



I Finished a Woodcarving!

*Carving
a Stick
and a Knife*

It's Finished!

Woodcarving a Stick and a Knife

Many thanks go to:
Wendy, Doug & Gaye & Nick & Joe & Anna & Jess, Rachel, John & Nikki, and Kevin
to whom this book is dedicated.



It's Finished!

Woodcarving a Stick and a Knife

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Whittle a Stick

I Finished a Woodcarving.

**I promise that you, too can finish a woodcarving,
if you promise to start one.**

How do I know that you will finish one?

**Because the first stick you find is already a finished
woodcarving! It's already very cool looking. It's shape is
cool. It's color and wood are beautiful. And it can be
anything you imagine.**

So, if you start by finding a stick – you're finished!

**If you improve your carving by rounding off the end, you're
finished, again! And your carving is improved. If you whittle
a handle or carve a design into it; it is finished, again. And it
always gets better and better.**



Key Idea! If you start, you're finished. So, just start!



Find a stick.

Did you find one? Then you are done. On the next pages, you will see what I did to mine to make it even better.



Key Idea! Breaking the branches off or smoothing the rough spots with your knife will make your stick nicer to hold.



Find a knife.

This is the knife I used. It folds. My good friend gave it to me as a present.



Key Idea! Any knife is good. It's best if it is sharp. A dull knife can slip on the wood.



Hold your knife.

Sometimes I hold the knife like this. Sometimes I put my thumb on the back of the blade where you see the ridges.



To whittle, push forward.

The hand holding the wood must be behind the knife, so that you don't cut yourself. The push stroke is forward. But don't just go straight forward. Stroke it forward and a little away from the wood on a diagonal. This will allow the knife to slide through the wood better.



Key Idea! If your stroke is on a nice diagonal you may see little curls of wood come off. If you do, Congratulations! These curls are good!

Whittle off the end.

Some people say “whittle” and some say “carve”. They both mean to stroke your knife on a diagonal: forward and away from the wood. I rounded the end of my stick.



Key Idea!

The best tip I can ever give you is this. If you push your knife both forward and away from the wood on a diagonal at the same time, your carving goes much, much better!

Round the other end.
I whittled the other end, too! Why? I don't know – it was fun.



Pick a place for a handle.
I grabbed the stick here. So, this is where I'll
whittle a handle.



Whittle off the bark.

To whittle a handle, scrape off the bark.



Make it smooth.

You are finished when it feels good to your hand. Remember to keep your holding hand behind your knife hand.

Key Idea! If it is too hard to push, try aiming your blade flatter along the wood. Maybe you were trying to push your blade too deeply into the wood.





Cut a single spiral.

Cut into bark by pressing down gently.
Be careful not to slip and cut your hand.
Go around and around the stick on a
spiral.

Cut a second spiral.

Cut a second spiral by following
closely along the first one. As you do,
lift off the bark with your knife.



You're finished!

But what did we make? I think it is a magic wand. No – it's the handle for a whip – I'll tie a rope to it, later. Or maybe I'll carve it flatter and use it for a letter opener. Maybe I'll decorate it more.

Sample Sticks



Whittling a Stick you can make a:

- Magic Wand
- Sword
- Whip
- Devil Sticks
- Bull Roarer
- Barrel & Peg
- Balancing Man
- Hiking Stick
- Fishing Pole
- Knight's Quarter Stave
- Hobby Horse
- Stickball Stick



Carve a Basic Knife



First, find a stick.

 Key Idea! Some wood is softer, some is harder. Try them out! Soft wood may be more fun.

**I love the white pine tree.
It has long, straight needles.**

Find a knife.

I used a kitchen knife this time. You can also buy woodcarving knives. Or you can use folding knives.



Start carving.

Keep your hand with the knife in front of your other hand.

Push it away from you.

 Key Idea! Push it both forward and to the side at the same time. This makes carving a lot easier. Your hand should slide on a diagonal.



