

SILVER ROPE-EDGE LACING

FOR MINIATURE SADDLES

BR1

This instruction sheet will show you how to simply and easily create a silver-laced "rope-edge" appearance to miniature tack items.

Genuine sterling silver stripping can be used (*Rio Rondo part #SSL1*) as well as narrow (approx 1/16") strips cut from the bottom of an aluminum pie plate.

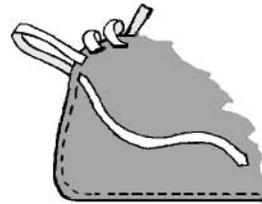
SADDLE SKIRTING, CANTLES AND FENDERS

Complete all tooling, dyeing and finishing of the individual parts to be laced first.

- 1) Lay the part grain side up (shiny/finished) on a cutting board or other protective surface.
- 2) With the tip of an x-acto knife, determine a starting/ending point and pierce a line of slits parallel to the edge. These slits should be approximately 1/16" from the edge of the leather, a bit less on small-scale objects. Be careful not to get too close to the edge, or the blade may slice across it, or the lace may pull through. Too far from the edge will not create the desired effect. Experiment and practice on a piece of scrap leather if you need to.
- 3) The slits should not join one another, but should be about 1/32 to 1/16" apart, and in line with each other. Be sure the knife cuts through the leather. If not, go back and repierce the holes carefully.
- 4) Measure the amount of silver lacing you will need. Lengths longer than 10" are difficult to work with as they tend to twist and kink. If more than 10" is needed, divide the work into two or more sections, and do one at a time. Add an inch to the length of each piece so you will have a bit of a 'tail' to work with.
- 5) Cut one end of the lace into a taper with a pair of scissors. Beginning at your starting point, thread the tapered end through the first slit from the grain (front) side. Pull the lace through until only a tail about 1/2" long is left. Fold the tail under the edge and hold it with your finger as you continue. (Hold the tail in place

until you've done two or three "loops", then it will stay in place on its own.)

- 6) While holding the tail, pull the stripping through until it's fairly snug. Bring the end around and thread it through the next slit (from the front) and tighten. Be sure that the stripping is lying flat, not twisted or kinked. (Kinds that develop along the strip can be flattened with your fingers or the flat portion of the jaws on a pair of pliers.) Pull each loop or "bight" snug enough to "pull" the leather slightly, but not so tight as to cause the leather to seriously warp, create a big open gap or pull through the leather. Continue to lace through each slit, around and around.
- 7) When the last bight or loop is com-



pleted, snip off all but the last 1/2" of remaining stripping, and fold the tail under. Tails can be secured later by gluing a small piece of thin leather over them on the back side. (In the case of breastcollars and lower skirting on saddles, adding the liner, chamois or 'sheepskin' to the underside of the piece will both secure the tails and prevent the possibility of the edges of the lace scratching a model.)

- 8) If you have two shorter strips to lace a large area, splices can be made by simply folding the end tail of the first piece under, and parallel to the slits. Then, begin lacing the next piece and make sure that the first couple of bights wrap over the end tail of the first piece, effectively securing it.

NOTE!!

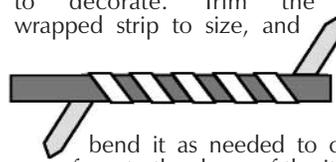
Take your time! I takes a little practice to

learn to make the slits even, and keep an even tension when lacing, but it doesn't take long!

GULLETS, SHOULDER EDGE SEAMS, STIRRUP EDGES

Silver Wrapping Technique

First assemble and finish the piece before applying the wrapping. It should be noted that this wrapping method is only suitable for "stable" areas that are unlikely to be flexed or bent.

- 1) Take a piece of leather lace (or strip of leather) that will closely match (or intentionally contrast) the color of the item you are adding a rope-edge to. The strip should be no more than 1/16" wide. (1/8 or 3/32 lace split in half lengthwise works well.) The strip of leather should be about an inch longer than you will actually need, and even longer is better to give you more to hold onto as you work.
 - 2) With a piece of silver lace, wrap the strip in a spiral manner down the length of the leather strip. Wrap only the center section of the leather, using the ends as "handles" for your fingers.
 - 3) When you have wrapped enough leather for the length you need, arrange the piece over the area it is to decorate. Trim the wrapped strip to size, and
- 
- bend it as needed to conform to the shape of the item.
- 4) Apply a bead of super-glue along the area the wrapping will cover. Be careful not to use too much glue or let it stray where it doesn't belong. Press the wrapped leather into place. Very long or tricky areas (such as around the edge of a stirrup) can be secured a small segment at a time, allowing the glue to dry before proceeding. Snip off any excess length after the glue is dry.

SPECIAL NOTES:

For smaller items or a more refined appearance, the silver stripping can be split or cut narrower and use as 'half-

width'. This can work well for classic scale items and any place where you desire finer detailing.

If you will be using wrapping for several areas, you can make one long wrapped strip of lace, and cut the needed lengths from it one by one as you add them.

ADDING LACE TO FLEXIBLE ITEMS

A laced center strip can be added to a breastcollar, for example, by making a wrapped strip first. With an 00-size hole punch, make a small hole in either end of the breastcollar panel where you want the ends of the laced strip to be. These holes will be where you tuck the ends of the lace into for a nice finish, so plan them carefully.

- 1) Shape the laced strip to the shape needed to cover the area, and make sure there is at least 1/2" extra length of leather on the strip.
- 2) Stick about a 1/4" tail into one of the holes you made from the front of the item, then crimp the tail end under. The long part of the strip should not be toward the grain side of the item.
- 3) Using super-glue, lightly glue the strip in place on the front side in just a few key spots to hold it. Do not glue the strip down solid. Tuck the other tail end through the remaining hole and crimp the tab down gently.
- 4) Using a needle and thread (thread of the same color as the leather) use a looping stitch to sew the strip to the item. One stitch every two bights of silver lace should do it. This will keep the strip in place on an item that will be bent and shaped as it's used. You may omit the glue altogether if you prefer. Glue alone won't hold things in place when an item needs to be repeatedly flexed.

NOTE:

Any items that are laced that will have the lace come in direct contact with a model should be covered with a thin layer of leather on the back side to prevent scratching. Of note, those areas would be lower skirting and fenders on saddles, and edge lacing on breastcollars.

LACED BRIDLES AND HALTERS, ETC.

The same procedure for creating wrapped strips is used, except you'll need to glue the tail end of the leather around something such as a bit shank or buckle. Adjust the areas you lace around so that there will be enough leather left to make tabs from as needed for this purpose. Plan your project carefully before you begin so you can make the laced portions the right length.

Remember to keep longer tabs that will be passed through a buckle (such as a crown strap) free of lacing for the portion that will pass through the buckle.

****CAUTION****

These items can scratch the model. It is a good idea to glue a thin liner to the back of any laced strap item such as a headstall to keep them from scratching your models. Thin skiver works, but in a pinch, even a piece of fabric or a snipping of paper towel will suffice.

TARNISHING

Silver tarnishes easily. If the silver lacing you are about to use is tarnished, try running it through a polishing cloth (#HD20) three or four times before you begin to remove the tarnish. Other silver polishing compounds and solutions can work as well.

One way to slow tarnishing down once an item is completed is to give it a coating of your leather finish (such as Tandy's Super Sheen.) When you're

done with the item, just brush some over the lacing. This will seal it without affecting the finish on the leather. If applied with care, clear nail polish added only onto the lace itself will serve the same purpose.

BASIC MEASUREMENTS:

Measure the total length of edging needed for a part that you wish to lace, and multiply that by 2 for a good approximate length of silver you will need. If the total length is to be divided into smaller sections for easier handling, add one inch to each section.

For wrapping, measure the leather longer than you need so it is easier to hold onto as you work. Measure the area that will be wrapped, and use 1-1/2 times that length of silver lace.

The following is a basic chart showing some recommended silver lace lengths for common pieces:

TRADITIONAL SCALE

Lower Skirt— <i>entire</i>	21"
Lower Skirt— <i>rear section only</i>	15"
Upper Skirt—	12"
Cantle—	7"
Breastcollar Edges— <i>each side</i>	8"

—Wrapping—

(measurements are for length of the **wrapped portion** needed)

Horn Rim Edge—	3/4"
Shoulder Seams— <i>each side</i>	3/4"
Gullet—	2-1/4"
Outside stirrup edge— <i>each stirrup</i>	3"
Entire stirrup edge— <i>each stirrup</i>	6"

CLASSIC SCALE:

Lower Skirt— <i>entire</i>	16"
Lower Skirt— <i>rear section only</i>	10"
Upper Skirt—	9"
Cantle—	6"
Breastcollar Edges— <i>each side</i>	7"

—Wrapping—

(measurements are for length of the **wrapped portion** needed)

Horn Rim Edge—	3/4"
Shoulder Seams— <i>each side</i>	1/2"
Gullet—	1-3/4"
Outside stirrup edge— <i>each stirrup</i>	1-1/2"
Entire stirrup edge— <i>each stirrup</i>	3-3/4"

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INSTRUCTIONS FOR FINISHING RIO RONDO CASTINGS BR2

There are two steps to finishing Rio Rondo castings:

1. **Cleaning up flash and seams**
2. **Polishing the part to a brilliant shine.**

It really doesn't matter which order you finish and polish your parts in. You can choose to finish your parts by hand, or by using a motorized tool such as a Dremel. If you plan on finishing large quantities of parts, a moto-tool is recommended since it will speed up the work quite a bit.

For either method, I suggest the following items to have on hand:

- **Pair of small cutters**— to remove any large burs or metal from the piece
- **X-Acto knife and blades**— (*no. 11 blade recommended*)—for removing excess flash from the insides of holes or other areas impossible to reach with a moto-tool or by other means.

SAFETY EQUIPMENT

- 1) Always wear goggles when working with metal parts as small chips can injure your eyes
- 2) Keep hair contained, and avoid wearing loose clothing or hanging jewelry, particularly when using a moto-tool
- 3) Use fabric-type band-aids to protect your fingers from cuts or accidentally polishing yourself as you work. Use them on your thumb and forefinger.

MOTO-TOOL METHOD

SUPPLIES NEEDED:

Dremel or other brand motorized tool (*adjustable speed is best*) mounted on your bench. Note that a special holder to mount your moto-tool to use as a small bench grinder is available for under \$10 at many hobby outlets.

Special Tip: permanently anchor this mount to a piece of wood, then use C-clamps to hold the wood to your bench or work table. This way you can quickly set up your moto-tool for use, but not commit to a permanent space for it. Also note that the actual mounting device simply uses a hose clamp to hold the dremel in place.

Screw mandrel (*Rio Rondo part # MD1*) and Grinding Wheel (*part #GRW1*). Many soft grinding wheels made of a rubbery substance that binds the cutting medium together into a disc shape will work, including BrightBoy and Cratex brands. **Do not use a grinding STONE.**

Attach the grinding wheel to your mandrel, and attach the mandrel to your moto-tool. Using a medium speed (approx. 12-15,000 rpm) you can easily remove any nibs, flash, seams, etc., from any cast part in seconds.

Stiff Bristled Brush wheel (*part #MD4*). Use this on your moto-tool to shine up the surface of any casting. (**This is a fiber brush, DO NOT USE A METAL OR WIRE BRUSH!**)

Use with red rouge (*#GRW9*) sparingly and only on parts that are too stubborn to shine up easily. You can also use other metal polishing compounds such as Flitz and Simichrome with this wheel. Operate the moto-tool at about 12-15,000 rpm for best results.

Screw end mandrel and 'bullet' shaped grinding heads. Screw the bullet onto

the shank, then attach the shank to the moto-tool. The bullet shape will allow you to smooth out the insides of items such as stirrups.

