on the skirt, pull the Loop around and then tuck it under so to align the Chicago Screw up with the other hole, as shown in Figure 100.

Insert the pistol and you're all done!

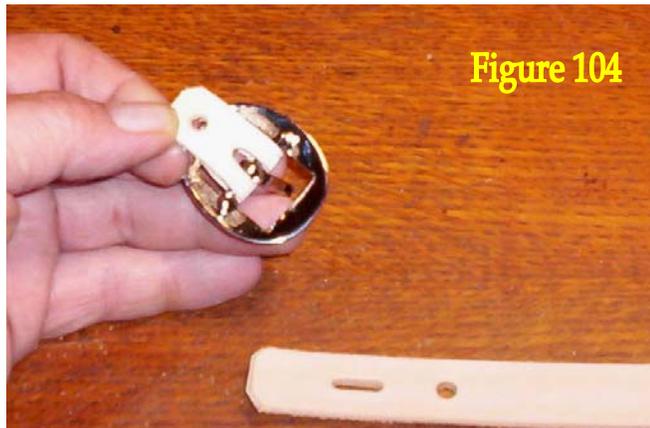


On Page 26 I said I would show you how to make the holster so it uses a Buckled Strap instead of the Loop. This particular strap is one of my designs and is specifically designed for the Center Bar Buckle **Only**. This type will allow the Buckle to lay flatter on the curved surface of the Holster, as you'll see later on.

First off, instead of the holes for the Chicago Screws, you'll need 1" Slots. So, use the 1" Slot Punch to cut these where the holes would have been, as shown in Figure 102.



Figure 103 shows the Holster Strap and Retainer Strap cut and dyed. Take notes here: the Retaining Strap (on top) is made from 2-3 ounce leather and measures 3/4" x 2 5/8" and has a 1" slot and two holes punched with a Size 7 Maxi Punch. The Holster Strap is made from either 7 or 8 ounce leather and measures 3/4" x 12". (The length can be trimmed off as needed when the strap is fitted to the holster.) It has a 1/2" Slot and a Hole punched with the Size 7 Maxi Punch. The hole on the Holster Strap is 3/4" from the end of the slot.



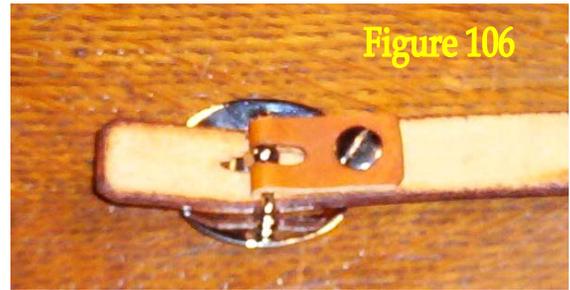
I'll show how the Center Bar Strap works with the Un-dyed leather for clarity.

The Retaining Strap will mount on the underside of the Holster Strap, so start by inserting the Retaining Strap through the Center Bar Buckle, as shown in Figure 104.

Then insert the Main Strap through the Buckle, as shown in Figure 105.



Secure the Retainer Strap to the Main Strap with a Chicago Screw, and you're ready to mount the Holster Strap to the Back Skirt.



Now, insert the Strap through the Slots cut in the Skirt, wrap it around the holster, insert the Strap through the Buckle, and then mark for the Hole with a Scratch Awl, as shown in Figure 107. This ensures the strap fits snug around the holster and cuts out the guesswork.

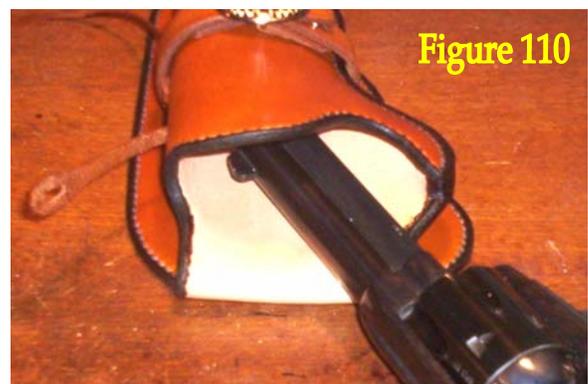
Use a Size 4 Mini Punch to make the hole, and then buckle it up.

In Figure 108 you can see how the Strap for the Center Bar Buckle works to keep the Buckle even with the surface of the Holster. Now, with any strap you will have some bulk under the buckle and that can't be helped. However, using this type of strap will give it a neater appearance.



In Figure 109, you can see the end result of the extra effort put into the Fold of the Back Skirt. The Fold is nice and tight which helps keep the holster snug on the gun belt. This will also prevent the holster from leaning out and flopping around.

In Figure 110 you can see the benefit of bonding the Liner as we did. By doing so, the liner keeps the holster opened up when the pistol is not inside. This makes it possible to store the holsters for long periods of time without having to leave tennis balls inside them.



Until next time,

The End
(or, is it?)