Carve off the bark.

I also used a carving knife I bought.



Round the end.

Remember to keep your holding hand behind your knife hand.



Key Idea! If it is too hard to push, try aiming your blade flatter along the wood. Maybe you were trying to push your blade too deeply into the wood.



Try different strokes.

Sometimes I push one thumb with the other.

 Key Idea!

Pushing one thumb with the other is a very powerful stroke!



Try the draw stroke.

Put your thumb on the wood. Face the knife towards you.

Now pull the knife towards you by closing your hand.

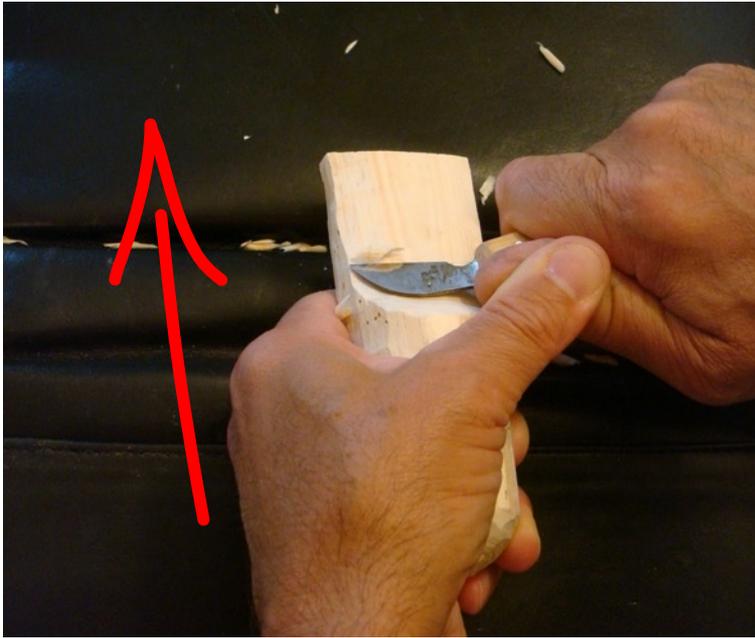
 Key Idea!

Do not let the draw stroke come near your skin!



Finish rounding.

Congratulations!
You are doing very well.
You have finished rounding one end.



Make the knife blade.

You can use the main push stroke.
Or you can use the powerful
'thumb-against-thumb' stroke.



Carve it flat.

If your knife hand can find a
thumbhold, you can also use the draw
stroke.



Finish the flattening.

You are done when you are happy with the thickness of your flat knife blade.



**Key Idea! Don't carve the blade too thin.
It's just wood. It could break.**



Shape the blade.

Make a curve on the bottom of the blade that goes all of the way to the end of the knife. I also put a little curve upward at the top of the blade.



Finish your knife with the handle!
Make the handle feel good to your own hand.
Congratulations!

You have completed an actual wood carving!



Key Idea! You can use both the push and the draw stroke alternatively to make the handle curves.



What if you improve your knife?

You could make the blade taper more. And you could make the handle be in better proportion to the blade.

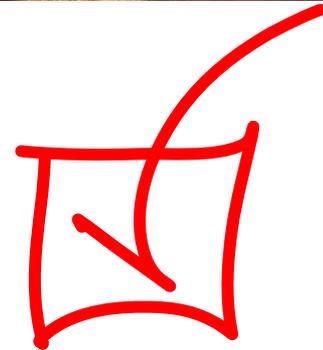


It's done again!

In a way, you have completed two wood carvings!



Key Idea! You can always rework a finished project. Sometimes it's fun to improve it!