MOTO-TOOL SPECIAL TIPS:

Using a moto-tool for finishing parts can cause two primary problems:

1. The speed at which the tool operates causes friction and parts can heat up **VERY QUICKLY** and become too hot to handle. Keep a cup or can of cold water handy and dip the part into the water every few seconds or as needed to regulate the temperature.
2. A quickly spinning wheel can easily flip the part right out of your hand. If you're wearing goggles, your eyes are safe, but the problem often remains of having to locate a lost item on the floor or other hard-to-reach place. The problem gets worse if you choose to hold the part with some sort of tool. It is almost impossible to hold a part firmly enough with a tool and NOT mar the surface of the part or damage it. (However, if you can locate a pair of rubberized 'tips' to slip over the jaws of your pliers, this will give additional gripping power without marring the pieces.)

If you are working with new parts that have pegs on the back side, you can get a pretty secure grip on the pegs with needle-nose plier, which should alleviate the problem of flinging parts. The pegs can be snipped off afterwards if you don't wish to use them.

In most cases, holding the parts firmly with your thumb and forefinger and using a finger from your other hand to support the piece and hold it steady is best. My best advice is to hold on **VERY** tight.

Certain areas on some parts, such as the rein and headstall rings on bits, or small filigree holes are **not** suited for finishing with a moto-tool. For those areas I rec-

ommend using either an x-acto knife, or possibly a small needle file to remove any seams or flash.

HAND-FINISHED METHOD

SUPPLIES NEEDED:

150 to 220 grit sandpaper—use the sandpaper to remove any seams and flash around the edges of your parts and smooth them up.

400 grit sandpaper (*wet or dry*)— this very fine sandpaper can smooth-sand the surfaces of any part, especially around the edges on rounded items to make them silky smooth

600 grit sandpaper (*wet or dry*) can really put a finished surface and shine on areas you've worked over to smooth out.

Polishing Cloth (*part #HD20*) —Turn the part face down on the cloth, then press the part down with your finger and move it back and forth with pressure in a brisk rubbing motion. The harder you rub, the better the shine with this cloth. You can also work on it from the top and get into the corners by pushing the cloth into crevices with a blunted toothpick.

Simichrome or Flitz (metal polishing compounds) can be used on a cotton swab and rubbed in, then washed off to help obtain a shine. If you opt to use a polishing compound such as these, do this first, then put a finishing buffing on the parts with the polishing cloth.

X-Acto knife— can be used to easily and quickly remove any sizable nibs or seams from the edges of parts. Be sure your fingers are protected (band-aids are recommended) before you begin working.

Depending upon the part, it can take anywhere from 30 seconds to 10 minutes to finish and polish a part by hand.

Most etched parts come with mounting pegs on the reverse side. You can poke a hole through your leather with a push pin or awl, then thread the pegs thru the holes. Bend the pegs over and gently 'squish' them down on the back side of the item for a secure fit.

SPECIAL NOTES:

For some items, (*most notably halters and bridles*), the pegs will be too bulky. There are several ways around this.

- 1) Remove the pegs with a pair of cutters, nail clippers etc. (*after finishing/polishing.*) Sand or grind down any remaining 'stub' at the surface and super-glue the plate in place instead.
- 2) If you use a "00" size hole punch on larger items (such as breastcollars and saddle skirts), the holes will be a little larger than you actually need. This will allow the part to have some "play" in it—and possibly make it easier to get the plate perfectly aligned. Place a little super-glue to the back side of the plate to secure it, once it has been properly positioned. Again, bend the pegs over and gently smush them into place.
- 3) On some items the pegs may be a bit heavy. You can use a grinding wheel or needle file to whisk off some extra metal on two opposing sides of a peg to make it flat and narrow, and less bulky.
- 4) If the pegs do not want to bend over where you wish them to, file a small notch at the base on the side you want the pegs to bend and they should bend over at that point easily.

AN UNUSUAL PART:

One of our buckles, FB57, comes with an extra bit of metal on the bottom so that you CAN indeed hold the part with a good pair of needle-nose pliers to hang onto it while you sand or grind on it.

When you get the part polished and finished as desired, simply use your cutters to remove the extra metal there.

You may find with the slip-type buckles, that threading a length of scrap leather lace onto the center bar of the buckle will provide a handle for you when using the moto-tool method.

SMOOTHING OFF ETCHED PARTS

The following recommendations are for working with our etched parts.

- 1) Separate parts from the sheet or each other by cutting with a pair of cutters, or toe-nail clippers. Do not twist or bend the parts to remove them as they may warp or break.
- 2) To begin separating items from a sheet, it usually works well to remove part of the outside 'frame' with a cutters, and then remove a strip or section at a time, then separate the parts from the strip or section.
- 3) To remove extra 'nubs' remaining on the parts, use 320 grit wet-or-dry sandpaper or a small fine needle file.
- 4) Wherever a part was connected to a sheet, the bare metal (brass or copper) is going to be exposed in that area and could be subject to future tarnishing. In many cases, such spots are going to be located where they will be covered by leather and never seen. However, in areas where they might be visible, if you wish, once the area has been smoothed up, you can apply a tiny dot of clear nail polish to the area to seal it from tarnishing. This, of course, is optional.

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FINISHING PASO STIRRUPS **BR3**

Rio Rondo's Paso Stirrups (*items SP50 and SP51*) are sold unfinished and require some added hand-work before they are suitable for use. This work, however is fairly simple and straight forward.

REMOVE FLASH AND SEAMS

This is best be done using fine grit sandpaper (about 400 grit, wet or dry). Larger nibs or excess metal can be removed with an x-acto knife.

POLISH "BARE" AREAS

These areas include:

- The entire section above the 'rope' design edge on the top (including the rope edge portion)
- The four corner tips
- The flat center strip on the front side (the side opposite the one with the hole for the foot).

This is quickly accomplished with a bristle brush (*Rio Rondo part #MD4*) on a dremel or moto-tool. Use jeweler's rouge (*#GRW9*) only if needed. If polishing these areas by hand, simply use a chemicalized polishing cloth (*#HD20*) or other metal polishing compound such as Flitz or Simichrome, and a soft cloth

Avoid polishing any OTHER areas of the stirrup. The other areas are to be painted brown to simulate wood, and the paint will stick best if those areas are not polished smooth.

PAINT THE "WOOD" PORTIONS

Use gesso (black or white will work equally well) and paint in the areas that are NOT to remain silver and polished.

Apply two coats and allow each coat to thoroughly dry before applying the next. Do not forget to paint inside the stirrup itself as well as the bottom.

If you accidentally get a little paint on an area to remain shiny, simply scrape it off with a fingernail, or remove it with a bit of rubbing alcohol on a cotton swab.

Make sure your paint is smooth and even. Heavy coats with as many brush

strokes as possible smooth out will work nicely. (Use more coats than two if you prefer)

PAINT THE "WOOD"AREAS BROWN

When the gesso is thoroughly dry, paint over these same areas with brown paint. A burnt-umber or dark brown color is best. (*For accurate color matches, I advise seeking additional information on paso equipment to view and study photos of actual full-size items*)

Paint as many coats as necessary to completely cover the gessoed areas. Make sure there are no streaks or thin spots.

Allow each coat to dry thoroughly before applying the next.

NOTE:

Be very careful as you work. It is very easy to mar or scratch your paint while you work so don't get in a hurry. The paint is more likely to be marred if it's not yet dry as you apply the next layer of paint, so its best to be patient and allow each layer to dry before proceeding.

ALLOW THE PAINT TO THOROUGHLY DRY

When you have the dark brown 'wood' color of the stirrup even and are satisfied with it, allow the paint to dry for a couple of hours. (Longer if the weather is humid).

PROTECT THE SURFACE

When you are CERTAIN the paint is completely dry, I recommend applying two coats of **Classmate Matte Polish** (*part #HD15*) over the simulated wood-colored areas. This gives the "wood" colored areas a satiny, burnished look, and protects the paint from future mar- rying. Allow the first coat to dry about an hour before applying the second coat. Allow the entire stirrup to dry at least another hour or two before attaching it to the stirrup leathers.

SPECIAL NOTE:

Paint will stick to pewter if you are very careful not to rush the process and allow the paint to dry thoroughly. Applying the matte polish over the top will help seal it (but is only truly effective if the paint is totally dry) and making *certain* the polish is completely dry will ensure a long-lasting and beautiful stirrup.

Should you ever need to re-do your stirrup at a future time, simply soak the stirrup in nail-polish remover or acetone (please read all precautions on these materials) for an hour or two,

then wearing latex gloves, use cotton swabs or kleenex to remove the paint etc., and work it out of any crevices. Wash the stirrup with soap and water, and allow it to air-dry thoroughly before repainting it.

Example of a Finished Paso Stirrup



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BEADS AND CONCHOS

BR5

Rio Rondo offers a selection of small beads that can be threaded onto lace (or embroidery thread) to produce a decorative silver ferruled look.

LEATHERS—

Larger beads such as Rio Rondo part #SF120 can be threaded onto 1/16" lace.

Smaller beads can be used on 1/16" lace (however the leather may need special trimming to be thin enough) as well as on our round lace (RL05, RL1)

ROUND LACE—

Round lace is available in approx 1/2mm (.5) diameter and 1mm diameter. All of our beads will fit on the smaller size, but some of them are too small to fit on the 1mm diameter type. The width you choose to use for your project should be based on the types of beads you wish to use, the scale of the object, and the finished look you are trying to achieve.

TOOLS—

An x-acto knife will prove handy to 'skive' a thin layer off the back side of the leather on the starting end so that your beads will thread onto the lacing more easily

An awl will prove useful on occasion where you may need to open the hole of a bead a little larger so that it will slide onto the leather easier.

A pair of 'crimping pliers', which have a little 'cutout' hole in the jaws that serves to compress the bead without truly flattening it may be desirable in some cases. Check your local crafts store or mail-order crafts outlet on this item

PLAN YOUR PROJECT—

You need to know the lengths of each piece, determine how you will attach various pieces together (by gluing tabs, using crimp beads as fasteners,) as well as adjustment areas using either buckles, or a button-and-loop arrangement.

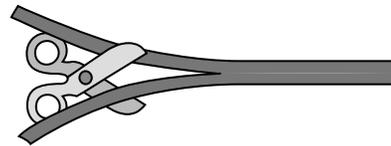
Many times you will find that it is best to build these types of items on the actual model you wish to use it on (or another

model body that is of similar proportions so that you don't damage a quality model) and measure as you go, as opposed to going by a 'formula' or strict measurement chart.

SPLITTING LACE:

This is one trick that any serious tack-maker must find a way to master, or find someone who will do it for them. Splitting lace (such as 3/32" or 1/18" widths) lengthwise (to make it 'half-width') allows you not only to thread beads onto the lace, but also offers you far more variety in the type and refinement of items you create.

I generally use a scissors, and with practice, one can learn to be fairly accurate with that method. At first it is very easy to skew off to one side and end up with lots of short pieces or irregularly cut ones. Keep any shorter pieces handy, as most pieces 1-3" long can eventually be used for some project. Practice makes perfect.



Some people have had better luck using an X-acto knife to split the lace. You may wish to try this method as well to see if it will work for you. Be careful though, it is very easy to split yourself instead of the leather with an X-acto knife!

THINNING or SKIVING THE LACE

Flat leather laces (such as 1/16", 3/32 and 1/18") can be thinned down by skiving. This can be accomplished by holding the lace firmly against a flat surface (tabletop) and carefully using an X-acto knife to "skim" or "skive" a thin layer off of the rough or flesh side of the leather. Alternatively, you can use sandpaper to sand off a bit of material from the flesh side of the lace. Many people find the sanding method to be easier and more reliable for them.

