



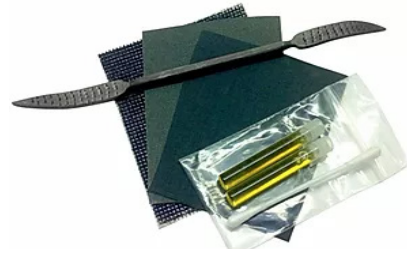
# Medium & Large : Carving a Fox

## Introduction

Congratulations! You have an opportunity to produce your own work of art. As you carve your personal soapstone animal, you must remember to have fun.

## Tools

Rasp  
100 grit wet/dry sandpaper  
320 grit wet/dry sandpaper  
600 grit wet/dry sandpaper  
Tung oil (food grade)



## Prep

Think of what kind of carving you would like to do, is it going to be realistic or more of a stylized carving? There are many different ways to carve the same animal. Look at pictures in books or on the internet, even if it's one for the head and separate images for the body. Looking at a toy model of the same animal can also be helpful. It is good to find pictures with multiple angles.



Set up a bucket of water to carve/sand in, or dip the carving in as you go. Water keeps the dust down, making clean up much easier.

## Shaping

Look at your soapstone animal and decide which large areas need to be removed. Using a rasp, begin to file these areas away. Start with the areas that require the most material to be removed.

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**Feet:** Looking at the feet of the fox, begin to file in between the legs to separate the left side from the right, staying as centered as possible, using the thinnest rasp available, with the fox silhouette this will leave you options on the stance. I carve this groove between the left and right limbs down to where I think the belly of the fox should be, you will have the option of four feet per side now. If a standing more stable look is what you are looking for then you will want to remove the set of “toes” furthest back on the hind legs and then remove the middle legs so that you are left with only four limbs. If a fox in motion is preferred then you will be choosing two legs on one side for the front and rear limbs and then removing the same limbs on the opposite side so as to create the look of an animal in motion. Once you have removed the limbs you don’t want, this should open up the bottom belly area of the fox for you to shape the remaining limbs in your preferred style, don’t make the limbs too thin as they will be susceptible to breakage. For fine feet details I use the pointiest rasp I have and “draw” in the individual toes and claws. Remember not to make them too thin in detailing or they will be prone to breakage or chipping. Narrowing the belly between the front and hind legs will help give the fox a more contoured look and also get rid of the “blocky” appearance it has to start. Making the neck narrower will also help create the definition between the body and the head.

**Head:** Look at the head; usually animal bodies are larger than the head so file the head down to be more proportionate with the body. I use roughly the width of a rasp per side too narrow the head and thus allow the front shoulders to flare out, I then narrow the nose more so as to define the cheeks. Try not to let it get too thin..

**Ears:** Ears are usually small and tapered. Do these parts at the end as they are easy to snap/file off if they get too thin. I save the division between the ears until I have the head the proper scale I want for my sculpture, then sculpting my ears with my rasp until they are close to the size I want them and then finish them up with the first stage of sandpaper.

**Nose and Eyes:** For the scale of the nose, I usually use the width of my rasp on either side of the snout and carve material away flush with the “brow” ridge. I then round it slightly and add some definition to the eyes and ears.

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## Sanding

Once satisfied with your animal's shape, it is time to begin sanding. Starting with the coarsest mesh of sandpaper, sand away all the unwanted tool marks, sandpaper 1 will still leave small scratches behind, this is ok. Follow with the next coarsest to remove any unwanted scratches from sandpaper 1, your carving should start feeling much smoother now!! ALL unwanted scratches should be removed before sandpaper 3 as it just smooths out the existing surface. Continue until the sculpture is nice and smooth. This is an important step! The better your sanding on stage 1 the easier stage 2 will be and then stage 3 will be easier and faster as well, the more attention to proper sanding the better the sculpture will look when oiled. Sanding in water is a must, because frequently dipping it will show you where more sanding is needed. Leave your sculpture overnight to dry, or warm it on the stovetop on low until the stone is completely dry.



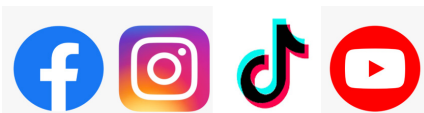
## Oiling

Included in the kit is a food grade tung oil. Apply the oil with a thin rag, wiping excess approximately an hour or so after applying. Allow 24 hours before applying a second coat. Tung oil leaves a more matte finish. With soapstone varying a little in hardness due to the metamorphic process, some will absorb more oil than others. If you want your carving to be super shiny, spray with an aerosol water-based wood varnish available from most local hardware stores. Traditionally, carvings are heated up and beeswax is applied to the surface.

## Breakage

Sometimes stones get dropped or seams in the stone let go and break while carving. When this happens, the first thing to do is stop carving.

Rinse off any dust on the carving and let dry. Do not rub the pieces together, as this may alter your contact points making the breakage point more noticeable. Once dry, apply a medium viscosity superglue on one of your contact points. Place the two pieces together, squeezing them together until excess glue weeps out the sides. Place your carving in a spot where it will sit undisturbed until the glue sets, you may wipe off the excess glue that has been pushed out now, depending on glue this may sit 15-30 minutes or overnight if you want to be sure its dry. Once cured, use a rasp to remove any exposed excess glue, and continue carving. If there is a big gap missing when you break it you can make a filler by mixing with extra dust with an epoxy glue.



For more carving information and how to videos check out our social media! Rubble Road Soapstone