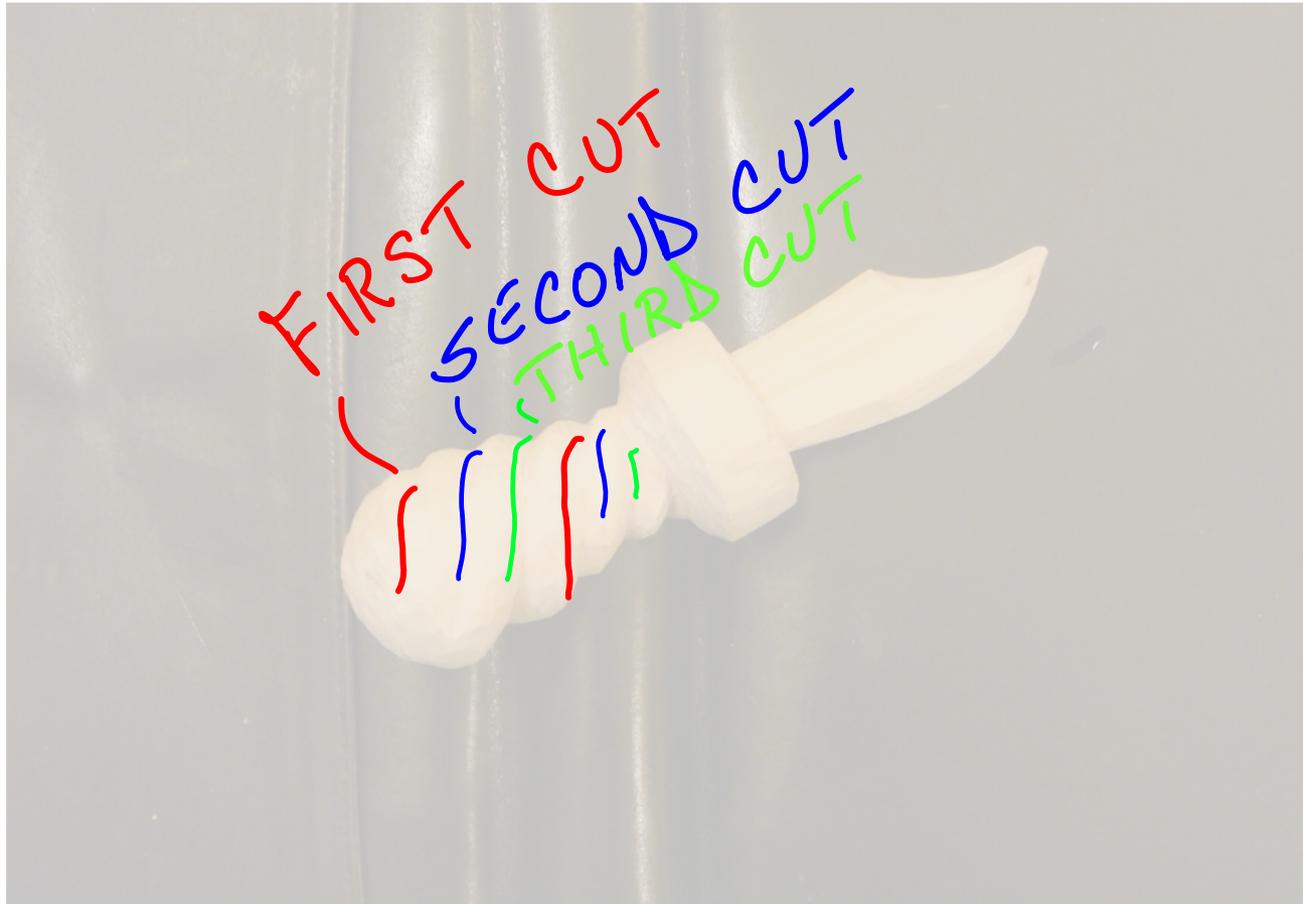
A circular inset image showing a wooden carving of a lion's head with a knife resting on its base. The carving is light-colored wood, and the knife has a dark handle and a silver blade. The background of the inset is a soft, out-of-focus blue and white.

Carve a Fancy Knife



Start by carving a basic knife.