EXPERIMENT A LITTLE

Before you get started on your first beading project, you might take a little time to string a few beads onto a strip of lace about 2" long. Of course you don't need practice stringing beads, but what you might wish to do is try out different combinations of beads to achieve different looks. You can set up a 'pattern' or 'theme' of bead sequences to achieve very interesting new looks out of fairly simple beads. Alternatively you can use the same type of bead exclusively, either spacing the beads evenly, or arranging them in patterns or groups. The only problem with doing this is that you may end up with way too many ideas you want to use, and not know which one to pick!

START BEADING

- 1) Prepare your leather lace. If you are using flat lace, cut it into half-width strips if it isn't already.
- 2) Begin by cutting one end into a taper. The longer and narrower the taper, the easier it will be to thread beads onto the leather. For round lace, you should also skive one side of the tapered end down so it is even thinner. This will be important for smaller beads in particular.
- 3) If this end is an attachment end (to be attached to a bit for example) decide whether you are going to fasten the leather simply by gluing down a tab, or if you are going to use a bead to crimp it in place.

If you intend to use a bead to crimp the item in place, you will need to skive (or sand) a layer off the leather (even round lace) first. Skive the round lace on one side so that it is approximately half it's normal thickness.

Thread a bead onto the lace, then pass the tab through the bit ring. Now, slide the bead back down, and over the tab end. This can take a bit of practice and trial and error to get the leather the right thickness so that both layers will fit inside the bead.



Once you get your bead in place, crimp it down. Do not crimp so hard that the bead cuts through the leather,

but it should be snug enough to hold. The "loop" of leather you just made around the bit ring should be loose enough to allow the leather to slide along the loop, but should not be sloppy.

You can use a spot of super-glue on either side of the bead to help secure it into place if you wish.

- 4) If you need to attach a buckle to one end of a strap, be sure to allow ample extra length there. Flat lace can simply be folded over itself into a tab and glued in place around the buckle to secure it.
- Round lace should be skived so that when it is bent over, the skived flat side will touch itself and then it is easily glued. While you can actually secure this with a bead, likely the bead will get in the way of an adjustment strap on the buckle, and would be covered by that strap in any case. So its probably not worth doing in that case.
- 5) If you are using round lace with a buckle, buckle adjustments generally are going to work best with a small buckle (B7 or B13). If your tab is not thin enough though, the adjustment strap passing through the buckle may not fit.

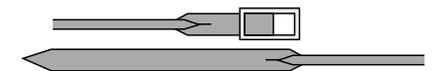
Another problem here is that round lace passing through a buckle like this can look sloppy. This problem can be avoided by splicing the round leather onto a flat strap.

Take a piece of flat lace of the desired width and cut one end into a taper.

Skive a thin layer of leather off the back side of the last 1/4" on the tapered end. On the round lace part, skive a thin layer from top side about on the last 1/4" of the piece. This should make a flat area on the top.

With an x-acto knife, pierce a small vertical slit in the leather piece, about 1/16" long.

Thread the end of the round lace through the slit on the flat lace from the top side.



Pull it through until both pieces line up with each other.

Apply glue between the layers where they join. (The flat side of the round lace

should be glued to the underside of the flat lace.) Make sure both pieces are lined up, then let the glue dry.

Now you have a flat end tab or strap attached to a piece of round lace. A short piece like this can be a tab to attach to a buckle; a long strap on the matching side of the headstall part can be an adjustment strap.

ADJUSTMENT Straps without Buckles—

In the old tradition of braided rawhide items, it was typical that a piece of tack would be made with no hardware for fastening, only ingenious methods using rawhide and leather to attach and adjust the pieces. Borrowing from this tradition, you can make a loop and button arrangement using beads. Sure the beads are hardware, but the idea still works.

On a headstall for example, you might choose to put the point of attachment in the poll area, instead of off to the left or right (you can choose to do this any way you wish however, this is only one example)

- 1) Attach one end of the round lace to your bit and thread your beads in place, leaving 3-4 inches extra to work with.

Use a large round crimp bead (#BD26) to make a slider by GENTLY flattening the bead a little so it becomes an oval shape, rather than round.

Thread this bead onto your lace, then loop the lace around and thread the end back through. The size of the loop can be adjusted by sliding the bead up or down. Arrange the loop and the bead so that the loop will end up about at the center of the poll between the horse's ears when the bit is at the corners of the mouth.

- 2) To keep the sliding bead from sliding off, thread a smaller bead (#BD25) onto the tail end of the lace that is hanging off behind the larger bead.



Crimp this smaller bead tightly into place about 1/2" behind the tip of the loop itself. Trim off the excess length of leather.

The slider should be snug enough so

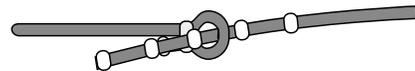
that it will only move if you move it, it should not be loose and sliding along the lace on its own. Crimp it just a little tighter if it is too loose.

- 3) For the opposite side, you can make a button attachment, OR another sliding loop.

To make another sliding loop, you do the same thing as you did on the first side, EXCEPT you thread the leather through the first loop before threading it back through the slider bead. By sliding the lace through each side, you should be able to adjust the headstall for different models.



- 4) To make a button attachment instead, you simply space out several small beads (3 to 5) along the end of the round lace and crimp each one into place. Each bead will serve as an adjustment marker.



Move the slider back a bit to open up the loop, then thread the beaded end through the loop. Snug the slider back in place.

These are just the basics of getting started with creating beaded items. I will advise anyone doing this to begin with very simple projects first. It takes a lot of planning and careful work to work in all the parts that need to be in order and end up with a useful item.

The best piece of advice I can give is to not be too stingy with the leather, particularly round lace. Always cut the pieces you are working with to be an inch or two (or more) longer than you need, on each end, just in case you mess something up, then you can continue without having to start completely over.

Also, avoid fully crimping or glueing beads in place until your project is fully assembled. If you should make a mistake, but have extra length you can move the beads onto, you won't have to start over from scratch.

KEEPING BEADS IN PLACE

Some beads will fit pretty snug on your leather and go nowhere, while others will slide everywhere and all your careful placement work will be undone immediately. When your projects is assembled, you can choose to either crimp or glue the beads into place.

For beads that slide very easily, you can move the bead off the desired spot, apply a dab of glue on the spot, then slide the bead back into place.

For beads that don't slide that easily, but will if you manually move them, you can apply just a touch of glue to one side or the other of the bead to 'anchor' it. If possible, place the dab of glue on the backside of the item so it will not be visible. (*Reins are difficult because they really don't have a 'back side' that won't be seen.*)

Beads can be crimped (or squished) into place using a crimping tool (which will keep the shape mostly round) or with your pliers. If using pliers, keep in mind that the bead will become somewhat flattened, so try to crimp only enough to hold the bead in place, but not so much that the bead flattens out. (unless of course, you are trying to get the bead flat on purpose).

When using beads in a sequence, (for example, a round bead, a short plain ferule and then a round bead) it is only necessary to anchor the beads on the ends, which will in turn, hold the bead(s) between them firmly.

TIP BEADS

Sterling Silver Tip Beads (#SF510) are very large round silver beads (also available in gold plate) and are the easiest way to get a silver tip onto the end of a flat strap of leather.

Start by gently crimping down on the bead with the flat portion of the jaws of a pair of needlenose pliers. You should crimp it down just enough to get it slightly oval.

Check to see that the bead fits over the leather. Once you get the bead to slide on the flat leather (3/32" is best, 1/8" usually needs to be trimmed a bit on the very end to fit), remove the bead.

Place a little dab of glue on the top and bottom side of the leather where the bead is going to be.

Now, slide the bead back on and with the smooth part of the pliers, crimp the bead down flat into place and let the glue dry a few minutes.

Take a pair of cutters and snip the tip end into a taper. Snip right through the metal and the leather under it.

If you choose to be more creative, you can use a fine bur on your moto-tool, or a scribing tool that will etch a bit of a design on metal and 'engrave' or 'inscribe' a design, or your initials perhaps, onto the flat surface.

CONCHO BEADS

Concho beads have a hole in the middle that allows you to thread them onto a stick pin or head pin. The edge of the bead sticks out around the pin's head, and the result looks like a slightly rounded concho with a decorated edge around it. These are best used for the 6 traditional conchos found on a saddle, but also can be useful for fastening together stirrups or other items.

Our sterling silver concho beads (#CB6) are shipped to us oxidized. This means that the crevices in the decoration around the edge are notably dark. If you would prefer a brighter, shinier look, I recommend cleaning the beads in a regular silver cleaning solution to remove as much of the dark areas as possible before using the beads on your tack project.

Dip the beads in rubbing alcohol afterwards to remove any residue and wipe dry with a plain kleenex (no perfume, no aloe). You can then coat the bead with clear gloss nail polish to seal out future tarnish. Allow the nail polish to dry THOROUGHLY before using the beads. If you don't, you risk marring the polish, and any place where the polish has been removed will tarnish in the future.

CONCHOS

Rio Rondo offers a large selection of conchos, of various types and uses.

CAST CONCHOS

Most of our cast conchos come with either one, two or three pegs on the back side for mounting, depending on the type of concho. Oval conchos have 3 prongs on the back side. These can be removed, and the parts simply super-glued into place.

Three Prong Conchos

If you look at the pegs on the oval conchos, you will notice they are arranged in

a triangle. The two pegs on one end can be bent across each other to form a loop. Extra length can be trimmed off and the result is a 'bar'. The third peg can be trimmed and bent into a little 'hook' and thus, the concho is magically transformed into a doll-scale belt buckle, or one very fancy concho/buckle for use on an extravagant halter.

Three-prong conchos can also have the prongs bent so that they hook over the center ring of a breastcollar, making an attractive decoration there.

TWO Prong Conchos

Conchos with two pegs on the back can be used similarly by bending the pegs so they cross over each other to form a 'bar', and then they can be attached to browbands easily. Alternatively, for heavier items such as breastcollars, holes can be made in the leather, the pegs passed through the holes and crimped down on the back side for a firm attachment of the item.

CC50, CC51 and CC57 are available with two prongs.

SINGLE Prong Conchos

Simply make a hole in the leather item, then pass the peg thru and bend it over for a secure fit. All of the non-oval conchos are available with a single prong (some styles with two as noted above).

Because there is only a single peg to hold the part in place, you will need to apply a touch of glue to the back of the concho, to make sure that it does not rotate.

SPECIAL NOTE:

If you will be using the conchos to decorate items on a halter or bridle OTHER than the ends of a browband, its best to snip off the mounting pegs and use super-glue instead. The mounting pegs generally are far too bulky to be used on bridles and halters.

SILVER CONCHOS

A traditional stand-by, our hand-made silver conchos can be used similarly to cast conchos. Silver conchos come in plain, wire-mounted and pin-mounted versions. The plain ones can be super-glued in place. This is most useful for horn caps.

Wire-mounted conchos feature a single wire on the back side that can be passed through a hole and then crimped down for secure attachment to most items.

Pin-mounted conchos are best suited to be used in lieu of plain pins for the traditional 6 saddle fastening conchos.

To use pin-mounted conchos for this purpose, the best way is to use a round-nose pliers to gently bend the pin at a 90 degree angle about 1/16 or so below the head of the pin. Then the pin can be held with a pair of needle-nose pliers and pushed through the layers of leather. Pulling the pin snugly into place around the 'corner' will seat the concho properly. Leave about 1/8" of pin past the "bend" and snip off the excess length

For a firm attachment, gently use a pair of pliers (flat jawed rather than serrated is best) to crimp the concho into place and seat the snipped-off end on the back side.

SOLDERING

Silver conchos can be soldered to many items. A quick-n-dirty way to do it is to use Kester Rosin Core solder (thin/narrow gauge suitable for electronics) over a candle flame.

