

Stamp Carving Using Linocut Techniques: Ukrainian Style!

Carve erasers and carving material using linocut techniques to make rubber stamps! In this virtual class, learn how to create these stamps using traditional Ukrainian designs. Lecture and demonstration will be provided, as well as time to “carve along with the instructor.”



About Else-Marie Tennesen

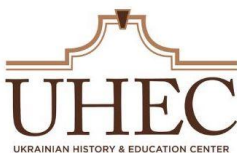
Instructor Else Tennesen is a member of St Job of Pochaiv Orthodox Church in Los Alamos, New Mexico.

She is an engineer and self-taught artist and has been carving stamps since 1994.



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Advance Registration Required
Register online at ukrhec.org/events



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Supplies you will need

To get started in stamp carving, you will need:

1. Erasers (white polymer) or carving material (MOO Carve, Speedy-Carve or Speedy-Cut)
2. Linoleum cutting handle and blades #1 and #5 (optional: #2)
3. Pencil
4. Tracing paper or white tissue paper
5. Dye-based ink pads
6. Paper for stamping on
7. Optional: paper clip

See the *Resources* page in this packet for shopping information.

Tip: For erasers with printing on them, remove the printing by wiping the eraser with a cotton ball saturated with nail polish remover (acetone). Don't rub; use a firm stroke across the eraser. If the eraser has raised printing on one side, carve on the smooth side.

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Carving

Step 1: Choose, Trace, and Transfer Your Design

Choose a design from the class design sheet, draw your own design, or pick an image from a book of clipart or online (use copyright-free images). Make sure the image you choose will fit the surface of the eraser.

Trace your image using white tissue paper or tracing paper. Lay the paper on the image and trace using a No. 2 or soft lead pencil.

Transfer the image by laying the traced image face down on the carving material. Gently rub the back of the paper with your finger. The pencil drawing will “transfer” onto the eraser. Notice that the image on the eraser is the reverse of what you drew/traced. That's okay!

Tip: If using a carving block larger than your design, cut your carving material to the size of the design plus a little bit extra all around the design.

Step 2: Carve Your Design

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Before you begin, here are some carving tips:

- If you've never carved before, practice with your blade on the back of the eraser.
 - Push the blade *along the surface* of the eraser—**don't dig or gouge**.
 - Carve small details first. Begin in the center of the design.
 - Be safe. Push the blade AWAY from, not toward, yourself.
 - This activity is **NOT** suitable for children! They could cut themselves!
 - Work slowly and thoughtfully! You are creating art!
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Using your lino handle and #1 blade, begin carving. To carve, place the blade open side up on the surface of the material and push forward. You can grip the carving tool like a knife or a pencil, whatever is most comfortable for you.

You don't have to push hard to remove material; it's very soft! Typically, you carve away what you don't want to print—the white parts of your image—but you can create negative images by carving away only the black parts of your design.

Start with the inside of the design and work outward, and carve small details first. You don't have to remove a lot of eraser to get a printable image, just enough to see a "relief." Be careful when cutting towards your design. Go slow and steady. You are creating something beautiful!

Design Tip: To make "dots," you can poke into your eraser/carving material with the end of a paper clip. Different diameter tools will make different sized dots.

When all your details are done, carve around the outside of your design.

Next, you are ready to carve away the background (or unwanted material around the outside of your stamp). Switch to the #5 blade (refer to your product packaging on how to switch out the blade). Gently carve away all the rest of the unwanted eraser.

NOTE: If you haven't used all of the carving material, save the big leftovers for more stamps!

Step 3: Stamp Your Design

When you feel your carving is almost complete, make a **test print**. Ink the stamp thoroughly by pressing the stamp pad onto the stamp (not the other way around). Stamp onto paper and note any details that need more carving or clean-up. Continue carving as needed.

Your stamp is “done,” when you say it is! Little print imperfections and tiny print artifacts are a hallmark of carved stamps. There is no “good” or “bad” stamp. It’s yours alone and shows off your own personality. Enjoy!

Step 4: Caring for Your Carved Stamp

To clean your stamp, rinse with **water** and let air-dry (you can also dab away water with a paper towel). Don’t rub—it’s still an eraser and it will wear down.

Some ink colors, such as dark reds, purples, blacks or blues, may stain your stamp, but that will **not** affect future printing. Store your stamp carving up in a dry place. Don’t stack them. Over time, the eraser may become hard, but it will still stamp. Store your closed ink pads upside-down to keep the ink near the surface of the pad.

What can you decorate/make with your Stamp?

- Cards
- Gift tags
- Bookmarks
- Stationery
- Wrapping paper
- Clothing
- Envelopes
- Journal pages
- Fabric (use fabric ink pads)
- Invitations
- Paper decorations
- Stickers

Resources

For erasers, carving material, and ink pads: www.dickblick.com and www.amazon.com.

Products available now on Amazon

(Click each blue link to be taken directly to the product page.)

- Recommended: [Basic Complete Stamp Kit](#)
- Recommended: [Speedball Speedy Carve Standard Kit](#)
- Recommended: [General's Factic Plastic Eraser](#) - fabulous!
- [Multi Block Complete Stamp Kit](#)
- [Linocut tool kit](#)
- [Pink 2x2 inch carving blocks set](#) - nice!
- [Large white polymer eraser](#)
- [Tim Holtz Black Ink Pad](#) - my favorite
- [Tsukineko Memento Black Ink Pad](#)

More carving material brands

- Speedball Speedy-Carve Block
- MOO Carve Block
- Speedball Speedy-Cut

Books about carving for later study

(Click each blue link to be taken directly to the product page.)

- [Stamp It! Printing with Handmade Stamps](#) by Jenny Doh
- [Making an Impression: Designing and Creating Artful Stamps](#) by Geninne Zlatkis
- [Carve, Stamp, Play: Designing and Creating Custom Stamps](#) by Julie Balzer

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Need help after class?

You can email me, Else Tennessen, at else10@gmail.com. HAVE FUN!

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