

## Make your own Leather Wallet



For thousands of years people have created clothings, tools, bags, armors and a million other things from leather. Leather making today is still a very important craft executed by professionals as well as hobbyists all over the world. You can become a Leathersmith or a "Leather craftsperson" by learning the trade through an apprenticeship. There are also modern apprenticeships to learn the tanning process that is the process of turning animal hide into leather. Apprenticeships to become a leatherworker or tanner also existed in colonial times. Before creating leather products, the animal hide has to be tanned to create the leather. Leather tanning is separate from leathersmithing. For more information on leather craft in colonial times, [see \*Thomas K. Ford, The Leatherworker in Eighteenth-Century Williamsburg\*, ebook at Gutenberg.org.](#)

The purpose of this leather making activity is to provide you with an easy project to introduce you to this traditional, useful and interesting craft.

These instructions include two types of wallets: The brown and beige wallets with the long flap have one pocket under the flap and one open pocket at the back. The small black wallet with a button has two pockets under the flap.



## You need:

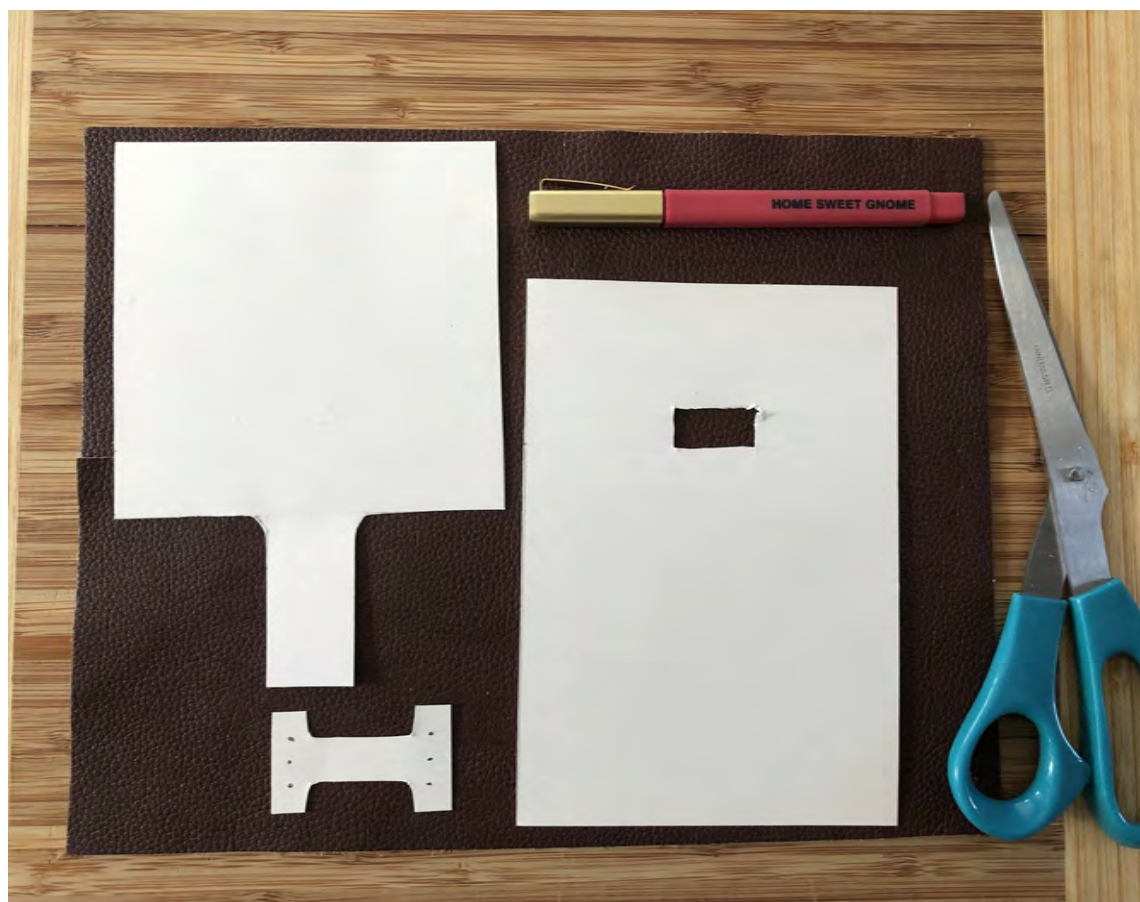
- A piece of soft leather such as Suede leather (used for the beige and black wallet in the picture), at least letter 8.5"x11" size or what fits the pattern to be purchased at a craft store
- A thin marker and a ruler
- Scissors or a knife to cut the leather
- An awl or leather punching tool
- Leather thread, round cording, 1mm or 0.03" - for the small wallet artificial sinew was used
- Leather needles to fit the cording or artificial sinew
- A shank button for the small wallet.



