

Carve a Cat

Here is an approach to carving a cat that is applicable to other 3D character carving.

What you need:

1 ½" X 1 ½" X 4" wood carving block (e.g., basswood)

Carving knife (sharp)

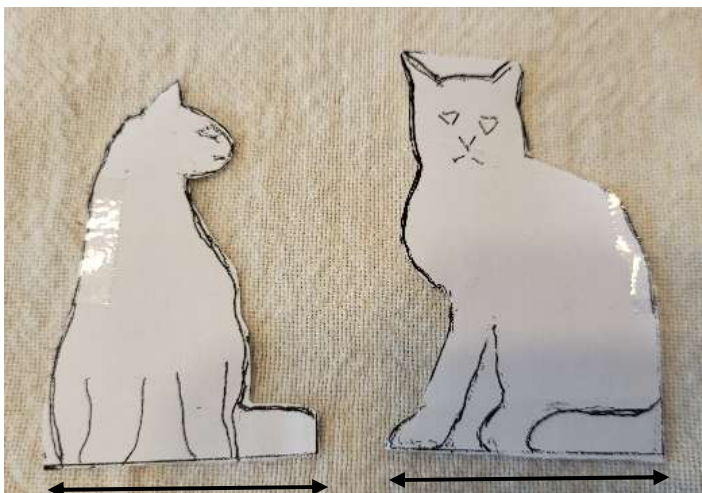
Gouge (e.g., #8, 3 mm)

Saw (if doing on your own, e.g., coping, scroll, bandsaw)

1. Find an example picture that inspires you on a subject, such as from the internet or a book. Use it directly or modify it as you want to obtain the final figure design.



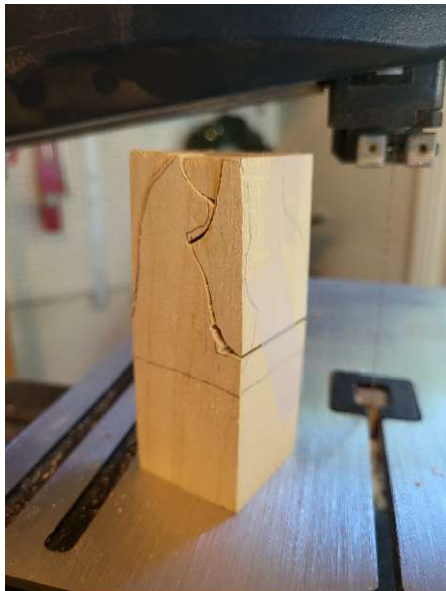
2. Use the design to prepare the figure from complimentary 90 degree angles. A printer or copier can assist with scaling to the wood's size (1 ½" shown by below). Transfer the pictures to the wood by cutting out and outlining it with a pencil, or use transfer paper.



3. Use a saw (e.g., coping, scroll, bandsaw) to cut out the figure in the first 90 degree direction.



5. Use tape (e.g., Scotch Invisible, painters tape) to re-attach the cut pieces. Cut the figure in the second 90 degree direction. The resulting piece is called a "roughout". This cutting process saves a lot of carving time.



6. Use your knife and gouges to carve the cat:
- Round and shape the figure by rounding the corners and shaping the figure. Use your picture or a 3D shaped figure to see what to carve. Notice that the tail and paws come down to the pencil line in the picture.
 - Add detail of the tail, legs and feet.
 - Use a gouge to open the area between the front legs.
 - Use a knife to relieve the front legs from the back legs on the side and shape the feet.
 - Leave the ears and face for the end, because they are very easy to carve off by mistake.
 - The cat face is very subtle, so take your time to shape and detail it.
 - Sand the carving at the end if you want a smoother surface.