You can attach your own pins to conchos by melting a 'bead' of solder to the pin-head first, then using a pair of pliers in each hand, hold both parts over the flame together (about an inch above the wick) and the solder will flow into the concho. Carefully pull both parts together away from the heat and allow them to cool. (This can be tricky and takes some practice not to accidentally pull them apart.)

Wires can be soldered to the back of a silver concho likewise. Bend a little 'hook' or right-angle 'foot' onto one end of the wire, then apply a bead of solder to that. Then place the soldered end onto the backside of the concho and hold the two pieces over the flame until the solder flows.

You can solder a concho to a plain etched bit by applying a dab of solder onto the backside of the concho. Place the concho where desired on the etched bit.

Hold one end of the bit with your pliers, with the concho on top of it (keep it horizontal). Move the bit over the flame until the solder flows, then remove from the heat and let it cool.

Using a polishing cloth you can shine up both pieces to good as new condition.

Practice makes perfect!

NOTE: do NOT attempt to solder pewter items such as cast conchos or bits over a candle—the items will MELT as pewter is a very low-temperature metal.

Soldering Castings requires a soldering iron and extreme skill and caution, and is **not** advisable. Please note that Rio Rondo is not responsible for replacing any items you may modify (or ruin).

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USE & CARE GUIDE FOR STERLING SILVER

BR6

At the present time, most of the silver items sold by Rio Rondo may need to be cleaned and polished before they regain the desired lustre expected of silver. This brochure will help show you a number of ways you can polish and care for any sterling silver items you have.

BASIC SILVER CARE TIPS:

- avoid storing bare silver in open air for long periods of time. Moisture and chemicals in the air will cause it to tarnish quickly (known as oxidization) and the silver will ultimately turn black. This of course can be fixed and cleaned up, but with finished items, its usually best to take measures to prevent tarnishing in the first place.
- Coating silver with clear nail polish or other commercial silver preservation products will help to delay oxidization for a very long time. Clear nail polish may literally last for years.
- Uncoated silver is best stored in plastic bags until you are ready to use the items.
- Make sure that all silver items to be used on your tack are cleaned, polished and coated BEFORE you attach them to your items (see further notes for other specifics). Due to the small size of miniature items, it can be difficult to adequately clean things that are permanently attached.

CLEANING SILVER

There are many commercial products available that will remove tarnish from silver. Many of them work quite well. Follow all label directions and precautions.

Soldered items sometimes have a residue of rosin flux on them. This is easily removed by soaking the items in nail polish remover or acetone. (Observe all label precautions). Nail polish remover/acetone will also do a fairly decent job of helping remove stubborn tarnish as well.

Silver can be buffed using any one of many products for this purpose, such as Simichrome and Flitz (used in conjunction with a small muslin buff attached to your moto-tool, or used by hand on a cotton swab). Wash all parts thoroughly to remove any residue when you are finished.

Rio Rondo's polishing cloth (*part #HD20*) also will put a high lustre on silver, and remove all but the most stubborn tarnish by hand. The harder you rub, the brighter the shine.

PROTECTING SILVER FROM TARNISH

Once you have your items cleaned and polished to your satisfaction, it is best to soak them for a minute or two in either a silver cleaning solution or rubbing alcohol to remove all traces of oils, particularly from your fingers (which will cause it to oxidize quicker in the future). Wipe excess liquid from the piece using a plain kleenex (do not use kleenex that is perfumed, or has aloe etc. in it)

Set the parts aside to dry.

Some commercial cleaning products claim that they impart a long-lasting tarnish resistant residue. However, I have not found this to be the case... in fact, most products seem to cause the silver to tarnish FASTER in the future. But maybe it's just the weather we have here, who knows?

In most cases, however, once the part is cleaned, stripped of oils and residues and is dried, you can now coat the part with clear gloss nail polish. While not precisely the same lustre as bright silver, a coat of clear nail polish can stop tarnishing for YEARS. Often the polish itself may yellow long before the silver begins to tarnish.

Coat the surface of each part carefully and allow it to fully dry before handling the item further. One coat should be enough. Allowing 12-24 hours is best, as nail polish is easily marred if handled too soon.

If along the line you find that the nail polish has yellowed with time, you

can easily strip it off the item using nail polish remover on a cotton swab. Take great care *not* to get the remover on any leather around the silver item as it can strip the finish off the leather and discolor it. Once the polish has been removed, you can use a little rubbing alcohol on a cotton swab to remove any residue from the polish remover. Allow to dry.

Now you can recoat the item with clear gloss polish. For maximum control, trim the brush in the bottle-cap to a taper. Be VERY careful not to get any polish on any surrounding leather or other decoration.

SILVER LACE

Clearly it is impractical to coat silver lace with nail polish once it has been applied to a tack item. But, you don't have to. The coating you use to shine up the leather (such as Tandy's Super Shene) also serves quite nicely to coat the silver lacing which protects it rather nicely from future tarnish, sometimes for years. The biggest liability there is that it might wear off with use and handling, and those spots may tarnish.

To remove tarnish that may be on the silver prior to using it on a tack project, try running it through one of our polishing cloths (*#HD20*) held in your hand.

Should you ever need to repolish silver lacing, use alcohol carefully on a cotton swab (trim the swab to a tapered end for more control) and this should effectively remove any previously applied Super Shene coat-

ing. Use a clean, dry kleenex to dry the silver and rub off tarnished areas. A touch of nail polish remover on a swab will help with stubborn areas. Be very *careful* to avoid getting alcohol on the leather itself.

Once you get the lace shined up, carefully go over it with rubbing alcohol once more to remove residue, then recoat the lacing with Super Shene.

Of course, this might be a good time to recoat the entire tack item and make it look shiny and new again!

SOLDERING

If you are going to solder or otherwise work with any silver item, be sure it is NOT coated with any substance before you begin. Soldering an item that has polish on it may cause the polish to burn and this can result in a permanent stain on the silver that will be difficult to remove without sanding it off. If in doubt, clean the piece with nail polish remover before you begin working, and wipe it dry with a kleenex.

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RIO RONDO SUEDE COLOR KEY

BR7

This quick guide will assist you in selecting matching colors of DMC brand embroidery floss to match our suede colors. Embroidery floss can be used in many ways including braided accents on tack items, fringe on doll clothing, cinches, decorative stitching on saddle blankets, etc.

Some of the colors are very close to the suede color, while others have no exact match, but the closest floss number (or numbers) are offered. The suede colors may vary a slight bit from piece to piece as well. A * indicates the floss color is the closest match possible, but no closer match is available.

Black/White—

Use standard black or white for these colors. White suede is actually a bit off white, however, DMC makes no off white color that is a better match than regular white.

SUEDE COLOR	RIO PART#	DMC FLOSS #
Dark Brown	LS2db	3371
Medium Brown	LS2mb	801*
Light Brown	LS2lb	433
Chocolate	LS2ch	938*
Burgundy Rust	LS2rt	918 or 221
Rusty Brown	LS2rb	300*
Tan	LS2tn	422* or 3045*
Buckskin	LS2bk	680
Grey	LS2gy	535
Dove	LS2dv	840
Violet	LS2vt	550
Red	LS2rd	817*, 304*, 347*
Wine	LS2wn	221
Ivory	LS2iv	644*, 3782*
Royal Blue	LS2bl	820
Cobalt Blue	LS2cb	995
Cadet Blue	LS2cd	3750*
Mallard Blue	LS2ml	924
Turquoise	LS2tq	807
Aqua	LS2aq	598
Forest Green	LS2fg	500
Teal	LS2tl	991

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CATALOG REFERENCE NOTES:

Due to variances in the printing process, its not possible to get exact color matches of items in print. However, we did try to come as close as possible. While there is some variation from catalog to catalog, here are our observations between the printed version of the catalog and actual color samples:

CATALOG COLOR	VARIATION OF ACTUAL SAMPLE
Dark Brown	a little darker
Medium Brown	very close
Light Brown	very close
Chocolate	very close
Burgundy Rust	slightly more intense*
Rusty Brown	very close
Tan	very close
Buckskin	slightly more intense
Grey	very close
Dove	very slightly darker
Violet	slightly more intense
Red	somewhat more intense*
Wine	less pink than shown
Ivory	very slightly darker*
White	very close
Royal Blue	darker and more intense (very electric actually)
Cobalt Blue	more intense and a bit darker
Cadet Blue	several shades darker
Mallard Blue	a little darker and more intense
Turquoise	a shade darker
Aqua	a shade darker
Forest Green	a shade darker with a bit more blue tone than shown
Teal	very close

NOTES: "very close" means close as possible to replicate the color in print

*these colors may vary somewhat between dye lots of the leather and/or the original color is no longer available and has been replaced with the closest substitute.

Personally I feel that the catalog swatches for Wine and Cadet Blue are the most 'off' in terms of what the actual color looks like, and the rest are very close for purposes of comparison and choosing colors you may wish to work with.

SPECIAL NOTE

If you plan to use the suede with the **GRAIN** side out for boots and other small accessories (as opposed to the *sueded* side out) note that the grain sides may not match the color of the sueded side (as shown in the catalog).

Colors in which the grain side is notably different in hue from the sueded side include:

Violet, Light Brown, Grey, Cadet Blue (*the grain side is a very close match to the catalog swatch on this one*), Teal, Tan.

In most cases, even colors that are very close between the two sides will have the grain side appear as a slightly lighter shade.

Medium Brown is sueded on both sides.

Preparing a Resin for Painting

Congratulations on your purchase of a Rio Rondo unpainted resin-cast horse sculpture! In order to ensure long-lasting results from a paint job you may add to your sculpture, we've prepared these prepping instructions.

Resin castings need to be properly prepared for painting to ensure the best possible quality in the finish job as well durability over the long term.

It is important not to cheat the prepping process! The appearance of the finished resin depends upon what you do in these preparatory stages, and a model will end up to be less than it should be due to lack of a few more minutes of attention!

Typically, to prep, prime and basecoat a resin can take from 30 minutes to 3 hours, depending upon the size, seam locations, detail level and overall quality of the casting. Poorer quality castings or those with a lot of intensive fine detail may require additional time.

Removing Seams

The first step in preparing a resin is to clean off the seams and any other flash or excess material remaining from the casting process. Seams can be removed by several means, including:

X-Acto Knife

An x-acto knife can be used to carve out areas that can't be reached with any other tool as necessary.

Carbide Scrapers

These specialized tools are among the most effective means for removing most of the seams from a resin model, and will allow you to carve in detail along a seam as you go.

Sandpaper

A light application of sandpaper after the major areas of flash are removed will result in a flawless finish. (Wet-or-dry 320 or 400 grit is recommended to avoid introducing visible scratches to the piece). Sandpaper can be used to remove most of the seams if you have no other fine tools available.

Filling Gouges and Dings

To smooth out gouges or dings, or small depressions along seam lines (or anywhere else) that lie below the intended surface of the piece, here's a few great tips to help...

Trick No. 1— Super Glue and Baking Soda

For bubble holes, pits and larger areas, this is the best method. Depending upon the nature of the area to be filled, you may wish to experiment with different techniques. For shallower holes, fill the hole with liquid super-glue, (do not use gel as this technique does not work with gel-type glues) then drop a pinch of baking soda onto the glue. The glue should turn white and harden instantly. Often, the soda-glue bond area will raise above the surface to be filled. This can be leveled off with sandpaper easily.

For deeper holes, it may work better to pack the hole with baking soda, then add a drop or two of liquid super-glue to the soda.

If you still have a depression in the area, just add a little bit more glue to the area and drop more soda onto it.

Skillfully applied, the soda-glue bond method can be used to fill in missing areas on eartips or other thin areas where there may have been an air bubble in the casting.

