

Carving a Horn

Horns are hard, slippery, and unmanageable, so today we pin them down first.



From A Manual of Wood-carving (Leland, 1891) · public domain

"Pin it, outline it, gouge it flat, then file it smooth."

1

Secure the Horn

Never hold the horn in one hand or between your knees while you carve it, since this is very dangerous. Instead nail cross-pieces to a board over its ends so a portion is exposed to work on, or fix a piece of wood to the table with a hole for the horn's small end while the butt rests fixed on the table; if you use holdfasts or clamps instead, take the utmost care, since they can slip when too much pressure is put on them.

2

Outline the Pattern

Once the horn is secured, outline your pattern using a V tool or a very small graining gouge.

3

Cut Away the Ground

Cut away the ground first with a quarter-flat gouge, then finish the cutting with flat gouges.

4

Work the Bent File

Use the bent file freely on the horn; it will be necessary in many places.

5

Finish with Files

Once the horn is roughed, finish it with careful touching, or with fine files and glass-paper.