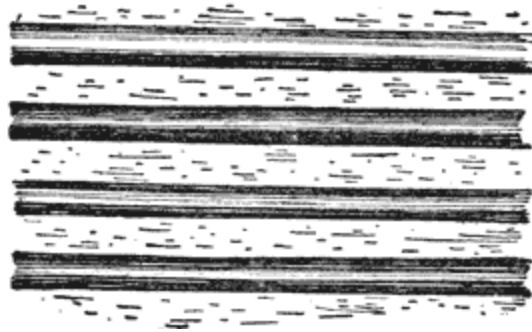


Cutting Grooves with a Gouge

A straight little ditch in pine, cut slowly enough to teach you everything else.



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

"Cut a little, not it all, then cut again till it's right."

1 Fasten and Mark

Fasten a piece of smooth pine, at least six inches by six and half an inch thick, to the table before you, since carving unfastened wood lets the tool slip and inflict a serious wound; always keep both hands on the tool, never holding the panel down with the other. Then draw two pencil lines across the grain, one-fourth of an inch apart.

2 Hold the Gouge

Take a fluter or gouge of semi-circular curve, one-fourth of an inch in diameter, and hold its handle firmly in your right hand, with your wrist and part of your forearm resting on the bench. Place the two first fingers of your left hand on the face of the blade about an inch from the cutting edge to direct it and stop it advancing too fast; some also rest the thumb below the blade, holding the tool between the thumb and the two fingers.

3 Cut the Groove

Carefully cut away the wood between the lines to form a semi-circular groove, but do not remove it all at once. Take away very little at first to make a shallow groove, then cut it over again until the incision is perfect.

4 Mind the Work

Keep your mind on your work, since a careless movement may cause the tool to slip and ruin it. Let every stroke be made and regulated by purpose and design, not haphazard or at random, thinking exactly what you wish to cut and leaving nothing to chance.

5 Practice Straight Grooves

Cut perhaps twenty straight grooves with great care before going further. Only then move on to cross-barred grooves, and after that to curved ones.