

Awls

Stitching and lacing

top row diamond bladed



Very fine
bridle awl



English
bridle awl



Small
buckstitch
awl



Large
buckstitch
awl



Old
Osborne
lace awl



Round awl

Correct size awl for your hand

The haft needs to lay in the palm of your hand, where all the pushing strength of the hand is. The blade is an extension of the fingertip as shown.

You will never get precise stitches if the blade is more than 1/4"-1/2" beyond the fingertip with the hand in the stitching position.

When the blade is too far in front of the fingertip, the precise control needed for hand stitching is lost.

A good fit in the hand is a combination of the blade length and the haft length. Likewise if the haft is too thick for your hand, you won't be able to grip the awl unit properly. There are many times when you have a long blade, you'll need a short haft to get the right length. For a short blade, use a longer haft to compensate.

If the tool is properly fitted to the hand, your stitching will gain speed with minimal effort.



Showing how awl haft must be sized for people with smaller hands. Awl haft on left is "standard" size; right one is for smaller hands. An awl must be a slight extension of your fingertips for optimum control. Actual sizes shown.



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Verlane's English bridle awls

(actual size shown)

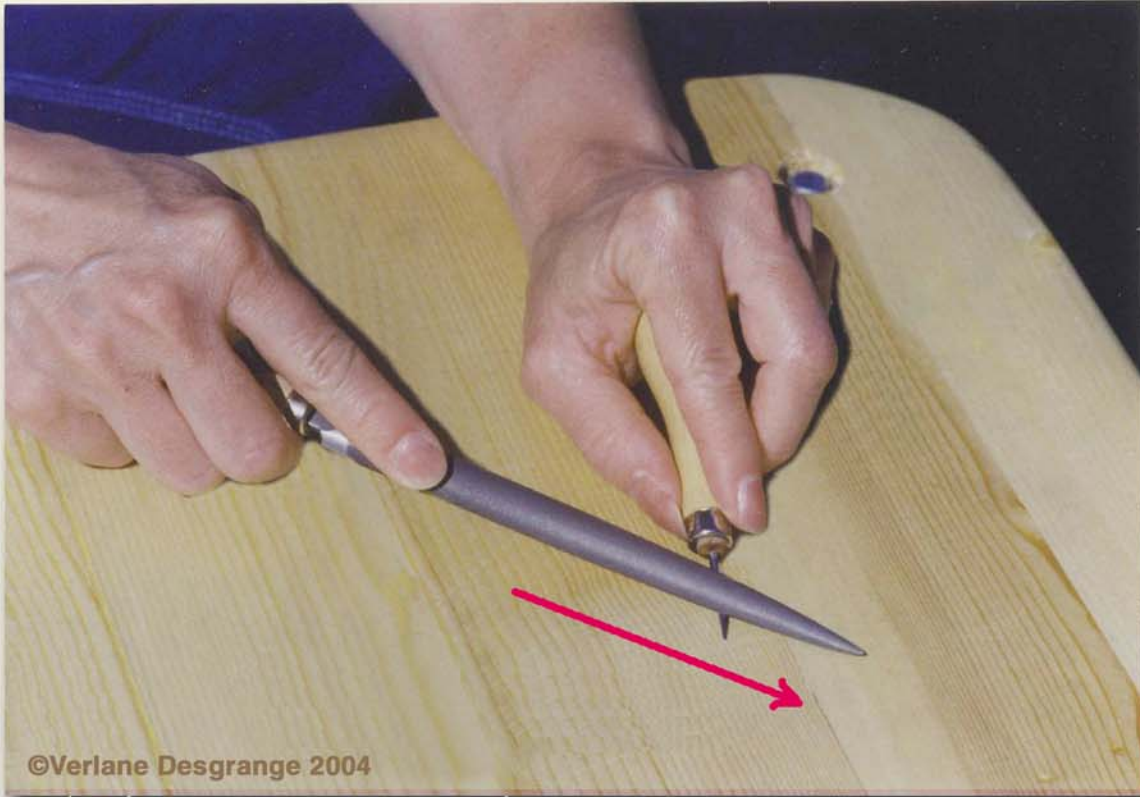


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Awl on top is used for 11-12 stitches per inch. Awl on bottom is used for stitching 8-10 stitches per inch. Awl hafts sized to fit my hand. They may be too large or too small for other hand sizes.

Sharpening awl blade with jeweler's ring file

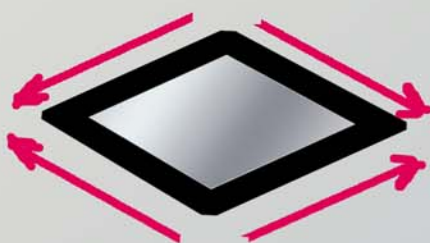


Above: Push flat side of file in direction of arrow to sharpen. Use either a #3 or #4 cut file (fine or extra-fine).

Cross section of diamond-shaped awl blade



Red arrows show cutting edges. Other two edges are non-cutting edges that push fibers aside to create a space for needles.



Push file toward cutting edges in direction of arrows to raise a "wire edge" or slight burr. Polish flat sides with 555 white rouge to smooth out any marks from file. DO NOT polish the edge, as it's the edge that cuts with its micro "teeth".

Awl position for hand stitching

Straight edge on leather



*Awl positions hold true for using thread
or buckstitching with lace*

Curved edge on leather



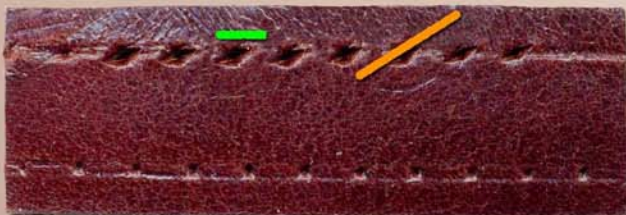
In both examples, note that one flat edge of awl runs parallel with edge of leather. The long diagonal on the diamond shaped awl blade forms approxiamtely a 45° angle with edge of leather. On a curved edge, you'll have to slightly rotate awl position with each stitch. For a straight edge, keep awl consistanly in the same position to get uniform stitches. Hand stitching should match machine stitching so there is no visible transition between the two methods.

Stitching sample



Above:

- Actual size 1/2" strap, marked 7/8 inch, stitched with 4 cord linen thread
- Stitch line is about 3/32" from edge. Distance from edge will change with different strap widths.



1.

Below: twice actual size to show details

1. Slanted orange line shows long axis of diamond awl blade that is approximately 45° to edge of leather. Green line shows flat side of awl blade is parallel with edge of leather. Only correct placement of awl will give correct stitching.



2.

2. GS of leather showing finished line of stitching. Last stitch on left is backstitched one stitch to hold line of stitching together.



3.

3. FS of stitch line showing how stitches tend to have a diamond shape. Blue line was mechanically copied from orange line above with no changes in angle, only reversed as this is FS of leather. Correct thread placement insures that FS stitches will look as even as stitches on front.