Trick No. 2— Spot Putty

Bondo or Loctite brand red spot putty for automotive body repairs works very well to fill in shallow surface dings and small open areas. Use a small palette knife to smear the putty into and over the area. Spot putty does not work all that well to get into very small pinholes, but works great for more open blemishes.

This putty sands silky smooth very easily, using wet-or-dry sandpaper (320 to 400 grit). Since the spot putty is softer than soda-glue, it should not be used for deep holes or bubbles. It is the filler of choice for shallow surface imperfections though, because the soda-glue has a tendency to build up over the surface of the piece when it solidifies, and since it is harder than the resin itself to sand, takes much more effort to smooth out than spot putty.

Trick No. 3— Modeling Paste

If you are faced with a casting that has a large number of pinholes over an area, brushing modeling paste over the area and smoothing it over with a brush is a quick and effective way to deal with it. This is particularly true for pinholes within the mane or tail of the sculpture, or sculpted feathering on the legs.

Ajaxing

To make sure all dirt, oils and any mold-release residue from the casting is removed, and to add some "tooth" to the surface to hold primer paint better, the easiest way to do all these things at once is to "ajax" the model. This can be a little bit "messy" even for a cleaning product, so dress appropriately.

Start by adding a little water to some ajax to make a "paste". Apply this paste with an old toothbrush to the model and scrub the model thoroughly all over its surface. Don't miss any nooks and crannies where mold release, grease or dust may hide out. A good ajaxing job on a traditional-scale (1:9) model will take about 5-10 minutes, depending on the mold and how quickly you proceed.

When the piece has been thoroughly scrubbed, rinse off the model and set it aside to dry.

Priming

Resin compounds and automotive body products are designed to work in tandem with each other. Spray primer is mandatory at this stage, regardless of how the model will be painted or finished off in the end, as it has the best overall adherence to the resin, and also seals it properly. Krylon (or other brand) Sandable Primer works well for this purpose.

- Using spray primers is best done outdoors to get adequate ventilation. Appropriate clothing as well as latex gloves for easy cleanup of your hands afterwards is highly recommended. Try to do your priming on a warm sunny day when it is not windy. The primer will dry quickly this way, and allow you to proceed faster than when the weather is cooler (under 60 degrees) or damp.
- Always be sure to shake the can well to mix the paint inside up properly. If the primer is not thoroughly mixed, it can result in "crackling" on the surface (which will cause you more work).

- Spray Primer is generally available in only a few colors, white, grey and ruddy brown (red) are the most common. (I recommend using white for buckskins, duns, palominos, greys, red for chestnuts and bays, and grey for blacks).
- Apply the primer evenly over one half of the horse (presumably you will be holding the horse by the other half). Don't apply so much paint at once that it drips or sags and be sure not to get the nozzle too close to the horse. Several lighter mistings are usually better than a thick heavy coating.**

***thick heavy coatings take much longer to dry and can remain slightly "soft" or "goosey" for a day or more. While "soft" they are easily gouged and will cause more work. On occasion, you may wish to use a thick heavy coating of primer to help fill and smooth the surface of*

a resin you may feel is overly rough in an area. Sometimes this is more effective and quicker than trying to sand such areas. Keep in mind that its very easy to get runs and sags using thicker paint, and you need to plan to allow the primer to dry a couple of days or so before you can continue.

- Allow the horse to dry awhile, until you can safely pick it up by holding the primered end, and then spray the other end.
- When the primer is dry and you can safely handle it, inspect the surface for any gouges, dings or seams that were missed. The better you do on the initial seaming portion, the less leftovers you should find at this stage.
- Raised imperfections can be lightly sanded off with 400 grit wet-or-dry sandpaper. The paper will gum up far less if its used wet on the primer.
- Fill any small dings with spot putty and when the putty is thoroughly dry, sand the areas smooth with 400 grit wet-or-dry sandpaper. Wetting the surface before you start will not only reduce dust, but will sand faster and smoother without gouging the primer.
- If you find the sandpaper is gouging the primer, the primer is not yet dry enough to work with. Such gouges can be sanded out later when the primer is fully dry in most cases, and if not, another coat of primer over the area, followed by a little sanding should do the trick. Spot putty can be applied to a serious gouge if necessary.
- Be very careful at this stage... it can be all too easy to add more imperfections than you are fixing if you are not careful! Proceed slowly, with care.
- When the model once again appears to be smooth, apply another coat of primer. Allow the paint to dry, then check the surface again for imperfections, and repair them as before. Continue the process as necessary until you feel you've obtained the best surface possible.
- At this stage it is best to let the model sit a day or three to allow the primer to dry and harden fully.

Basecoating

Some people like to paint directly on top of the primer, while others prefer to basecoat the piece with gesso or acrylic colors. You can handbrush gesso or acrylics onto the piece, or apply them with a fine-celled sponge (for a slightly textured surface). Additionally, an airbrush may be used to apply a basecoat. Keep in mind that gesso, in particular, tends to be thick and can build up on the surface quickly. If you are handbrushing gesso onto the surface, apply it in several thin layers to prevent buildup.

Each artist has their own preferences for the painting surface they prefer, smooth or textured, white gesso or colored basecoats, flat or shaded... if you are an artist new to this type of three dimensional painting, you may need to try experimenting to find out what works best for you.

Once a basecoat has been applied, the resin sculpture is now ready to be officially painted its actual finished color, in oils, acrylics; by handbrushing or airbrushing.

Additional Tricks and Tips

- If you need to rebuild a sizable area that is missing from a resin (a tail tip, ear, nostril rim or portion of a hoof are the most common areas to have problems) using epoxy putty may be more effective than using soda-glu glue bonding. Martin Carbone "Gapoxio" putty works very well for this purpose when you need to "sculpt" a missing or damaged segment rather than just fill in a hole.
- For models sold as "hair prep" (which include no sculpted mane and tail, and are designed for the finishing artist to add either a mohair mane and tail or to add a sculpted version) epoxy putty is the best and most durable material to use for sculpting manes and tails.

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**For more information about Resin-Cast horses
and to find additional sources for other molds to collect, see**

<http://www.riorondo.com/resinhorse/>

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ETCHED DECORATIVE PLATES

THE BASICS

BR9

This brochure will show you how to prepare and attach Etched Decorated Plates and Conchos to leather items.

Required Items:

- **Sheet of 320 Grit Sandpaper, Wet or Dry**
- **Hot Glue and Glue Gun**
- **2-Part Epoxy -- 3 or 5 minute type.**
- **Pair of Nippers or Side-Cutters --** to remove parts from their frame
- **Masking Tape** or other type of tape
- **Hobby Knife**
- **Small Fine Tweezers**
- **Toothpicks**
- **Small Needle Files, Optional --** to smooth out connector tabs from the parts
- **Piece of 1/4" Wooden Dowel about 6" long.**
- **Wooden Craft Stick**

Standard Hi-Temp hot glue will work nicely. We recommend a small glue gun and if possible, a small tip. Use hot glue for large or long parts, and parts attached over areas that are curved, and tack items that may be bent or flexed.

The 2-Part Epoxy works best for tiny items such as rivet and keeper covers, tips and smaller conchos as it is easier to work with the glue for these items. Epoxy should not be used on areas where the leather will be notably flexed with use. We used Loc-Tite brand 3-minute epoxy with good results.

STEP 1

Rough up the Back Side of the Plates

You will need to "scuff up" the back side of the plates to give the glue some "tooth" to adhere to. This step works best if you leave the plates in their "frame" rather than cutting them all apart, especially the small/tiny items.

A larger sheet will be easier to work if it is cut into smaller segments. Large items such as corner plates will work acceptably if separated from the frame. Small and tiny plates are best left attached to the frame for easier sanding and to prevent losing them.

Buckles do not need to be sanded (but it won't hurt if they are)

Place the sandpaper, rough side up on a flat working surface. To avoid the scuffing your work surface, place a few sheets of newspaper under the sandpaper before you begin.

Place the sheet or segment of a sheet of plates with decorated side UP on top of the sandpaper. Press down on the parts with your fingers and gently rub the back side of the sheet/plates around on top of the sandpaper. Check the back side of the parts to see that the surface is fairly evenly "roughed up" a bit.

STEP 2

Cut the Parts from the Frame

Take a piece of masking tape (regular scotch tape can also work) and place it sticky side up nearby. As you cut each plate from the frame, you can stick it onto the tape to avoid losing it.

With the nippers, cut the plates from the frame one by one. You may need to clip away sections of frame to get a clear shot at the connection points.

Cut the plates from the frame, leaving a lot of "connector" on the plates. Once the plate is separated from the frame, it will be much easier to fine-trim the connectors off.

Try to clip the connector as closely and evenly to the plate as possible with the nippers for best results.

Don't throw away the frame just yet! -- The parts of the frame will come in handy to practice and experiment on!

STEP 3

Removing "Burs" from the connector areas

Using a small piece of sandpaper (320 grit, wet-or-dry), or a fine needle file, gently sand or file off any "rough" spots or "burs" where the connectors attached to the part.

Be careful to avoid scuffing the top surface of the plate... angle the file or sandpaper towards the back of the plate as you work.

You may need to use a pair of tweezers to hold some of the smaller plates.

STEP 4

Bend or Form Plates that require it

Many plates will require a certain amount of bending or shaping to fit properly on various tack items. For example, nosebands, browbands, and one-ear plates require quite a notable amount of "bend" to fit appropriately. Breastcollar plates and saddle corner plates may require a mild amount of bend, or none, depending upon size of the plate and where it will be placed.

Plates requiring only a small amount of bend, can be carefully formed with your fingers. Gently and slowly bend it to the shape it needs to be. (Fine tuning can usually be done once the part is glued into place)

For plates requiring more extreme forming, (such as nosebands for halters) take a 1/4" wooden dowel (or other small round cylinder) and use it as a "mandrel" to bend the plate around.

It is best if you practice a little bit first. This can be easily done by using sections of the frame the parts were attached to.

Nip off any extra connectors or burs from a section of the frame, and practice forming it with your fingers. Also practice forming pieces (from 1/2 to 3/4" long) around the wooden dowel to familiarize yourself with how the metal bends, how much force is needed, etc. It also may be useful to you to "purposely screw up", by bending things too sharply on purpose and so forth to get a "feel" for how much pressure is needed to wreck a plate.

AVOID using any metal tools such as pliers of any type to help with this operation, as it is very easy to mar and/or kink the part by doing so.

You may hear some faint "crinkling" or "cracking" sounds, which is normal. With gentle forming, the plating should not break or crack off.

To form a Noseband — Gently use your fingers, pressing firmly from the center of the plate outward toward the ends to form a smooth, even curve around the dowel. The parts may be a little resistant, and will want to "spring back" a bit, so keep working the part slowly until it is shaped as you desire.

The very ends of the plate may not wish to bend "enough", so use the tip of a wooden craft stick to press those ends down along the side of the wooden dowel to get the required amount of bend in this area.

Check the plate against the leather part (or a model) for overall shape and fit before gluing the plate into place.

To form a One-Ear Plate — These are a little tricky, because they need to be both bent a bit, and twisted just a little. Most of this can be done with your fingers (check the plate against a model or your tack item as you go). Use your wooden dowel mandrel, and craft stick as needed.

STEP 5

Glue the Parts into Place

Have your leather item prepared and ready to have the plate added. Any dye, finish or other leatherworking effects should already be completed and the leather allowed to completely dry (if necessary).

Note that some plates are best added before you do the final assembly on your tack item, while others are easier to attach after the parts are already put together.

Examples: Slotted Halter Plates, Breastcollar Center Plates with lacing tabs, Buckles, Dee Rings etc. will need to be attached to the halter during the assembly process

Corner Plates, Halter Plates can usually be glued on top of the leather after the tack item is complete (or mostly completed).

