LE PREVO
LEATHER & CRAFT SUPPLIES
Est. 1973

MAKING A LEATHER BELT

Simply put a belt is a strip of leather with a buckle at one end and holes at the other to fasten it around the waist. Belts can be made with a few simple tools.

It's best to pick a buckle first then cut the strap to fit it.



Buckles are measured by the width of the strap that will fit through it:

There are two broad categories of buckles – HALF and FULL.

The rear of a full buckle acts as a belt loop / keeper to secure the belt end.



HALF



FULL

A half buckle uses a separate loop / keeper to secure the belt end.

Belt leather can be bought as a strap cut to the required width or you can cut one yourself from a suitable hide with a simple adjustable width strap cutting tool.

T39



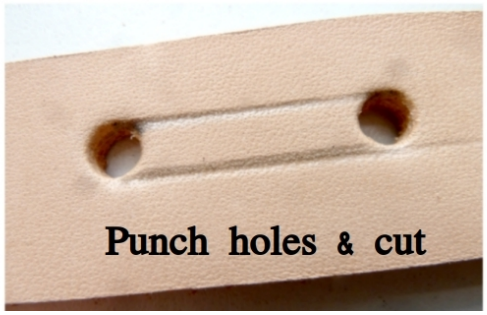
Adjustable wooden strap cutter.

The strap needs a slot in one end to allow the prong of the buckle to pass through when the end is folded over and secured.



Slot punch

This can either be done with a slot punch tool or by making two holes and cutting out the section between them.



Punch holes & cut

SECURING THE BUCKLE

Buckles can either be fixed with stitching or rivets.

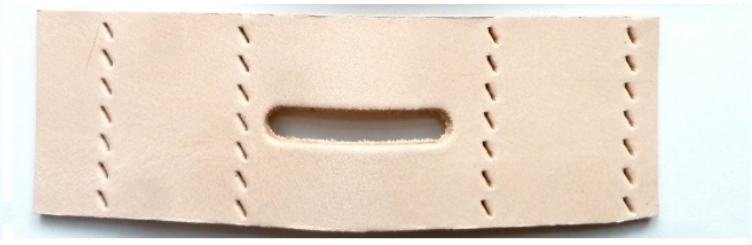
A full buckle will only need holes for two rivets / one row of stitching either side of the slot.

A half buckle will need holes for four rivets / two rows of stitching either side of the slot.

The space between the two rows of stitching / rivets will hold the belt loop / keeper in place.



Rivet set up



Stitching set up

Narrower belts may only need one rivet on either side of the slot.

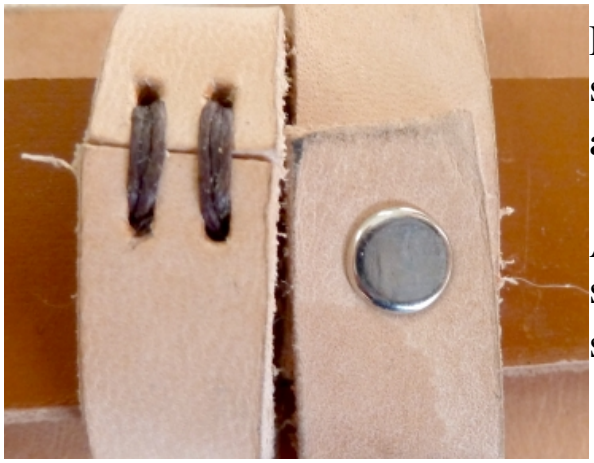
Half buckles secured to belt with belt loops set in place:



Rivets

Stitching

BELT LOOP / KEEPER



Loops can be made from a narrow strip of leather joined by stitching or a rivet.

Alternatively we have a large selection of metal loops in different sizes and styles.

ADDING HOLES

To work out at what length to add fastening holes on the belt you can either add 2" to your regular trouser size or take a measurement from a belt you already have:



A. End of belt (not including buckle).

B. The hole that you currently use.

Find the centre point of the width of the belt and make that measurement the middle hole in the belt and add an even number of holes either side of that – usually at 1" intervals. That means the belt will fit you if your weight fluctuates up or down.

Holes can be added with a single hole punch (used with a hammer) or a hand operated rotary hole punch. The distance between holes can be measured with a ruler, dividers or one of our belt hole templates



(www.leprevo.co.uk/book-list.htm#templates).

STRAP END CUTTING

This can be as simple as cutting a diagonal line across the end of the belt.

Alternatively we sell strap end cutting tools in a variety of sizes and shapes which are used with a hammer.



Strap end chisel - Pointed end

We also stock belt end templates which you draw around and then cut with a knife (www.leprevo.co.uk/book-list.htm#templates).

BURNISHING EDGES

Burnishing uses heat and pressure to create a polished finish on the edge of leather. This works best on veg tan leathers – less effective on split leathers.

You can use a piece of scrap leather or a wooden polishing tool for this:

T143



Wooden edge slicker - used to burnish leather edges

T187



Multi groove wooden slicker - used to burnish leather edges

Using these tools with edge polishing finishes (Gum Tragacanth or Tokonole) produces a nice shiny finish:

C34	 Tokonole burnishing gum	Premium Japanese edge finish and sealer for burnishing edges of leatherwork to a fine finish	120 g
C39	 Gum Tragacanth	The classic edge finish and sealer for burnishing Dries clear and buffs to a mellow sheen	4 oz 118 ml
C112		As per C39 but decanted into a plain bottle	approx. 500 ml
C122		As per C39 - but really big	US Gallon 3.79 ltr

WHICH LEATHER TO USE?

www.leprevo.co.uk/straps.htm

Our cowhide split straps are ideal for making economically priced belts and available in a wide range of colours. Split will take some embossing but not as well as veg tan leathers.

For a higher quality belt a pre-dyed veg tan leather is ideal but there is a limited choice of colours. Suitable for embossing / stamping and tooling.

For a high quality belt that you can dye to your preferred colour natural (undyed) veg tan straps are the way to go. This leather is also very suitable for embossing / stamping and tooling.