
Leather Brindle Clutch with Elke Bergeron

Chapter 1 - Introduction

Overview

(upbeat music) - If you've never worked with leather before, this class is a great place to start. We'll be learning how to cut the leather and hand-sew it into a nice, fun little clutch. We can try two different closures, a buckle closure, or a button stud.

Chapter 2 - Materials

Materials

- To make your leather clutch, you're going to need some heavy, nice thick leather. This one is a veg-tan leather, which means it's been tanned naturally. You can go to your local store and kind of pick what works for you, just make sure it's strong enough that it can be made into a bag and really hold your things without dropping away on the sides. We're gonna have a template that can be downloaded from the site and then we're gonna have some basic leather tools. We're gonna have punches, a strap cutter for finishing off the belt. This is an option, you can also just if you're not ready for this kind of tool yet, you can also use a rotary cutter to finish the ends, it's not all necessary. We use a strap as a closure. We'll have the button studs, the scissors, chalk, rivets, rivet setter, an awl, some poly cord for sewing the sides, a needle with a big enough eye that can hold they poly cord. This is a leather needle, but you don't necessarily need to have a leather needle because you have already punched the holes. We'll have a rotary cutter, a hammer, some craft glue, something that preferably dries pretty quickly, and I use a cutting board to punch my holes for the hammer and the punch and it works well.

Chapter 3 - Clutch Construction

Cut template and leather

- Place your template on the leather so the top part would be your flap. And you want to look at your natural edge, so you can utilize it, the shape, the natural shape, to put into your flap, and see which way it would work best. So by moving your template around, you'll find the best position on your piece of leather. It doesn't have to be even, leather is a natural product, and the asymmetry sometimes is actually what makes it more unique and special. So when I'm measuring mine up, I'm gonna look at the size, and I really like this point here. So by adjusting the sides, you don't worry about that that's a hard edge, we're going to move this up, and I'm gonna place my pattern right in the middle here. After I put the paper down, I'm going to take the chalk, and always draw on the back side of your leather. You don't want to draw on the front side, because you'll leave marks for sure. Trace around your template. And go up to the edge. When you take it off, you'll see that now you have this really beautiful edge that when it's folded, will create a great line for your bag. Once you've drawn your template, you can take your rotary cutter, or you can use a scissor. It's up to you and what you feel comfortable with. But I'm gonna choose the rotary cutter, and I'm actually gonna grab a ruler, because I like to make my lines really straight, and I don't trust myself to do it alone. So I'm gonna line up my ruler with the edge of my chalk, and I'll start at the bottom here. There's your first cut, and I'm gonna do both my parallel lines first. Actually, I'll work from the bottom. Okay, and then I like to turn the leather so I can actually have a better handle on cutting a straight line this way. Once you've made all your cuts, sometimes the corners are still connected, so that's really

when your scissors come in handy. You can just take them and easily clip the corners. And I just stay on the chalk line. Now that we've finished cutting the leather, you're actually able to start seeing the beginnings of your clutch.