While you can apply the parts while holding them in your fingers, very small parts such as strap tips, keeper covers, small conchos etc. are best handled with a fine, tiny tweezers.

"Eyeball" where on the leather you intend to place the part. A small faint indentation on the leather with a fingernail can help "mark" where the edge of a part should line up (to help with centering and proper locating).

Working with Hot Glue

NOTE: Use Hot glue for large and long plates, and any plates that will be used on an area that will be flexed, as the glue will flex some with the leather.

2-Part Epoxy should only be used to attach very small plates to leather that won't be subject to flexing or bending, and it is easier to work with on tiny items, than the hot glue.

Heat up your glue gun

For larger plates, you can apply the glue either to the leather or to back side of the plate itself. Hold the plate with tweezers while applying the glue.

Quickly position the plate, then press it into place, before the glue cools.

If the glue does cool, you can touch the side of the glue gun's TIP (make sure it is clear of any glue residue!) to the top side of the plate, to re-warm the glue until it sticks.

Small and tiny plates can be tricky, since hot glue tends to "string" a bit. However, most of this can be removed later.

Squeeze a tiny amount of glue from the tip so there's a small bead of glue there. Have your part ready (it may pay to stick small parts upside-down to a piece of masking tape so that they will stay put)

Using a toothpick, quickly get a little glue on the end of the toothpick then dab it onto the center of the BACK side of the small part.

NOTE: since the amount of glue in this case is so minimal, it will be nearly impossible not to add small parts in two steps. Therefore, go ahead and add a dab of hot glue to each small part you will be gluing on.

Pick up a small part with your tweezers and position it where on your tack item. If the part does not wish to "stay" in place long enough to re-warm the glue, you can use a very tiny smear of Sticky Wax to hold it temporarily.

Touch the side of tip of the hot glue gun to the top of the part and allow it to warm until the glue melts. Use a toothpick to push the plate into position.

Extra glue can usually be removed carefully with the tip of a hobby knife— although you will need to be very careful to not scrape the leather while doing so. Re-warming the glue a little may help remove extra glue or "strings".

Working with 2-Part Epoxy

Hot glue has a disadvantage with small parts in that it is hard to get a tiny amount of glue on a tiny part, and keep it warmed up and prevent "stringing". Attaching tiny parts to leather with a standard 2-part Epoxy is easier and less hassle. For attaching the tiniest parts to leather, we recommend epoxy.

Do not use epoxy for large plates, plates that may be bent with use or plates on areas where the leather will be flexed under the part.

Do not use Gapoxio.

We used Loc-Tite 3-Minute Epoxy. It is clear and worked very well. We also tried an old standby "JB Weld", which is silver/grey color. JB Weld does take longer to cure (overnight is best) but it has the advantage of being visible. If you use a tiny amount... you can see where you have placed the epoxy easily. Of course, you can just as easily see it if it gets put in the wrong place or smeared!

Squeeze out a little of both A and B parts into two separate little puddles onto a folded up piece of paper, or a metal lid etc. (Any object that can be thrown away).

Using one toothpick each for parts A and B, scoop up a little of each A and B parts; try to keep the amount of each even, and put them into a small "pool" together and mix with the tip of a toothpick. When the epoxy is well-mixed, wipe the excess from the tip of the pick with a tissue.

Use the tip of the toothpick to scoop up a small amount of epoxy and place it in the middle of the spot on the leather where you will attach the item.

Grasp the part with your tweezers, and carefully place it where desired onto the base leather. Be sure to wipe the tweezers clean with a tissue as needed to keep it free of residue.

Use the tip of your tweezers, or a clean toothpick to gently press the plate into the epoxy, and to shift the plate into the desired position. Since the epoxy does not begin to really cure immediately, you should have plenty of time to get the part placed accurately.

Use the tip of a toothpick or hobby knife blade to remove any excess epoxy that may ooze out from under the plate. Be sure to wipe the epoxy off your tools as you go.

Once the mixed epoxy starts to get "gummy", just mix up a new little batch for further attachments, rather than fighting the gummy epoxy.

Allow the epoxy to set the minimum amount of time recommended on the packaging, and add a few minutes (especially when temperatures are cool). You can place the parts under a lamp to keep them warm during the curing process.

STEP 6

Final Forming

Once the plate is in place (and the glue has cooled, or cured), you should be able to do any small adjustments in terms of bending the part for an ideal fit. Go slowly and gently with your fingers, bending both the plate and the leather together, as needed.

If the plate should "release" from the leather (using hot glue), just rewarm the glue after the plate has been correctly formed and press back into place.

A plain undecorated nickel or gold plated item should require no further care or maintenance, and stay bright and shiny for years.

For more information and details on more advanced decorating techniques for our etched decorated plates, please go to:

<http://www.riorondo.com/info/brochures/BR10etchadvanced.html>

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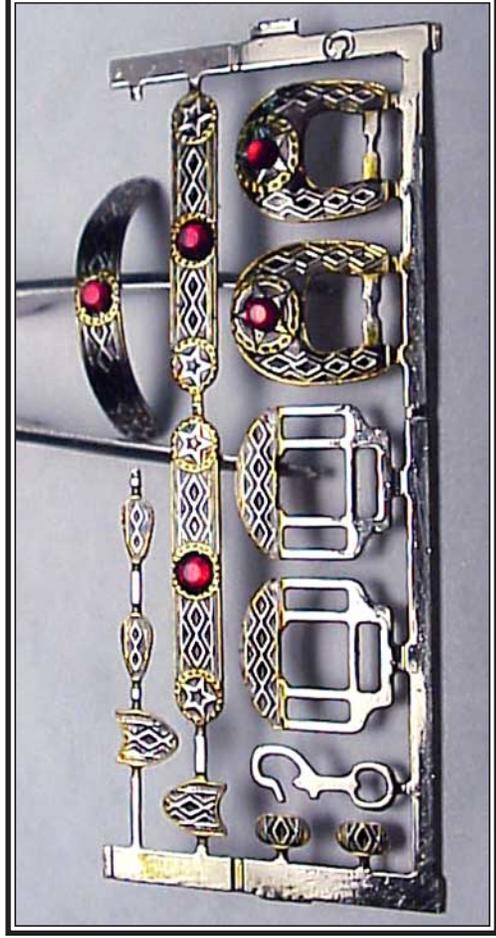
ETCHED DECORATIVE PLATES

ADVANCED TECHNIQUES

BRIO

This document will go over various advanced techniques and options to further enhance and decorate Rio Rondo etched plates. Topics covered will include Antiquing, Sealing, Doming, Stacking, Colorizing and adding Crystals.

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1/19/2006



Items shown have been Antiqued, Colorized with gold, Sealed, formed, the buckles Domed and Crystals added.

PLEASE BE FAMILIAR WITH ALL BASIC PREPARATION STEPS AS PRESENTED IN THE BASIC INSTRUCTIONS BROCHURE (BR9)

There are quite a few things you can do, that will add more variety, color and dimension to Rio Rondo's etched plates. Please note that the various procedures outlined below, need to be performed in a specific order in reference to each other as well as with the Basic Procedures Brochure (BR9).

Depending on the type of plate and tack items you will be working with, you may need to vary the order of the steps.

Adding an Antique or Blackened Look

The simplest thing to do to enhance the look of these plates, is to add a little antiquing or "blackening" effect to them.

For this you will need the following:

- Black "Marks-A-Lot" Marker — Standard wide tips are best. You may wish to experiment with other colors. A black Sharpie pen can also work, but the black will not be quite as opaque.
- Masking Tape — or other tape
- One or Two Sheets of plain white copier paper, folded in half
- Camera Lens Paper — optional
- Toothpick with slightly roughed-up tip
- Nail Polish Remover or Acetone
- Cotton Swabs

Be sure that you have saved your "frames" the parts came in! They are very handy for testing colors, and practicing.

Within this document, "Antiquing" will refer to the process of adding color to the low areas of the design.

Typically, "Antiquing" is going to be done with black color. However, you may wish to experiment with other colors. For hours of amusement, I'd suggest investing in Sharpie's large package of 29 colors with "Ultra-Fine" tips for use both in Antiquing and "Colorizing" (We found ours at both Hobby Lobby and Staples.) Keep a fat black marker around for general blackening.

This procedure should be performed **after Step 1 of the Basics Brochure (BR9)**. Individual larger items such as Corner Plates can be antiqued individually after **Step 3 of the Basics**, if you prefer.

PLATES MUST BE ANTIQUED PRIOR TO STEP 4 of the Basic Instructions.

STEP A — Setting up to Work

Place the folded up copier papers together on top of your clean, flat, work surface. You may wish to place a couple sheets of newspaper over your work surface to prevent staining or marking it up.

STEP B — Apply Color to the Plates

Use the marker to apply color to the entire decorated surface of the plate(s) to be antiqued. Allow the ink to dry about 5 minutes.

It is best if small parts remain attached to their frame. It is also easier to work with if the frame is cut into smaller segments about 1" or so wide.

Note: Marks-A-Lot markers will lay down a thicker more opaque black color than Sharpie... however it will be a bit more difficult to buff the extra color off.

STEP C — Buff off the Color from the High Spots

Place the plate (or segment) blackened side down on top of the paper. Press the plates down with your fingers, using some pressure and rub the top surface back and forth across the paper. This will begin to remove the ink color off of the high spots of the plates.

Turn the piece over and check it as you go. Continue to rub the top surface on the paper until the desired amount of ink is removed. You may need to press down harder on some areas than others.

If the ink coverage does not seem to be quite enough, or seems to be missing or light in a few spots, you can re-ink the plate and try again.

If you do not like the effects, or wish to experiment with different colors, simply dip the tip of a cotton swab in Nail Polish Remover (or acetone) and swipe all the ink off the parts. You may need to use several cotton swabs to remove all of the ink. Blot the parts on a paper towel if needed, before starting again.

STEP D — Touch-Up

You can very lightly buff the top surface with a piece lens paper, to carefully remove more ink and reveal better detail. The results of this will depend on the exact design and depth of the decoration. If you find you have removed too much antiquing color, simply re-ink the plate or the affected area, and try again. Regular bath tissue can work in a pinch, but will tend to leave lint that will need to be removed.

You can selectively remove a little more color from some areas with the tip of a toothpick dipped in nail polish remover or acetone. Before starting, "chew up" the tip just a bit so it is a little "fuzzy" (or sand the end slightly). Do this before dipping it into any solvent. Use the tip to carefully remove ink from tiny areas to obtain different looks or effects.

NOTE: This is a rather tricky operation... and takes some fine control and luck to do successfully and consistently, especially on the smaller parts. If you mess up, simply re-ink the plate and begin again.

Multiple Colors

You can also apply multiple colors in different areas of the plate for differing effects. Please note however, that colors may “bleed” into one another, so some practice may be required.

At this point, the Antiquing procedure is complete and your plates are ready for **Sealing** — please review the instructions below.

Once the plates are sealed, you can also add other special effects to them, or you are ready to complete all the remaining basic steps each plate will need, and glue the plates into place.

Sealing the Plates

All plates that have color added must be sealed in order to preserve the coloring so it will not rub off later.

If you plan to **Colorize** the plates (add color to the high spots), they will require two sealings... one before you add the color so it will not bleed, and a second coating to seal the color in.

Plates must be sealed **BEFORE** they are glued onto the tack item or used in the assembly process.

Notes About Sealing:

Hot glue can be used before and/or after sealing with no ill effects.

Plates can be domed, formed and shaped even after they have had sealant applied.

Plates **MUST** be allowed to thoroughly “dry” or “cure” before performing any further steps.