## Instructions for wallet with long flap

### Step 1: Drafting the leather pieces

Print the pattern on the last page of these instructions. Cut out and trace the pieces onto the leather. For the small wallet, use the measurements from the pattern on page 13 to draft your pieces onto the leather. Cut the pieces out with the knife or scissors.





## Step 2: Creating the flap closure

Punch six holes into the closure piece, three on each side, as shown on the pattern.



Cut two slits into the rectangular piece at the markings of the pattern and push the closure piece through the slits from the right side to the left or the frontside to the backside. The holes from the closure piece will be on the left side of the rectangular piece that will be on the inside of the wallet. If the closure piece doesn't fit, adjust the slits or closure piece by either making the slits longer or the closure piece thinner.





Mark the holes for the closure piece on the rectangular piece by tracing through the holes of the closure piece.



Then punch three holes under each side of the closure piece. Take the closure piece out again or hold it up.



Sew the closure piece to the rectangular piece. Start by putting the needle between the closure piece and rectangular piece and push through the first hole.



Come back from the front side through the middle hole and through the closure piece.





Then push the needle through the last hole and come back to the middle again.



Then push through the first hole again to meet the tail of the cording between the layers. Finish off with a double knot and cut the ends.



**Step 3: Punching sewing holes**

Use ruler and marker and mark holes around the two long edges of the rectangular piece. Space the marks  $\frac{1}{4}$ " from the edge and from each other. Using the awl or punching tool, punch small holes along the edges of the pieces as shown on the pattern pieces. You can use the rectangular piece to mark the holes on the flap piece by laying it on top of it. At the end where the flap is, leave 1.25" of the flap piece without holes.





**Step 4: Sewing pieces together**

Lay the flap piece on the rectangular piece matching the first holes of both pieces.



**Sew the pieces together using a whip stitch or a running stitch.**

**Running stitch as used in the beige wallet:**

Cut a 15"-20" long piece of cording or artificial sinew and lace through the leather needle. Push the needle through the first hole of the flap and the rectangular piece starting from the flap side (inside). Leave a 3" tail. Come back through the second hole from the rectangular piece and the flap piece. Then fold the rectangular piece over and push the needle through the second last hole of the rectangular piece. Then continue with a normal running stitch.

When you get to the end, turn and sew back using running stitches again. When you are back at the beginning, stitch back two or three stitches to secure the ends. Finish between the layers and cut off the cording. Stitch back the tail end as well.





**Whip stitch as used in the brown wallet:**

Push the needle through the first hole of the flap and the rectangular piece starting from the flap side (inside). Leave a 3" tail.



Fold the rectangular piece over, wrap the cording over the edge and push the needle through the last hole of the right side rectangular piece, then through the second hole of the flap piece and through the second hole of the rectangular piece.



Wrap the cording over the edge again and push through the next holes through all three layers. Then continue with the whip stitch until the end of the row.



Then wrap the cording over and continue whip stitching all the way back.



Make a knot between the layers, lace through the ends through the layers and cut.





## Instructions for small wallet with button

### Step 1: Drafting the leather pieces

For the small wallet, use the measurements from the pattern to draft your pieces onto the leather. If you are using black suede leather as in the example here, it's advisable to use a white chalk pencil for markings.

Cut the pieces out with the knife or scissors. Then punch holes as shown on the pattern picture below.

The measurements are: for the large rectangle 8" x 4" with 21 holes on each side, starting at 2.75" from the top. For the small rectangle 4" x 2.5" with 10 holes on each side.



### Step 2: Sewing pieces together

Sew the pieces together with running stitches. For this small black wallet, artificial sinew was used. Start with running stitches. When you reach the end, stitch back into the second last stitch and continue with running stitches back. When you get to the end, stitch three stitches back. See step 4 of the instruction for the wallet with a long flap.



### Step 3: Making the button hole

Choose a shank button and mark the buttonhole on the inside of the leather. Use the diameter of the button to determine the length of the cut. Then cut the buttonhole with the knife in the length that fits your button.





**Step 4: Sewing the button**

Use the buttonhole to mark the correct place for your button. Use the punching tool to make two small holes  $\frac{1}{4}$ " apart. Sew on the button with the artificial sinew as you would sew on any button.

