

## How to do the Letter carving on a wooden spoon handle

In this article I will walk you through the steps how I carve the lettering onto my spoon handles. I will concentrate on the slicing.

### What do you do for this purpose?

I suggest that you use as solid a knife as you're comfortable working with. Because you are carving on a spoon handle, you will have one hand on the spoon and the other one is steering the knife blade, similar to other decoration methods like chip carving or kolrosing. Another knife option that I have seen David Fisher using, is a pocket pen knife.

A good light source is important to see the contrast in your letter carving.

### What to look out for ?

Letter carving is a similar skill like chip carving, so you have to keep a careful eye on the way, how and where the grain runs.

On straight letters it's not as crucial compared to cutting the round ones as you will need to change the slicing directions while carving.

I often get asked if straight letters are easier to carve compared to round letters. I wouldn't say so. In my experience in stone and wood work a straight letter can easily look wonky if the outlines and centerline don't line up properly.

Carving round letters on a spoon handle will at first feel stiff and awkward as you learn how to move both the spoon and the knife in the slicing process. In my experience this unfamiliar sense vanishes as you improve your technique with more practice.

### First step :

Find your layout/design for the word or phrase that you want to carve. Make a sketch on paper or draw directly on the spoon if you are comfortable doing that. Another possibility would be using masking tape to define your lettering space on the spoon handle. Place the piece of tape on a flat surface and draw your letters onto the tape as a template. Then simply stick the tape onto the handle again (David Fisher has a blog post on how to do on his website).

#(pic drawn layout on spoon handle)



### Second step :

Now the fun part begins. In this step the letters are carved mainly in a V-cut style. I would suggest you use a 40-60 degree cut when beginning to carve or slice your lettering.

# (Sketch1)

In the letter cutting process, you slice along the outlines of the letters. You can either start with the long side lines or the shorter stop cuts on the top and bottom of the letter. After you have done those 4 precise cuts, the chip should pop out, like with chip carving.

# (Sketch 2) (Pics from the process on straights)



Once you have carved your lettering you will want to take closer look at your letters and you might want to take this opportunity to refine your work.

One of the trickier parts of cutting and slicing your lettering is going to be working the round parts. Like on the the Letter J for example.

You will start the short cuts on the ends of the letter. It is important to remember the opposing grain directions when carving a round letter, cutting your outer line down the grain and your inside lines up with the grain. You will do well to remember in which direction the grain of your spoon handle runs compared to your lettering. See attached photo.

# ( Sketch 3 (Pics from the process on rounds)



### Third step :

Now we are in the final stage when you will clean up and tidy any remaining wood fibers. If need be you can do some refinement here, for example corners or straight lines. To clean up your corners, pull the knife tip towards the V groove end point and carefully pivot the blade towards the upper edge (see image).

Carefully look over your whole word looking for tiny errors, unclean corners and overall balance and clean centerlines.

#(pics of the finished lettering)

If you're looking for a really good tutorial , I can recommend you the interview from Barn the spoon with David Fisher at the 2019 Spoonfest on the lettering topic . You can find this on Youtube @UKSpoonclub.