To apply sealant to your plates you will need:

- **Spray can of Min-Wax CLEAR GLOSS non-yellow formula spray Polyurethane***
- **Masking Tape or other Tape**
- **Desk Lamp** — or warm area to hasten the drying/curing time
- **Work Surface covered with some newspaper to protect it**
- **Camera Lens Paper** — bath tissue will work in a pinch
- **Latex or Vinyl Gloves**

***DO NOT USE KRYLON clear gloss spray!** It will not adequately adhere to the parts, and will rub/chip off easily. It will also dissolve your coloring and vice-versa.

We found the Min-Wax Clear Gloss Polyurethane in the paint/stain section of Walmart as well as at our local hardware store.

STEP A — Setting Up

Cover your work area with newspapers to protect it, and place the desk lamp on your work area. The lamp will be used to “warm” the parts and assist in curing the sealant.

Place the parts on the sticky side of the Masking tape to hold them in place. Make sure they are firmly pressed down.

Place some strips from the frame of the parts on the tape as well. You can use this frame piece to check for dryness later, and it will come in handy for other testing.

Lightly wipe any fingerprints or anything else from the surface of the plates with lens paper. You can use bath tissue, but use only tissue that does not have any lotion in it. Place the tape with the parts on it under the lamp. Turn the lamp on and allow the parts to warm for about 5 minutes.

STEP B — Spraying

Read all label instructions and cautions on the can of sealant. Shake the can vigorously for 2-3 minutes. Put on the gloves to protect your hands.

Pick up the tape strip with parts on it in one hand, and the can in the other and **GO OUTDOORS!**

Spray the can into the open air, **AWAY FROM YOUR PARTS** pointing the spray **DOWNWIND** to get the flow started.

Holding the can about 12” away from the tape, spray the parts in one even stroke from top to bottom. Spray only enough to just barely coat the parts to an even gloss... do not spray so much that the sealant runs or sags! Do not spray so little that you don't achieve an even coverage.

Turn the can upside down, and with the nozzle pointed away from you, spray the can until no more sealant comes out.

Wave the tape in the air for a minute so most of the solvent in the sealant evaporates before going back indoors.

STEP C — Allow the Plates to Dry

Place the strip of tape with your parts on it back under the lamp and allow them to sit for about 20-30 minutes if you are doing a first sealing.

DO NOT GET IN A HURRY! If the sealant is not firmly set, you can easily gouge it and leave fingerprints and stains and will have to begin again.

Check the “test” strip of frame for any “tackiness”. When it is adequately dry to the touch to handle, your parts are ready for coloring.

If you are sealing a part that needs to be formed (such as a noseband), allow the parts to dry about 2 hours under the lamp, before attempting to form the part.

When all procedures for the plates are completed and any additional decoration and coloring is added, your plates will require a second coating of sealant. Follow steps A, B and C again.

NOTES: Sealant can be applied over any crystals that have been added, without dulling their shine or sparkle. (Alternatively, crystals can be added after the final sealing has been completed, if you prefer.)

If you find some sealant has seeped under the parts, this can be easily removed by placing the part on sandpaper (320 grit, wet-or-dry) and rubbing the backside around until the back is level again.

Label recommendations are to allow the sealant to dry or cure for 72 hours before putting the item to use. For model horse tack, I would recommend waiting 72 hours before attempting to package the tack up in a bag or other packing material and shipping it. This is to avoid the possibility of things becoming embedded in the sealant.

Leave a lamp on the parts for the first hour or two, after that, set the parts aside in a safe place (preferably warm if you can do so) and allow the parts to finish curing.

You can attach the parts to your tack about 1-2 hours after the final sealant is applied. After that, leave the tack in a safe place to allow them to completely cure, before wrapping them up for storage or shipment.

STEP D — Removing Sealant

Hopefully, this will not be necessary! But if for some reason you need to strip the plates and start over, you'll need this information.

Find a small glass or stainless steel container and pour a small amount (about 1/2” deep) of Lacquer Thinner in it.

Drop the plates into the container and allow them to soak for 1-2 hours. Use tweezers to remove the parts from the thinner and blot them on paper towels. Use a tissue to remove any remaining sealant, coloring etc. Allow the parts to dry for 30 minutes or so.

If you need to also remove any glued on items, you will need to heat the glue and remove the parts that way (as noted in the sections on **Stacking** and **Adding Crystals**).

Now you should be ready to start again.

Please note that it is very difficult to adequately antique plates after they have been stacked and/or formed.

Additional notes: You only need to use Sealant, if you are applying antiquing or colorization to the plates. If you are simply going to use the plates as is, or are using only doming, stacking or crystals, the plates will not need a sealant (although, you can apply sealant if you wish.)

The various procedures can take a bit of time to perform overall, especially across an entire set of plates for a coordinated tack set. You can choose to do a few plates at a time, or perform each step for all the parts as you go.

Take your time! Don't be in a big hurry to assemble your items immediately if your plates require sealant! Be patient, and allow the plates enough time to adequately cure.

Adding A “Domed” Look to Conchos and Other Plates

Doming is a procedure to help add a little more depth and dimension to the plates. Please note that we are in the process of locating tools that you will need to do this effectively... and will add that info here as soon as we have it.

Most notably, conchos, as well as buckles can benefit greatly from being domed a bit. However, doming can be a very tricky operation, and takes some practice. Be prepared to “wreck” a few parts learning how!

For the Doming procedure you will need:

- **A block of soft wood** — such as a segment of pine 2x4 or other similar wood scrap
- **Mallet, wood or rawhide**
- **1/4 “Diameter Ball Stylus**
- **Metal tool or object about 4-6 “long, with a rounded (domed) end** — we suggest a small carriage bolt*

The small ball stylus is useful for doming out small conchos, buckles or areas of a plate that have a small concho shape within them.

*We have found that a small carriage bolt with a rounded top works fairly well for plates 1/4” and larger. We looked for one with a smooth cap (many of them have raised lettering or other marks on them). If you can't find a smooth-topped bolt, you can use a grinding wheel on a dremel, or some wet-or-dry sandpaper to smooth it out and shape the surface. While there are professionally-made tools just for this purpose, they tend to be quite pricey.

This procedure should be performed after *Antiquing* and *Sealing* as shown above.

In most cases, parts should be removed from the frame, and trimmed as in Step 3 of the *Basics Brochure (BR9)*.

STEP A — Place the Part on the Wood Block

Place the part decorated side down on the soft wood block.

STEP B — Doming

Place the rounded end of your doming tool firmly on the back center of the area to be domed. Rap the handle of the tool with a mallet firmly.

To “dome out” a round concho shape within a plate (such as a halter plate) one good tap should do it (using the ball stylus).

To dome out a round or oval concho, may take several good raps. You will need to move or “walk” the doming tool around the back of the plate a little bit to get the right look. Err on the side of caution here, and keep the taps light. Too many hard taps will deform and “pockmark” the part.

Large Conchos or areas to be domed can be very tricky (areas over 1/4” diameter). Use a large domed object (the head of a smoothed carriage bolt) for these items. Alternatively, you can “walk” a smaller tool around the back of a plate.

CAUTION! The problem with doming large things or tapping the plate multiple times is that it can cause the surface to become uneven or even pock-marked. Also, the surface design will flatten and become soft and less distinct with more taps. The idea is to get the amount of doming you desire in as few accurately placed taps as possible. This will take some practice, and on larger plates, please be prepared to ruin a few items.

For Buckles, two or three average raps across the large wide area at the buckles top generally will do the trick nicely and give the buckle a little curve and dimension.

Depending on the size of your larger doming tool, one good rap over the entire back of the buckle may produced good results.

You can also use any small tool (such as the tip of a stylus) to tap down the tongue bar from the front side, to “depress” it a bit, so the leather tab attached there will not “stick up” so far from the front of the buckle after assembly. **Be careful** — it is possible to “overwork” a part and severely mash it or break it.

STEP C — Level the Part

After doming, some parts may need to be “leveled” a bit so its edges will lie flat and even. (This is particularly true if you will be stacking the domed plate on top of another plate.)

Place the part on a hard and flat surface, and using a wooden or rawhide mallet (not a metal hammer!) lightly tap the surface once or twice. You can place a piece of paper over the part to help protect the surface. Check to see if the edges are level or nearly so. Repeat if necessary.

Doming is perhaps the trickiest operation to perform and may not always work as desired. So be prepared to make some errors and even ruin a few parts learning how!

Stacking One Plate on top of Another

This procedure will add quite a bit of design flexibility to all of your tack items and is fairly simple to accomplish. It consists of simply gluing one plate on top of another... for example, the concho of your choice can be added to your favorite corner plate to add depth, dimension and produce an entirely new look.

It does take some planning to set up stacked plates... to decide which decorative options will be used, and what order to perform them in.

Stacking should be done **AFTER** any *Antiquing*, *Sealing* and/or *Doming*.

In addition, for plates that will need some type of forming (Step 4 of the *Basics Brochure (BR9)*) under the area where the plates are stacked, you should form both parts at the same time (both base plate and added plate on top) before gluing them together. This would be most common if you wished to stack a concho on a noseband plate or browband or stacking a concho on top of a buckle. In most cases, corner plates can be stacked first, and then formed.

When in doubt, form first and stack later.

For this step, the term “plates” will refer either to both items to be stacked together or to the “base plate” or your main plate that will be on the bottom (such as a corner plate). The term “concho” will be used to denote the item to be stacked onto the top to add decoration.

For the Stacking procedure you will need:

- **Hot Glue Gun and Glue**
- **2-Part Epoxy or JB Weld** — an alternative to hot glue
- **Hobby Knife**
- **Toothpicks**
- **Small Tweezers**
- **Masking tape or other tape**

NOTE: We found we preferred using 2-Part Epoxy for stacking plates, as the glue would hold the plates together nicely, when we went to attach the plates to leather items with the hot glue.

It is important if you are going to use epoxy, that any notable forming of the plates to be stacked should be done at this time, so the plates are stacked together in their “formed” shape, and will not need to be adjusted much for the final attachment. This will keep the plates from potentially separating from each other from the bending.

STEP A — Set up the Plates to be Stacked

Place the base plates (those that will have other parts added to the top of them) on the sticky side of a piece of tape, decorated side up, to keep them from moving around.

Check for appropriate fit and location of added conchos/plates to “eyeball” them to achieve the look you desire.

If you intend to use a 2-part liquid epoxy, skip to **Step D**.

STEP B — Start Gluing with Hot Glue

Heat up your glue gun, and have your knife, tweezers and toothpicks handy.

Pick up a concho (or other part to be placed on top) with your tweezers and have it ready.

Apply a tiny dab of hot glue to the bottom plate, in the center of the area where the concho (or other item) will be added. (Alternatively, you can place a tiny dab of glue to the underside of the concho, then add that to the base plate instead.)

Put down the glue gun quickly, and place the concho on top of the dab of glue. Press down on the top of the concho firmly with either your tweezers or a toothpick. Nudge the part to adjust its location if necessary.

For very small conchos, squeeze out just a little bead of glue from the glue-gun's tip. Use a toothpick to pick up a wee bit of glue, and touch it to the bottom of the small concho. Then place the concho about where you want it on the base plate and go to the next step. (Applying a small amount of glue to the concho will help prevent using far too much glue and creating a bigger mess on the base plate.)

STEP C — Adjusting the Placement

If the concho on top is not placed correctly, you can gently “re-heat” the area.

Have some paper towels or tissues handy to wipe off any glue from the side of the glue tip first.

Touch the *SIDE* of the heated tip of the glue-gun area right to the added concho to re-warm the glue. Don't touch the top of the plate/concho with the glue-gun's tip to avoid getting glue on the plates.

Alternatively, pick up the plate with tweezers, and warm it with the side of the gun's tip, from the bottom side of the plate.

Wait a moment while the hot tip re-heats the metal, and the glue softens.

Use the tip of your tweezers or a toothpick to nudge the top concho to where it should be.