Glue and punch holes

- What I like about this clutch is that you can take the template and really adapt it to any size you want. You could make it into a longer shape, shorter, smaller. Here's just basically a smaller version of it. So it's just a basic measurement that you can use, and you can adapt it to whatever shape you'd like. Then I take my measurements that I drew previously, and because mine is cut out for this size, I'm gonna take my fold lines, and grab my chalk, and make a small mark that will show me, in the end, where I'm going to want to fold my flap and fold the bottom up into the body. So, that's on the bottom, gonna move it to this side. And go like that. So now it's been marked on either side. Before we start to sew the clutch, we're going to need to add a little bit of glue to hold it together. And that does not hold your bag, it's not permanent, but it makes it a lot easier to sew once it's glued, and it won't be slipping around. So I like to use Tear Mender. I find that it's effective and it dries very quickly. I'm gonna start by adding a light line of glue from the fold line, up to the mark I made for the flap fold. So you just need a little bit, and then we'll do it on the other side as well. This will hold your leather in place for your stitching. And we'll carefully fold it up. So you'll rub the edges and make sure the glue is sticking. Don't worry if you have a little glue coming out on the sides. You can just grab a paper towel and just clean it off. And now you're ready to start measuring to punch your holes along the sides. You're gonna get a ruler, and then you're gonna measure it from the edge, about a quarter inch in. Then you will grab your awl, or something that will make a nice mark. You can use a sharp pencil or anything that you'll be able to see where you're gonna be putting your stitching. I'm gonna be making my stitch marks a quarter of an inch apart. So, starting at the top, I like to start my stitch at the fold line, so I would have a hole there. And you almost don't even have to make it, because it will follow the line and it will be over the edge. So going down a quarter of an inch, I'm going to start making marks all the way down. These will then be markers for where we will be punching the holes for the sewing. And when you're done, you'll see a very light, embossed dots going all around the edge. So now we'll know where to punch. I'm gonna flip the bag around and do the same exact thing on the other side. So we'll go a quarter inch in from the edge, and we'll make our first punch right at the top on the fold line and go a quarter inch for each stitch. And now we can punch our holes. So I'll get my small hole punch, a hammer, and you're going to need your poly board, your cutting board, to put underneath. I'll start at the top, and go right above the flap, and start that first hole that was over the bottom piece. (hammer pounding) And just move down the line. (hammer pounding) Make sure you hold your punch straight up and down. (hammer pounding) Continue punching all of your holes.

Stitch clutch

- To sew the sides, we're going to use a nice poly cord that you can get at a beading store. It's really strong and you only need a single ply to sew the sides of the leather bag. So, when I'm pulling my string I like it to be nice and generous, because I don't want to have to stop halfway through to make a new knot. So I'm just gonna do an arm's length. And that's pretty much guaranteed that I can do a whole side at one time. And we're gonna take our needle, you'll pull it through, leaving a fair amount at your end, so it doesn't fall out while you're stitching. I like to start my sewing from the inside, so when you're all finished with all your stitching, the knot will actually be hidden inside,

and you won't see it at all. We'll start at the top, and you'll push it through the front of the first hole, and leave a fair amount at the end, so that your fingers can manage to tie it. If you make it too short, it'll just be really difficult finishing off the knot. It'll also give you something to hold on to as you start the stitching down the bag. We're gonna go in the next hole, through the back, make sure it's tight, and we'll come from the back, back to the front. So you'll continue down the bag, making a running stitch line, and you'll come up the other side. When we get to the top, I'll show you how to knot it off. We're almost at the top. We're going to finish the stitch at the second hole. We're going to push it to the inside of the bag... instead of coming through to the backside. Make sure you pull that really nice and tight, and then we can clip our thread. We can tie them off and make a knot. So, I like to use a double turn on the knot, and just pull it nice and tight on the inside. Then we're going to do it once again. And just really pull it nice and tight. When you're finished, let's see if I can get that back, clip the cord, and you can use your scissor even to just push the knot inside a little bit, so it's hidden. Repeat the same process on the other side, and knot it off.

Chapter 4 - Closures

Closure variations

- We can close our clutch in a couple of different ways. We can do a belt closure, which will have actually a stud opening, or we can make a clean button stud, that just pops open like this. This is a version with the belt. So to make the belt closure, what we'll do first is take a length of belt. For me, it's best to really do it visually, because you don't know how the edge of your clutch is going to fall on your bag. So you have to see your measurements. The tip of my closure will determine the placement of where I'll put it. So when I use a belt closure, I actually do like to put it right in the middle. Because we have a close edge at the bottom, we're gonna make sure that the tip has enough room to add a button stud underneath. So we'll be cutting the under piece of leather, the second piece, and then we'll move up, and visually, we'll probably cut it about an inch below the top of the flap, using the strap punch. We'll take our punch board. You're gonna take your strap punch, and measure it up with your top strap, and you can hammer it off. If you don't have the strap punch, you can easily use a rotary cutter, and just follow the line of your top strap. And now you have two pieces that are basically the same size, the same length. What I'll do is I'll take my bag back, I'll measure, and I'll say okay, we need to put the punch there. So I'll cut off about an inch lower. So by keeping my finger in the position where I need to cut, I can place it back down, place my tool in a v-shape, right in the center, and... And knock it off. Now we can see if this fits, and ends up the way we want it to. That looks pretty good. I'm going to use my awl, to make a small mark at the top of the strap, about a half an inch down. You want it away from the edges, and you'll need to make a punch. Put it back on our block, we'll grab our one eighth inch hole, which is larger than the one we used for sewing. This is thicker, so that the post of the rivet can fit through both the buckle and the leather. Put it right on our spot. And this one is perfect. We're gonna put it back onto the bag. Make sure we're right in the center. I know my bag is 10 and a half inches wide, so we'll put it at five and a quarter. And from there, we still have to make sure that we'll still have plenty of room for our stud at the bottom. I can take my awl again, and we can make a small mark on the leather flap itself. So when we take away the strap, we can see where we're gonna need to punch another hole, to stick the rivet through. You'll open your bag up, and lay it flat on your punch board. We'll use the same size tool, the one eighth inch hole, that you used to punch your strap. Place it directly on the mark you made. You've got a nice, clean hole. Once we have this in place, these two will measure up. Rivets come in small, medium, large, extra small, and that really depends on the size of the post, the