This one has a round handle like the basic knife in the earlier section of this book. The finger guard that is carved between the handle and the blade is also round.



Cut spiral grooves into the handle.

Cut a groove along a spiral path from the end of the handle to the guard. Then divide the space between parts of the spiral.

I divided the space into two more spirals.



Round the spirals.

Between grooves is the flat handle.

Round this area.



Key Idea! Make slopes from the flat areas to the grooves.



Square the guard.

**The guard was the round shape of the branch.
I've made it square – just for fun!**



Carve a wolf head.

This can be advanced or tricky. If you think you are not an artist, try it anyway.



Key Idea!

Start by carving away from the **ears** and proceeding downwards. They are the highest points. (Don't forget to leave a long, pointy **nose**.)



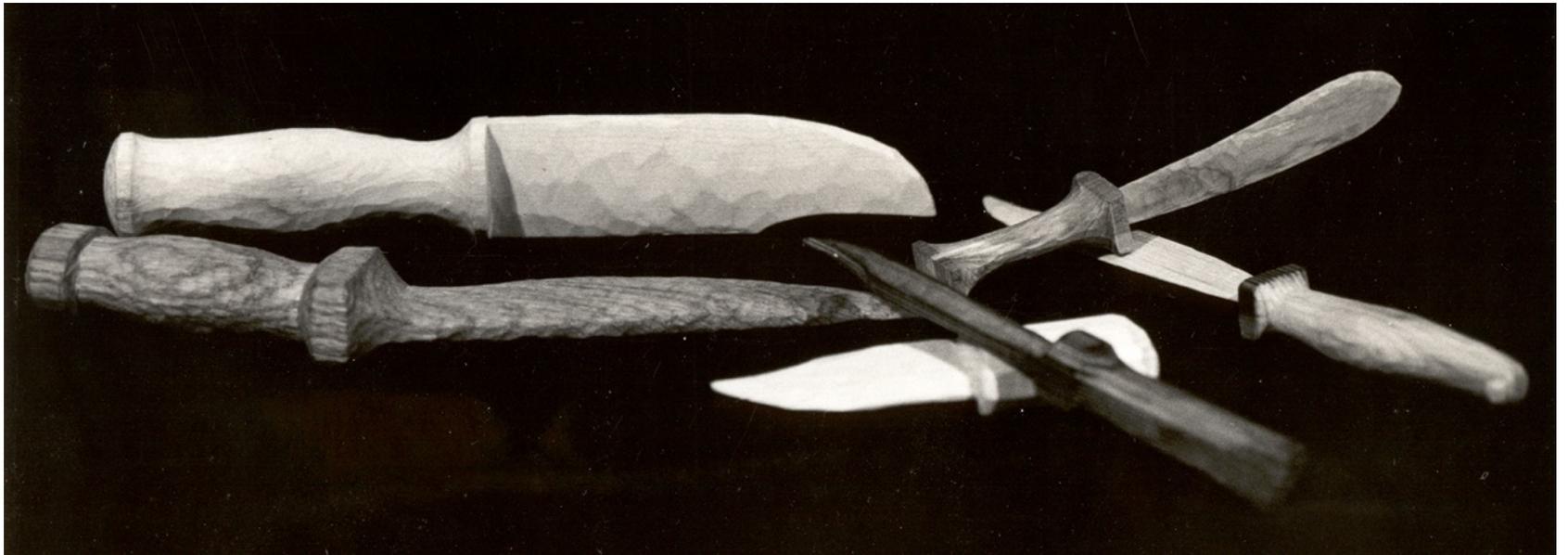
Finishing touches.

I just had to finish him up with colored pencils. Then I rubbed some non-toxic, white glue all over him.



Key Idea! The glue is a great idea! It dries clear and protects the wood. It's real messy on your hands – but that's part of the fun! And it washes off in a minute.

Sample Knives



Notes