

How to Tattoo on Leather

1) Leather Prep

- a) Prep your leather to cover (paring turn-ins, endcaps)
- b) Copy your lines from the leather onto a piece of binders board that's a little bigger than your leather.
- c) Paste the leather onto the binders board, lining up with the markings.
- d) Let dry.

2) Stencil Your Design

- a) Print out your design
- b) Get stencil paper, remove loose onion paper between thin white sheet and blue ink
- c) Put design on top of the stencil paper, and start tracing your lines with a thin ball point pen making sure the blue lines are transferring onto the thin white sheet. You want a thin pen because you'll want to completely cover the stencil with your tattoo or else you'll see the halo of your stencil.
- d) Put crop marks on stencil

3) Putting Stencil on Leather

- a) Put latex gloves on
- b) Tape your stencil onto the Davey board where you want it to land on your leather so you know you're hitting your crop marks.
- c) Put enough Stencil Stuff on leather to create a thin sheen when you hold it up. Not glooped on.
- d) Lay stencil on, following your crop marks
- e) Rub down with gloved hand, adding Stencil Stuff to top of thin white sheet to really adhere the blue ink down to leather. When you see the blue ink coming through white sheet, you're good. You can peel up a corner to see if it's down. Remember this is a guideline.
- f) If you don't like the placement then...it is what it is. I have never had good luck taking off the stencil. It looks like you messed up. Apparently you can use alcohol to rub off the ink but it just creates a smudge in my experience
- g) Let dry for 5 min. Can leave it on for however long.

4) Set up Your Tattoo Machine and Supplies.

- a) Prep your tattoo machine.
 - i) Rotary or coil machine, set up your foot pedal, voltage machine and clip cords. I'll grabbed the desired needle and pop the needle loop into the nipple.
 - ii) Pen machine, make sure the battery is charged and grab needle cartridge.
- b) Set up your machine to the needle depth of 2mm or so.
 - i) Rotary or coil machine, I do this by pushing down on the needle to its furthest point and see how much the needle sticks out of the cartridge. Screw the clamp tight.
 - ii) Pen machine, turn on the machine and rotate the bottom half left or right until you hear it click and get the desired height
- c) Grab some plastic cups, ink, A&D ointment, towels, diluted green soap, a cup of water and a copy of the art you're copying.

5) Start Tattooing!

- a) Rub a sheen of A&D ointment down wherever you are starting to tattoo. I add A&D ointment as I go down the tattoo and not on top of the fresh tattoo. I make sure to cover the whole thing (even the parts that aren't going to be tattooed) so there isn't any weird discoloration on the leather.
- b) Dip the needle in the ink while the machine is on.
- c) Test needle and ink on a plaquette or an edge that'll get covered.
- d) Start tattooing! Follow your stencil lines. Go slow.

6) Clean Up

- a) Once finished, now is the time for clean up.
- b) Spray the piece with diluted Green Soap in a spray bottle (1 part soap, 6 part water).
- c) Grab your shop towels and a brayer (or your hand) and lay the towel on top of tattoo and roll off as much ink as you can. I can use up to 20 towels. I have rubbed off the ink, but that leads to a lot of discoloring on the leather. I have found it's better to get a new towel every time and roll off as much as you can. I never wait for the ink to completely disappear on the towel. I let it dry and check it the next day.
- d) To clean you needles or cartridges, clean off the tip with a towel and then dip the needle into water as the machine is running. If it's a needle, take the machine apart and wipe the needle, if it's a cartridge then push the needle down to wipe off the needle.
- e) (I have used a Magic Eraser to clean up the tattoo before as well but I don't do this anymore because it seems to really seep the ink into the leather where it's not tattooed)

7) Touch-Up if Needed

- a) After the tattoo is dry (24 hours) I usually do a touch up, meaning I can see that I didn't black out some parts like I wanted to. So I'll put A&D ointment down again, and tattoo over the lines or the shaded parts again.

