

**Basic Leather Working, Strap Creation,  
and Commercial Shortcuts for Gaston  
Phebus or “I always wanted to ‘Bling Up’  
my horse or hound, but didn’t know  
where to start...”**

**Else Hunrvogt, OP, OWGS**

**Disclaimer: There are many, many places to buy project supplies. Sources listed here are merely a starting place. Talk to folks who do leather working for other suggestions and never forget that internet search engines are your friend. Plugging in the words seen here can lead to new avenues to explore.**

# Acquiring Straps

**Strap cutters help for making long consistent cuts from leather hides.**



**Strap cutters can be adjusted by measurement.**



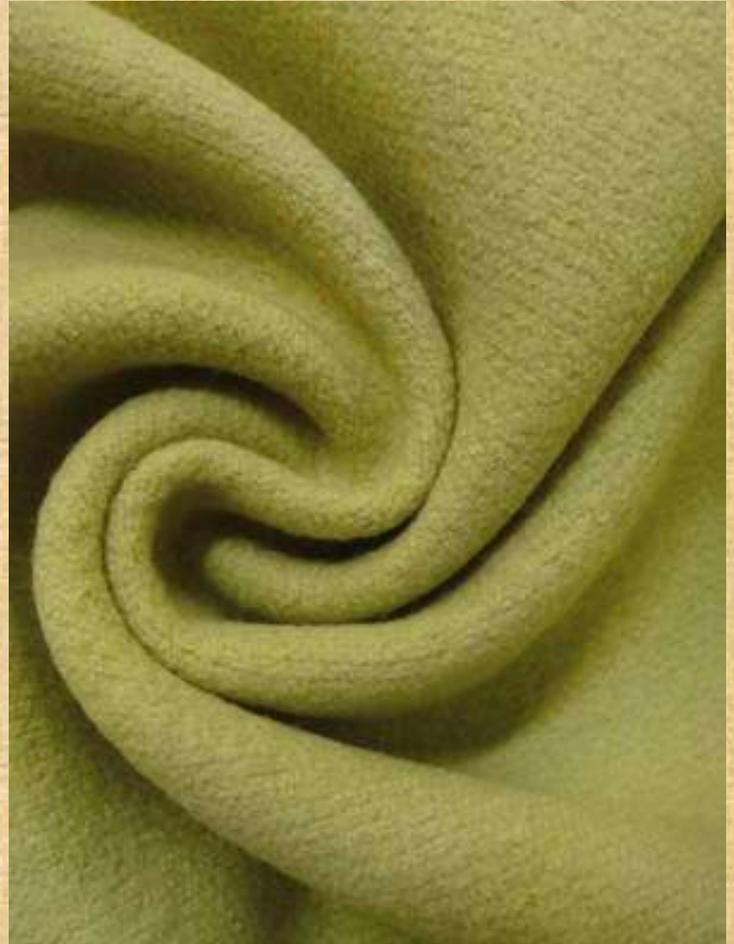
**Keep the strap cutter flush to the edge and draw along to leather.**



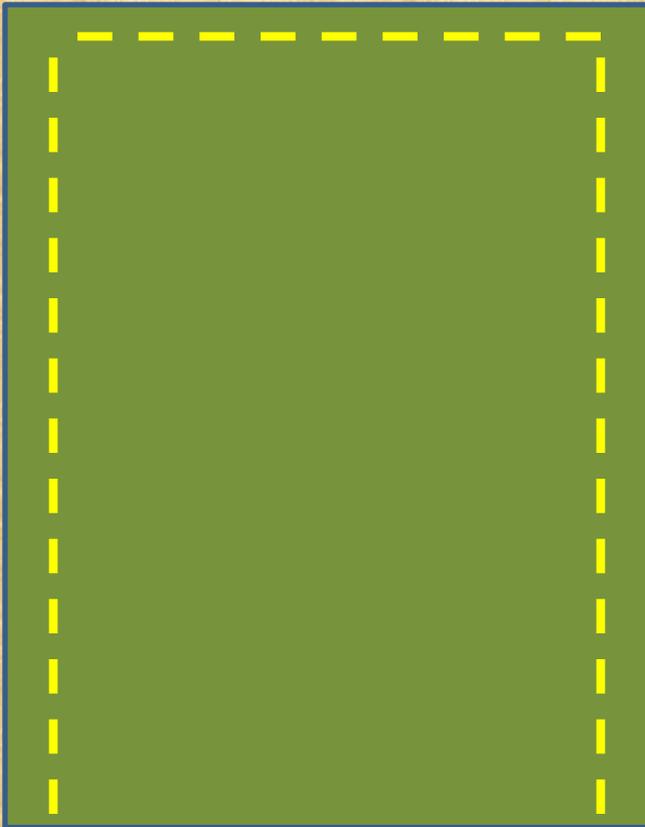
**Straps can be purchased pre-cut and sometimes pre-dyed, pre-tooled, and/or pre-braided from commercial suppliers. Try searching for belt blanks.**



