

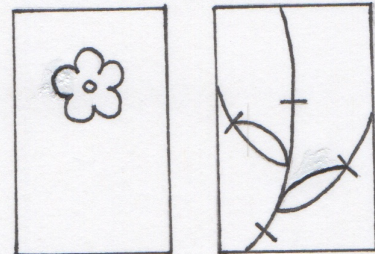
Hand Tooling on Books with Foils and Leather Inlays

Because foils have an upper layer of a thin plastic, you can use a stylus tool to draw across the foil to add it to the material on a book cover. Foils work on leather, book cloth and paper so it is a way to add decoration to most of the books you make.

The best way to do your tooling is to first make a tooling template so you can go over the lines of your design multiple times. I start with making a drawing, and then I use tracing paper to draw it again. With the tracing paper, I can check to see if it fits well on the book cover. Transfer the drawing onto a piece of 3 ply Bristol board. You will be using the board as a template for shaping your design. In order to do this, first cover the lines on the other side of the tracing paper with a lead pencil and place it on the Bristol board then draw it again.



For some designs, it is better to break up the drawing so there will be several templates for tooling the full design. Before cutting the lines I use a red pencil to make marks where a line ends because when you cut the Bristol board some of the cuts will have to go to the edge of the board or overlap another cut. Cut some blue removable tape cut into small strips so that after you make the first cut on the Bristol board, you can hold it back together for cutting the design.



When the cutting and taping of the design is done, it needs to be held in place on the book for the foil tooling. For cloth bound books, the blue removable tape can be used but for leather, the tape can damage the surface. For leather covers, do the decorative tooling before the endpapers are glued on to the cover boards. Take a strip of paper that can wrap around the top and bottom edges of the book and use the blue tape inside on the cover board. Then tape the Bristol board on to the strips of paper on the front.

Heat up the stylus tool and check the temperature with a damp sponge, it is the right temperature when you hear the sizzle sound when it is close to 250°. You can lift up a section of the Bristol board and then start drawing a blind line. Then slip in a piece of the foil over the blind line. Check the stylus tool temperature and go over the area again then pull the foil away to see how it went on the book. Then do a second layer of foil. Continue with another section of the design.

Another decorative method using stylus tools is leather line inlays. As with foil, first heat up the stylus tool and check the temperature with a damp sponge. Lift up a section of the Bristol board and do a blind line. When working on leather, you can take a small brush dipped in water, then brush along the tooled blind line and then go over it again with the heated stylus tool to darken and harden the line.

Now you need a thin pared piece of leather cut to fit into the blind line. To help in cutting a strip about 1 to 1.5 millimeters wide, the leather can be pasted down on a piece of plastic and when it is dry, you can pull it away from the plastic. This stiffens the leather so you can cut several millimeter strips. Then check to see which ones fit well into the blind line.

To attach the strip to the leather on the book you can use PVA glue. First put a drop of PVA on a piece of paper and drag the first inch of the strip across the glue. Then drag it over some of the paper so there is not too much glue on it. Then place the glued section into the blind line and rub down the first 1/2-inch. Use a small glue brush and add glue to another 1 or 2 inches. Then rub down the part of the glued area into the line.

If some of the glue does starts to come out around the line inlay, use a folded piece of Japanese paper to give you a precise edge to clean the leather surface. Then keep gluing until you are close to the end of the line. Check the length and cut it off to the length needed and glue the end down. If the line is too close to the edge of the cover, the line can be pulled off with to much handling of it. You can poke a hole at the end and tuck in a small bit of the line inlay covered with glue into the hole to secure the ends.

Line Tooling Jig

This is a line jig made from two pieces of book board that I taped together. One piece is about an inch and a half wide and the second piece is about five to six inches wide and both pieces are 11 inches long.

To make the jig, I laid the thinner piece on top of the other larger piece and wrapped the packing tape around the edge of the two pieces. Then I folded the thinner piece back over and put a piece of tape on the other side. This allowed the thinner piece to fold up so I could slip a piece of foil under it while the larger piece was held in place with a weight.

Use a clear plastic ruler so you can line up the jig with the edge of the cover, and put a weight on the larger side to keep it in place.

Place two pieces of the blue low tack masking tape on the edge of the smaller side to show where the line should start and end. When the foil is placed under the jig you cannot see where to start and end without those blue markers. You can use a stylus tool or a line pallet to make the line once you are set up, because they glide across the foil.