8) Peel, Crop Marks and Wax.

- a) Peel leather off Davey board. Spray back of leather with water and peel off the remaining Davey board.
- b) Now you're ready to cover like a normal book. Make sure your crop marks are still lining with the real book.
- c) Once covered and dry (24 hours) you can now put Renaissance Wax on the tattooed parts using a rag or a q-tip. You do this as a last step because you still need the leather to let water in and the wax will seal everything down.

Questions & Answers:

What are the differences in needles?

RL is round liner. RS is round shader. M is magnum. The number to the left, indicates how many needles there are. 11RL means 11 needles round liner.

What are the layers of stencil paper?

There are 4 layers. The thin white sheet at the top, the loose onion skin next, the ink and then a backing sheet. You remove the onion skin when you're ready to stencil. When you start to

draw with a ball point pen, the ink transfers to the thin white sheet. Check to see if you're doing it right with the first two lines.

Why is leather puffy when I black it out?

Why is the leather indented when I use a RL?

I'm guessing here, but I think when you black out the tattoo, you're using a 23M (or so), so there are a lot of needles being dragged along the leather and a lot of ink being injected into the leather which makes it puffy. When you use a 3RL, you are basically slicing the leather so the leather looks indented.

Can I gild on this? Onlays, inlays?

Yes! Just be aware that if you add more moisture to the leather, there is a chance of seepage from the tattoo.

Stenciling on dark leather.

The stencil shows up metallic purple when I put it down on dark brown calf, so I'm more free-hand with my stencil and fill it in as I see fit. You could buy a red-tinged stencil that helps for visibility.

Why did the leather blow out on the edge?

The leather is parred down to nothing, so when you tattooed over it, there was no where for the needle/ink to go. You can see that the needles go so fast in the machine that it just acts like a knife. There will be tension there too when you pull the turn-ins that won't help your cause either.

What kind of leather should I use?

Pergamena, Hewit and Harmatan are all lovely leathers to use. Look for goat skins with as little grain as possible. You can mess with color but I go for lighter skins since it'll darken with the inks.

What kind of tattoo machine do I own?

