



MAN CRATES
PROJECTS

BROWN BAG

DIY LEATHER BAG MAKING GUIDE



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HIDE AND SLEEK

Ask any biker, cowboy, or extra from the movie Grease and they'll tell you leather's more than just a fashion choice.

It's protection, it's a statement, it's a way of life. It beats back the elements. Leather, like the man who Ask any biker, cowboy, or extra from the movie Grease and they'll tell you leather's more than just a fashion choice. It's protection, it's a statement, it's a way of life. It beats back the elements. Leather, like the man who carries it, is uncompromisingly tough. Heck, there's a reason even cows wear it.

This kit contains the leather, tools, and instructions you'll need to make a handsome messenger bag perfectly sized to fit a 13" laptop, blanket roll and canteen, or 28 bottles of hair pomade. Your call. And you'll get to make it with your bare hands. Because the only thing that might last longer than the finished bag is the memory you made crafting it.





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The Leather

We've included a stencil and enough 5-6 oz oil-tanned leather to make a bag large enough to hold a 13" laptop. It's been vegetable tanned and completely saturated by natural oils, resulting in a leather that's incredibly soft, waterproof, and uniquely beautiful. See? Even leather can benefit from eating its veggies. The single-piece construction of the bag means that it'll be easy to assemble and plenty durable.

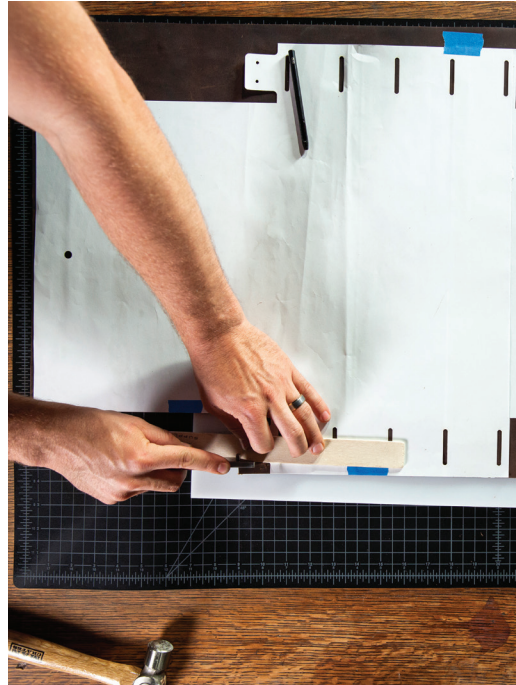
The Hardware

The highest-quality leather demands high-quality hardware. The steel D-rings, strap slide, and swivel snaps will work together to make your strap adjustable. The screw rivets are a strong and simple way to assemble the bag and fasten the leather. Finally, we've included a Fidlock SNAP closure, which combines magnets and mechanics for an easy snap closure that just needs a tug in the right direction to open.

*** TOOLS YOU'LL NEED:** Besides what's included in this kit, you'll also need a utility knife, a hammer or mallet, and a flathead screwdriver.

Step 1: **CUTTING**

The first step is to lay the stencil on the leather and prepare to cut it to size. We recommend finding a large, flat surface to work on. Leather working isn't delicate business, so find a sturdy surface that won't be ruined by a couple knicks and dings, just in case you get carried away. It helps to use painter's tape to hold the stencil in place while you're getting started.



Before you begin, make sure you put the cutting board underneath the leather to protect your working surface. Then, place a ruler along the line you'll be cutting and use a utility knife or razor blade to cut along the ruler.

PRO-TIP: Don't try to go through the leather in a single pass. Press lightly and focus on keeping a straight line against the ruler. Take several passes to ensure you get a clean cut.

When cutting the interior corners, it can be hard to have the two cuts meet perfectly. We recommend punching a hole in the corners first. Then, starting from the hole and using a ruler, cut the line that runs tangent from the corner. Not only is this method easier, but a rounded corner is also stronger. You've made it this far in life without cutting corners, why start now?

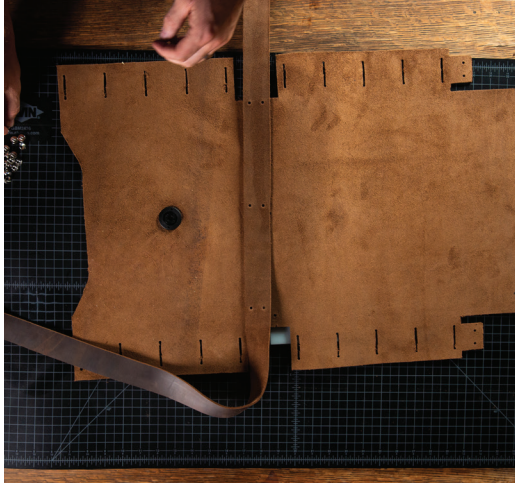
Likewise, when cutting the slots on the sides of the bag, it's easiest to punch holes at both ends of the channel first. Then, use a ruler and your blade to cut each side of the channel, connecting the holes. Start at the tangent of each circle and cut halfway across the channel, then do the same at the other end to complete the cut. This will keep you from accidentally cutting past the end of the channel.



To quickly punch the bag's larger hole, it's easiest to use the leather punch to knock out smaller, connecting holes along the outside edge of the circle. Don't even bother with the blade, it's a losing proposition.