length of the post. So for my leather today, we need a medium sized rivet. You don't want it to be too long, and if it's too short, the cap won't catch. So we'll put this underneath the flap, and then we'll add the buckle, and you're gonna make sure that it's facing in the right direction towards you, so that this is at the top of your flap. And then we'll add the cap, and to knock the rivet in by hand, it's a small tool, it's called a rivet setter. A rivet setter comes in two pieces. You'll have a domed piece, that will go on the bottom of the rivet, under here, and then you'll have a spike that will be your setter. So we'll slide this underneath, to sit directly below the rivet, in the middle. You can see the outline when you touch it, and you know that this is sitting comfortably there. You'll adjust your strap, make sure it's straight. You take your rivet setter, place it directly on top, straight up and down. And then strike the post with a lot of force, but make sure you keep the post really as straight as you can, so the rivet's post doesn't bend. Now that the rivet is in place, we're going to need to add the button stud. So the first thing we're going to do is we're going to pull up the top layer, and we're gonna place our hole for the button stud on the bottom strap. Right in the middle, about the same distance that we did the rivet on the top. So it'll be a half an inch in, and we'll strike the hole. So using your one eighth inch hole punch, you can place it at the bottom, half an inch from the edge, enough so that it's covered. Hold it steady, straight up and down. And you'll make your hole. We'll close the bag, and adjust the strap, and with our hole, we'll use our awl again, to mark a point that we'll wanna put the screw for our button stud. So if we just use that as our guide, we can open up, and there's our spot. Using my cutting board, I can slide it inside my bag, to support it, so we can punch another hole. We're going to use the same one eighth inch hole punch, and this will be a great size for the screw, to be able to poke up out of the bag. Now you have a great, perfect hole, to put our button screw into. A button stud comes in two parts. The bottom is a screw, and the top is gonna be your closure, your button. First, you'll take your screw. We'll take the screw side, we're gonna stick it inside, underneath, and punch it through the hole. Then we'll take the button side, and thread it onto the screw. Whenever you're using anything that has a screw back, make sure to tighten it with a screwdriver. These can loosen up over time. So this is actually a perfect fit for the outside, but we still have to add the oval punch to this hole, to give it a keyhole shape, so that the button can fit through nicely. We'll bend back the top piece, we'll grab the oval punch, we'll add it to the circle, so that we can make the hole bigger, and it will fit the button more comfortably. We'll place it facing up. Okay, now we have our keyhole, let's see if it fits. Okay. There we go. This is a stiff leather, so I needed a little bit longer keyhole punch. But leather will always loosen. It's better to make it a little bit small, than to make it too big, otherwise it'll slip out. We have a couple other variations of closures. This one, we just used a simple buttonhole. All you need to do is punch the hole into the leather flap itself, and you would attach the screw the same way that you did originally on the first one. And it's a simple closure. And because of the softness of the flap, you just need to snip a tiny slit, you don't need to make an extra whole hole, because it's very soft and pliable. We also have some other versions that are dyed. We've added embroidery, we have contrast stitching, and we can also do asymmetric closures. It doesn't have to be straight, and it doesn't have to be in the middle every time. Depending on the curve of your flap. By making these clutches, you'll get a great foundation of how to work with leather, and apply these techniques to make all sorts of accessories and leather bags.