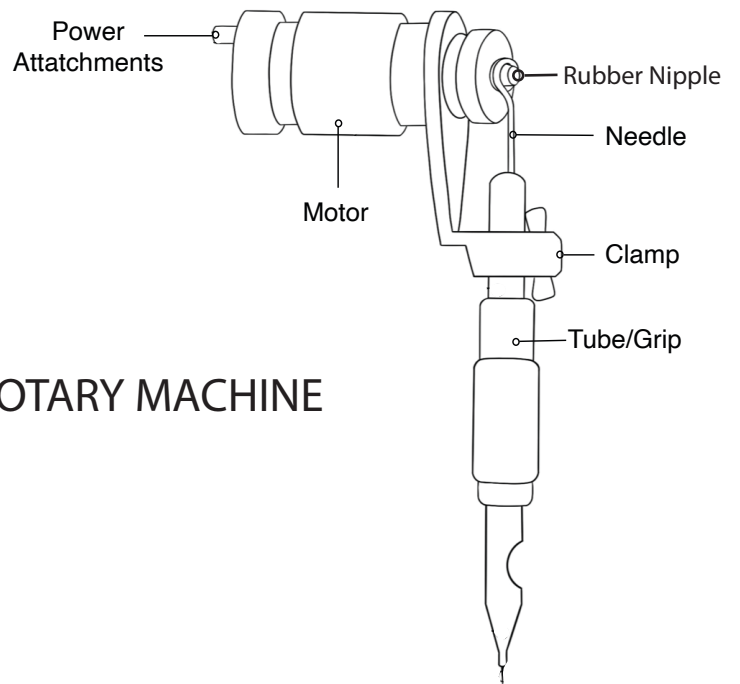
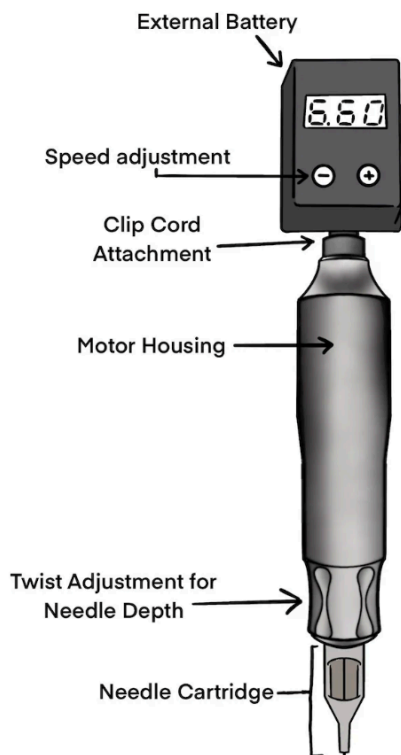
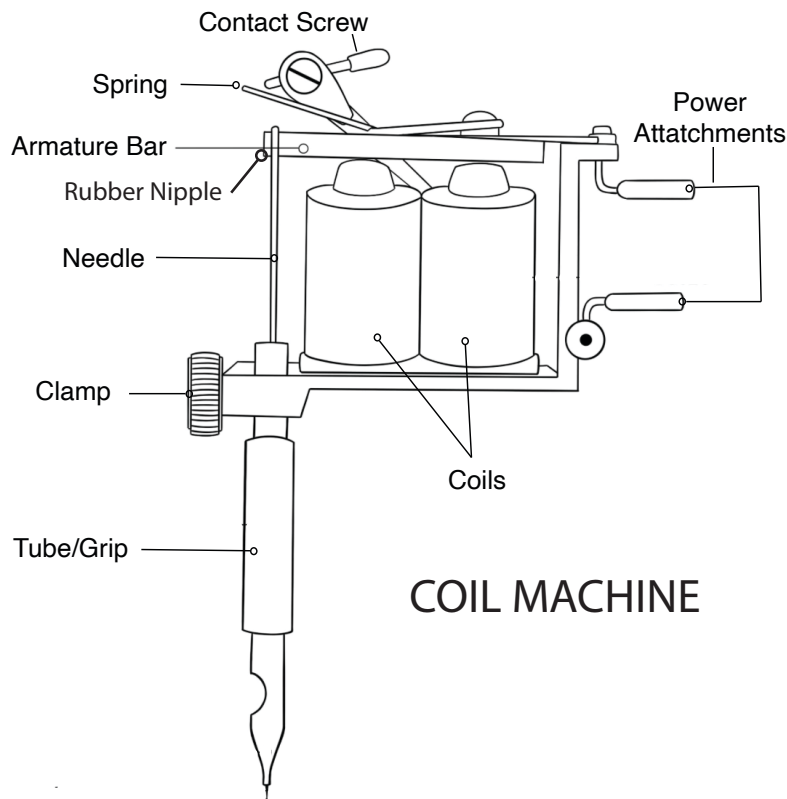
Dragonhawk extreme rotary tattoo machine, Phantom Coil tattoo machine, and a Mast Tour pro plus rotary pen tattoo machine with rechargeable battery.

What kind of tattoo ink did I use?

Solid Ink or Eternal Ink

Why do you use A&D ointment?

You use A&D ointment to cover the leather before you tattoo. This is to create a hydrophobic barrier so the ink doesn't go all over the place. Vaseline and coconut oil can be used as well.



ROTARY MACHINE

By Kate Vosler

Materials List:

- Davey Board
- Leather
- Tattoo machine
- Needles: stick or cartridge
- Ink
- A&D ointment
- Thermal transfer paper
- Ball point pen
- Green Soap
- Stencil Stuff
- Cups to hold ink
- Cup of water
- Paper towels
- Brayer
- Latex gloves
- Renaissance Wax

Draw in your own heart tattoo designs!