Step 2: **ASSEMBLY**



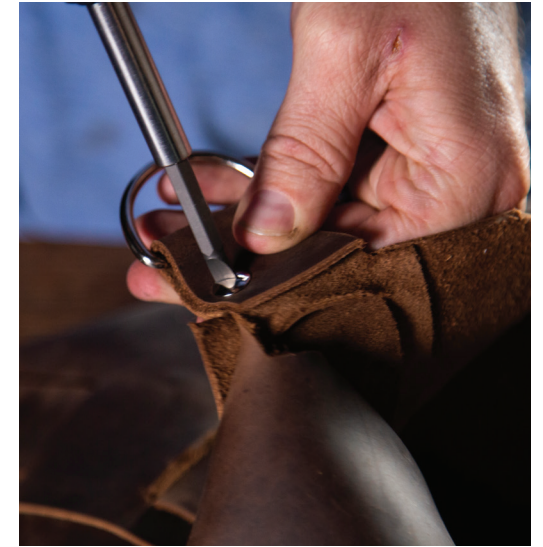
Whoa-oh, we're halfway there. Whoa-oh, we're working on some leather. Okay, now that we've got that out of our system, let's work on putting this bad boy together.

Start by laying one of the two straps along what will be the bottom of the bag. Use the stencil to mark holes in the strap and punch them out. Then, join the strap to the inside of the bag using screw rivets.



Next, you'll fold the bag to make the bottom and sides. The slotted edges should overlap one another to form the sides of the bag. Also, the edge from the front of the bag should be outside of the edge coming off of the back.

Thread the strap through the bottom two channels, then loop back and thread it through the next two slots. Continue until you've laced together both sides.



Then, using the holes you've punched in the tongue that's extending off of the side as a guide, mark and punch the strap so the holes line up.

Next, fold the strap around a D-ring and loop it back down the other side of the tongue. Once again, mark and punch so that the holes in every layer line up. Use screw rivets to sandwich these together, fixing the D-ring in place.

Finally, repeat all these steps on the other side of the bag.



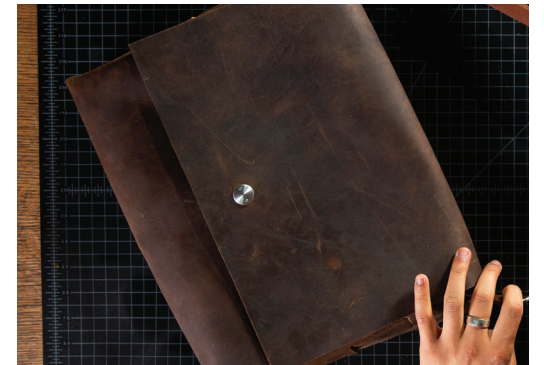
Step 3: **CLOSURE**



Closure is an important part of the healing process, especially for bags. The closure comes in two parts: a male end with an aluminum cap and a female end that's made of black plastic. Unscrew the two parts of the female end and insert it into large hole you've punched into the front of the bag. Then tighten the two pieces in place by hand. Take care to ensure the channel in the front of the closure is pointed toward the bottom of the bag.



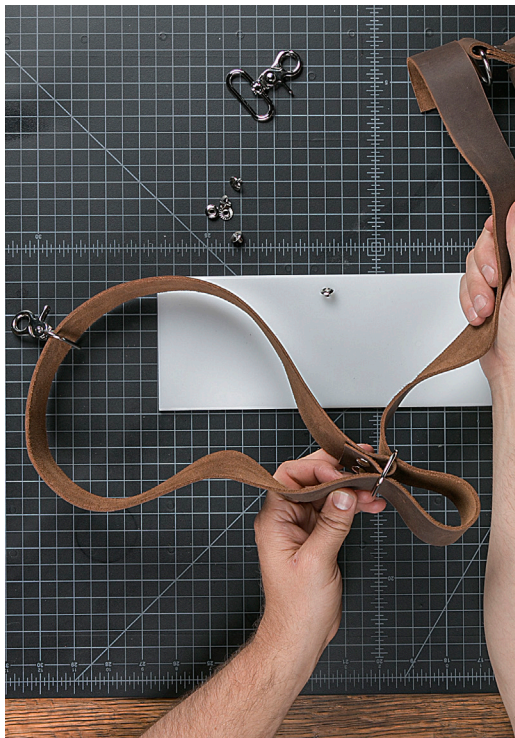
Similarly screw the two parts of the male part onto the front flap of the bag to complete the closure.



Step 4: **STRAP**

You're almost there, and we've saved the easiest part for last. Take the remaining strap and measure in $\frac{1}{4}$ " from the sides and ends of the straps, and punch two holes into each end of the belt.

Fold one end through the middle bar of the strap slide and lay the end back over the belt. Use the end to mark and punch matching holes to connect the belt with rivets.



Slide the belt through one swivel snap, then pass back through the slide, passing over and around the fixed end of the strap.

Finally, fold the second end of the belt around the second swivel snap and use the holes you've already punched as a guide to make matching holes. Then use your last few rivets to finish the strap and lock the swivel in place.

Snap your strap on the bag and breathe a sigh of relief. Wow...what a beaut.



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