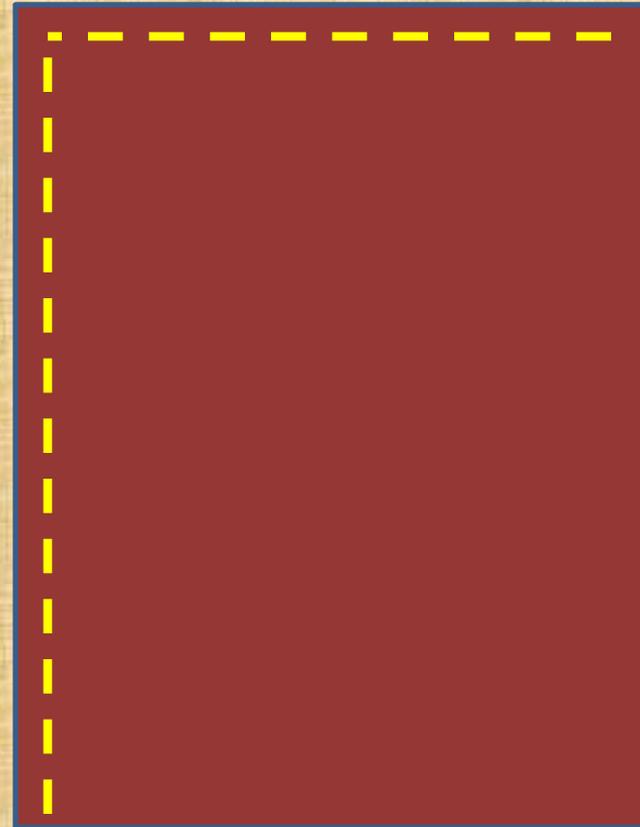
**Straps can also be made from heavy fabric. Coat weight wool can be dagged without fraying at the cut edge.**



**If using lighter weight fabric, you may need to sew tubes to create stability. Sew and turn long strips and cut to fit.**



**With two layers, sew 3 edges and turn**



**Two layers with a folded edge, sew two edges and turn.**

# **More Color!**

**Animal equipment frequently ventures  
beyond brown and black.**

Dyes are commercially available. Bright colors for leather mimic those found in medieval manuscripts. Dyes can be mixed to develop the shade you want.



**Commercial applicator sponges are very useful for applying dye.**



**Finishing dyed leather helps to darken the color and minimize bleeding.**



Oiling leather will  
darken the  
appearance of many  
dyes. It can reduce  
the number of coats  
of stain you need to  
apply if dye  
application is even  
and if you are seeking  
a darker appearance.



**Undyed leather equipment can be dyed.  
Bright colors mimic the manuscripts.**



**Commercially purchased water loops dyed to match the rest of the project.**



<http://www.chicksaddlery.com/page/CDS/PROD/1011/233900>

\$20 brow band head stall



**Searching for undyed  
bridle or reins or undyed  
harness leather can lead  
you to lots of products  
that can be 'blinged up'  
with minimal labor and  
expense.**



\$19 one ear headstall

<http://www.chicksaddlery.com/page/CDS/PROD/1011/233000>

**The same trick works for dogs. Search for undyed leather collar, martingale collar, spiked collar, or leash.**

<http://www.dogsupplies.com/products/Bully-Extra-Heavy-Oiled-Leather-Dog-Collar.html>

**\$7 Heavy Duty Collar – Ready for metal bling and dye**



**Holding It Together**  
**Making Fasteners Work For You While**  
**Adding Beauty and Stability**

# Rotary punch



**Hammer punches are excellent for setting holes in thick or tough leather.**



# Equipment can be tied together with leather lacing



**Lacing equipment together or to the saddle is an excellent means of attachment. Leather lacing can even be dyed to match the rest of the project.**



**Buckles can be purchased commercially and fastened to the leather with rivets or sewing.**



# Needles for Hand Sewing Leather



# Sewing awl with waxed black thread



**Rivets can join two or more layers of leather. Grommets can reinforce holes. Both come in a variety of sizes and materials and may serve a decorative function. Rivets can have decorative washers added to change appearance.**



Chicago screws come in a variety of sizes, materials, and lengths. There are even extenders that can be added to existing Chicago screws to let them go through more layers of leather. Also Chicago screws are reusable and can be fastened and unfastened.



[http://www.outwestsaddlery.com/html/brass\\_bronze\\_stainless\\_conc.html](http://www.outwestsaddlery.com/html/brass_bronze_stainless_conc.html)

<http://www.tandyleatherfactory.com/en-usd/home/departments/Conchos/Conchos.aspx>

**Conchos come in  
Chicago screw,  
slotted for lacing,  
with ring backs for  
rosettes, and on  
screw posts for  
attachment into  
solid items.**



# Front of a rosette on a browband.



**Back of a rosette on a brow band.**



**Leather keepers  
act as spacers on  
some bridles and  
can be replaced  
with rosettes to  
improve the  
medieval  
appearance.**



**Bling for Bling's Sake**

**Many burial finds of belt mounts also make good fittings for bridles, barding, collars, and leashes.**

<https://www.quietpress.com/later.html>



<https://www.quietpress.com/saxonbelt.html#B47>

**You can even buy original finds and  
cast your own pieces**



<http://talbotsfineaccessories.com/cgi-bin/antiquities.cgi>

**Or buy items that someone else has cast.**



<http://www.revivalclothing.com/bucklesandbeltfindings.aspx>

**Remember simple and elegant is still elegant.**

