

# A brief guide to Carving Your Own Rubber Stamps

## YOU'LL NEED:

\* White plastic erasers (we like Pentel Hi-Polymer, available at Office Depot)

OR

Blank carving medium, a.k.a. "butter block" (like Speedy-cut or PZ Kut).

\* An X-Acto Wood Carving Knife with a V-gouge blade or a Speedball linoleum cut tool with v-gouge (it doesn't look sharp, but it is - so be careful!)

\* A simple, high-contrast image to turn into a stamp - must be under 1" to fit your eraser (use a Copier to reduce the size if necessary).

You can buy carving tools & carving medium at retail craft stores or online (try DickBlick.com).

A note about eraser brands: Magic Rub erasers tend to be full of little air bubbles that make carving difficult. We don't recommend using Pink Pearl or Art Gum erasers for carving because they're very crumbly. Mars Staedtler white erasers are only flat on the side with the blue lettering, which can be confusing to carve around.

## TRANSFERRING THE IMAGE:

There are several ways to transfer your image onto the eraser's surface, depending on available resources.

\* Tracing paper method--

Use tracing paper and a soft pencil to trace the lines of your image. Then, place the tracing on your eraser, pencil side down. Rub the back of the tracing to transfer the pencil lines to the eraser. The pencil lines may smear a bit.

\* Laser printer method--

Place the printed image face-down on the eraser. Hold the paper in place while rubbing the back of it with a Q-tip dipped in Citra-solv (or use a Chartpak colorless blender pen, which contains xylene). Be sure to open a window!

\* Inkjet printer method--

Print your image onto parchment paper, then place the printed image face-down on your eraser and rub the back of it with your fingernail. Check out this illustrated tutorial: <http://bit.ly/Inmv7C>

## CARVING YOUR STAMP:

Remember to work slowly!

\* Using the V-gouge in a shallow scooping motion, carve away everything except the part of the stamp that you want to touch the paper.

\* For a positive image, you need to carve around the parts you wish to print. These areas will be raised from the surface.

\* For a negative image, you need to carve away the parts of the image you wish to stay "white."

\* If you're carving a positive image, you may wish to first go around the edges of your design with an X-Acto knife to ensure a crisper edge. Then use your V-gouge to clear away extra material.



positive image



negative image

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<http://benttuba.com>