If there is too much glue pushing out from around the edges of the concho, while the glue is still warm, you can use the tip of a toothpick or the tip of your hobby blade to gently “peel” out the excess glue. This will take a little patience. If all else fails, heat the parts enough to remove the concho — remove some of the warm glue with toothpick or knife, then start again.

Once the glue has cooled, you should have an excellent and strong attachment.

STEP D — Using 2 Part Epoxy or JB Weld instead of Hot Glue

Skip this step if you're using hot glue!

Hot glue has a disadvantage with small parts in that it is hard to get a tiny amount of glue on a tiny part, and keep it warmed up and prevent “stringing”. You may find stacking plates with a standard 2-part Epoxy is easier and less hassle.

We used Loc-Tite 3-Minute Epoxy. It is clear and worked very well. We also tried an old standby “JB Weld”, which is silver/grey color. JB Weld does take longer to cure (overnight is best) but it has the advantage of being visible. If you use a tiny amount... you can see where you have placed the epoxy easily. Of course, you can just as easily see it if it gets put in the wrong place or smeared!

Squeeze out a little of both A and B parts into two separate little puddles onto a folded up piece of paper, or a metal lid etc. (Any object that can be thrown away).

Using one toothpick each for parts A and B, scoop up a little of each A and B parts; try to keep the amount of each even, and put them into a small “pool” together and mix with the tip of a toothpick. When the epoxy is well-mixed, wipe the excess from the tip of the pick with a tissue.

The amount of epoxy you will need to glue down each concho plate, will depend on the plate's size. A tiny dab is all that is needed for very small conchos, while a small “pile” to fill in the gaps will be needed for a larger domed concho.

Use the tip of the toothpick to scoop up a small amount of epoxy and place it in the middle of the spot on the base plate where you will attach the concho. If you are attaching a large domed concho (1/4” or so) apply the epoxy into the depressed area on the back of the concho instead, while holding the concho with tweezers.

Grasp the concho with your tweezers, and carefully place it where desired onto the base plate. If any epoxy has gotten onto your tweezers, after releasing the concho, wipe the tweezers clean with a tissue.

Use the tip of your tweezers, or a clean toothpick to gently press the concho into the epoxy, and to shift the plate into the desired position. Since the epoxy does not begin to really cure immediately, you should have plenty of time to get the concho placed accurately.

Use the tip of a toothpick or hobby knife blade to remove any excess epoxy that may ooze out from under the concho. Be sure to wipe the epoxy off your tools as you go.

Once the mixed epoxy starts to get “gummy”, just mix up a new little batch for further attachments, rather than fighting the gummy epoxy. Allow the epoxy to set the minimum amount of time recommended on the packaging, and add a few minutes (especially when temperatures are cool). You can place the parts under a lamp to keep them warm during the curing process.

NOTES: Hot glue (and epoxy) can be applied over or under sealant. It will hold acceptably either way.

DO NOT use “Super Glue” for stacking plates. It will not hold acceptably well.

DO NOT use “Capoxio” instead of a standard 2-part liquid epoxy. It will not work for this use.

Once the epoxy is fully set (or your hot glue fully cooled) you are done with this step!

Colorizing or Adding Color to the High Spots

This procedure should be done after any *Antiquing* and/or *Doming* has been completed.

ALL PARTS TO BE COLORIZED MUST BE SEALED FIRST!

The sealant provides a “base” for the ink to soak in. Without it, it will rub off easily with the barest amount of handling, and if multiple colors are used, they will bleed into each other easily.

Please note that colorized parts also require a second coat of sealant over the top, to seal in the color.

For the Colorizing procedure you will need:

- Colored Sharpie Marker Pens — Ultra Fine Tip
- Masking Tape or other Tape

Most Sharpie markers are delightfully translucent, allowing you to colorize an area, and yet still have the sparkle and shine of the metal show through. Some colors cover better than others.

We recommend the “jumbo” set of Sharpie markers, featuring 29 colors, for tons of fun.

STEP A — Practice and Experiment First

To initially test colors and practice, you will need to do this on an **UNSEALED** item. You can use a cotton swab and nail polish remover (or acetone) to remove any color as you go to test your ideas.

Pieces of the frame, or the back-side of extra plates (or front side of unused plates) can all be used to experiment. When you are done, simply swipe off the ink with a cotton swab and solvent.

DO NOT “TEST” COLORS ON SEALED PLATES. The sealant will absorb the ink, and you will not be able to remove all of the color without removing the sealant! However, you can go ahead and “seal” scraps from the frame, to mess around with. Keep in mind, by the time you get to this colorizing step, you've probably invested a lot of time in preparing your parts, so be sure to test your ideas and check your colors on other parts or frame pieces first!

Some of our favorite colors (from the “Jumbo” Sharpie marker set of 29 colors):

- The dark mustard-yellow color makes an excellent gold. Try selectively coloring in the outside rims or certain parts of the design with this color
- The orange color makes a lovely copper. The “peach” colored pen makes a lighter highly polished copper, or the “red gold” shade of “black hills gold”.
- There is a light, pale green color that makes an acceptable “black hills gold” green tone
- The royal blue and bright and dark red colors make wonderful sapphire, ruby and garnet jewel colors when applied to small areas. Green makes a pretty emerald too. One of light blues makes a pretty topaz. Try this in the middle of stars or diamond shapes to simulate a “jewelled” look.
- With practice, you can color one color over another to get a “mix” of the two. This is a little tricky, but can help to get just the shade you’re after.
- Several of the bright colors can simulate the “anodized aluminum” look that is currently seen on some tack items.

STEP B — Place the Plates on the Sticky Side of a Piece of Tape

Place the parts *decorated side UP* on the sticky side of the tape to hold them in place as you work.

STEP C — Apply the Color

Apply the desired color to the areas of the plate that you wish. The color will seep into the sealant, and not “bleed” very easily.

Do not “overwork” the part coloring it. Apply it carefully, and in one pass where possible.

For tiny areas, use the barest touch to the surface, and work outwards as needed.

Keep in mind that the color will soak into the sealant. If you really mess up, it may not be possible to fully remove all the color, without also removing the sealant. Some of the color can be rubbed off with your fingertip immediately if you must... and some colors will come off well enough not to be noticeable. Some colors are very difficult or impossible to remove, even if you try to remove them immediately.

Handle the parts gently. Most of the more intense colors will hold up to light handling as needed as you work, but be careful. Check to be sure color has not rubbed off, and if it has, add more coloring.

Take your time, have patience and don’t rush!

STEP D — Allow the Ink to Dry

Allow the ink to dry for 5-10 minutes

STEP E — Apply a final coat of Sealant

See the instructions for applying sealant, above. Allow the parts to cure well before further handling or assembling.

Be sure to include a piece of the frame when applying the final coat of sealant, so you can use it to check the curing of the sealant.

Adding Crystals or Rhinestones

This step should be performed after all other optional procedures have been completed and any sealant has cured.

In this section, the term “Crystal” will refer to Swarovski, Austrian or Czech crystals (generally lead-glass). “Rhinestones” will refer to plastic simulated gems. “Stone” will refer to genuine natural stone cabochons or faceted gems.

We recommend Swarovski, Austrian or Czech crystals for best appearance and also they will hold up very well to the heat from a glue gun. Genuine stones of other types (turquoise, tiger eye, etc) may also be used. Cheaper

plastic rhinestones can be used, but will not hold up to high temperatures of the glue-gun (and will melt in some circumstances). Plastic rhinestones should be attached with epoxy

NOTE: After all of our experiments, we find we much prefer to attach crystals with epoxy, since it is far easier to control the amount of glue and easier to adjust the positioning of the crystal. Also, if hot glue has been used to stack plates together, it is the best choice to prevent wrecking and undoing the parts.

Don’t let the “wait time” to let the epoxy cure put you off... it really does work best for this purpose.

For Attaching Crystals, Stones or Rhinestones with Epoxy you will need:

- **2-Part Epoxy**
- **Small Fine Tweezers**
- **Toothpicks**
- **Rhinestones/Crystals with a flat back** — Sizes from 5ss to 20ss work well.
- **Masking Tape or other Tape**

For Attaching Crystals with Hot Glue (or Iron-On Crystals) you will need:

- **Hot Glue Gun and Hi Temp Glue**
- **Iron-On Stone Setting Tool** — or you can use the side of the tip of your glue gun, or a soldering iron, or wood-burning tool.
- **Tweezers, toothpicks, crystals, masking tape as above**

The “Iron-On” variety of crystals are handy because you won’t need to mess with applying the hot glue (they are already pre-coated with hot glue). However, they do cost more than standard crystals.

Plastic rhinestones can be used, however they don’t sparkle nearly as nicely as lead crystals. Plastic rhinestones should be attached with epoxy.

Many natural stones can also be used, such as turquoise, tiger eye or whatever you can find. To avoid cracking genuine stones with applied heat, we recommend attaching them with epoxy.

STEP A — Prepare the Items

Place the parts *decorated side UP* on the sticky side of the tape. This will hold them in place as you work.

Select the crystals you will be using and check them against the plate for desired size and location.

If you will be using hot glue, heat up your glue gun (or soldering iron, stone-setting tool or wood-burning tool) and have your tweezers handy.

If you will be using Epoxy have your epoxy ready to mix as outlined in **Stacking** — **Step D**, above.

If you are using “Iron-On” crystals, you can skip to Step C, below.

If you are using epoxy, skip to Step D.

STEP B — Applying Hot Glue (for standard crystals)

Apply a TINY dab of glue to the center of the back of the crystal. Use the least amount of glue possible to avoid having too much glue squish out from around the edges. For very small stones, you will need to scoop a bit of hot glue from the tip of the gun, onto a toothpick, and quickly apply the glue to the crystal with the toothpick.

Quickly, use your tweezers to place the crystal onto the plate and press it down. If the glue has already cooled, you can warm it by holding the side of the glue gun to the top of the crystal. Wait a moment until the glue melts and you can nudge the crystal into position. Alternatively, you can use the tip of a soldering iron or a stone setting tool tip to heat the crystal (and warm the glue).

Allow the plate to cool. Skip Step C and D.

STEP C — Applying an “Iron-On” Crystal

Place the crystal on the plate in the location you want it to be with tweezers.

Use a stone-setting iron (or the side of your glue-gun tip or the tip of a soldering iron) and touch it to the crystal until the glue softens. Press the crystal down into place. Use tweezers or a toothpick to nudge the crystal into position. Rewarm the crystal as necessary to adjust the position of the crystal.

Skip Step D

STEP D — Applying Crystals, Rhinestones and Stones with 2-Part Epoxy

Prepare the epoxy as in **Stacking-Step D** above.

With the tip of a toothpick, place a tiny dab of epoxy on the plate where the crystal will be placed. Using tweezers, place the crystal, and lightly push it down. Nudge the crystal into place with the tip of the tweezers, or toothpick.

Place all your crystals and allow the epoxy to set the recommended time. Placing the plates under a lamp to keep them warm will help assist the curing process. Even with the 3 and 5-minute epoxies, it is best to wait about a half hour before using them in tack assembly.

If for some reason, you had forgotten to seal the plates, sealant can be applied right over the crystals, and will not alter or reduce the gloss and sparkle.

If necessary, crystals can be carefully added to existing plates that are already attached to your tack items, using epoxy.

NOTE: With very tiny parts, such as strap tips, keeper covers etc., it is easier to add special decorating while the parts are still attached to their frame. At some point these parts will need to be removed from the frame and the edges cleaned up. We recommend that you do as much work as you can before removing the parts from the frame. Once you get to the stage of removing the burs, the parts can be placed on tape and given a final sealant coating that will seal in those edges.

Once you have completed all your decorating steps, you can proceed to any remaining steps of the **Basic Instructions Brochure (BR9)**.

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