

# HOW TO CARVE THE STYLIZED BEAVER

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Artwork by Jack Ekstrom

**STEP ONE**-Trace the pattern onto a plastic can lid or lightweight cardboard. Cut out for permanent template. Trace around the template on the wood. Grain should run from nose to tail. Saw blank.

**STEP TWO**-Draw a center line around blank. This serves as a guide to prevent carving too much off one side and not enough off the other. You can use a carpenter's measure to draw a center line, to draw a border around a piece. Grasp the pencil between thumb and forefinger just as you do for writing. Measure where you want the line drawn. Place tip of pencil on line. Let your middle finger serve as a guide on to wood. Do not change the position of the fingers. Drag them and pencil around figure or along edge of wood.

**STEP THREE**-Draw outline of beaver on top view of wood.

**STEP FOUR**-Think shape, not details. At the top of the curve on this blank, make a mental mark. Pretend that this is the top of the watershed; all water runs downhill. Carve in the direction of the running water away from the highest point. IF you carve uphill, the knife will dig into the grain and you can chip off half of the figure! This beaver gives good practice in working on curves.

**STEP FIVE**-Curve the underside of the head but leave the top just a bit flat to add to the freedom of the flowing line.

**STEP SIX**-Round out the body. The beaver will have an egg-shaped look. Smooth the rough cuts with smaller knife cuts. Or, sand the figure. Finish with a coat of paste wax or your favorite wood stain. For a professional waxed finish, apply several coats of wax. Buff between each coat with a soft cloth or an old vegetable brush.

