



PADDLE PENDANT

There are many small model paddle pendants that can be found in museum collections thanks to their popularity and widespread appeal. Paddle pendants were used as regalia. During dance ceremonies, the pendants made a statement that incorporated an audible and visual presence through ornate necklaces, masks, and carved stone pieces. The paddle pendant is created with a straight knife and small power tools.

The learner will develop the fundamental skills to design and craft a yellow cedar paddle pendant.

Materials

- Yellow Cedar ½" x 5" x 10"

Supplies

- Paddle pendant template
- Pencils: HB, F
- Eraser (gum erasers work best)
- Tracing paper
- Flexible clear ruler (knitting ruler)
- Rubber mat (cupboard liner)
- Sandpaper – 100- or 120- and 220-grit

Tools

- Band saw or scroll saw
- Straight knife
- Belt sander

Safety

- Eye protection
- Ear protection
- Leather apron
- Dust mask
- Safety boots

Procedure

1. Choose a piece of clear, edge-grain cut yellow cedar with no knots. Knots in the wood on this size project will make it difficult to work with the wood.
2. Fold a piece of transfer paper in half. Using the provided paddle pendant template, trace the template onto a piece of the folded paper using the fold as a center line. Now, fold the paper, pencil side in, and trace over the design. This process ensures that both sides of the paddle are identical.

3. Transfer the design to the wood. Take your piece of tracing paper, place it on the wood (pencil side down) and trace over the existing lines.
4. Following the pattern, cut the wood using a band saw or scroll saw. To ensure your safety and prevent injury, use proper PPE, follow proper operating procedures, and use safety guards.
5. Draw a center line on the edges of the board. These lines will act as guides to keep both sides of the project even.
6. Measure and draw a line 1 3/4" from the tip of the paddle. This measurement will give you an approximate location of the blade's widest part.
7. Shape the paddle using one of the two options listed below:

Option 1 : With a straight knife

A sharp knife is essential for ease of carving to reduce the chance of an injury and the quality of the finished product. When carving wood, you should always try to carve away from yourself. There are some exceptions to this rule. In such situations, focus on your work and be very careful. Keep the knife's cutting direction in mind so that you can keep your hands behind the knife's cutting edge. If you are working on your lap, use a leather apron.

- A. Hold the paddle in one hand and your knife in the other. The hand holding the knife will act as a guide. While holding the paddle with the other hand, you will use your thumb to push on the back side of the blade. Your thumb steadies the knife. It provides better accuracy. Start carving from the widest point of the paddle blade (which you have previously marked) towards the tip of the paddle. Push the knife away from your body, using small cuts along the paddle's side. You want to shape an oval taper on the paddle. The taper narrows at the outside edges and is thicker at the center. Use the edge center guideline to ensure that both sides are equal.
- B. Rotate the paddle to carve the other half of the blade, starting at the widest point moving towards the handle. The middle of the paddle blade can be carved from either orientation.
- C. Carve the thinner part of the paddle, called the shaft. Cut the edges, working towards the grip. Use sandpaper to round all four edges.
- D. Carve out the grip (handle). This is a delicate part of the paddle because the shaft is thin. Remember, short cuts are the best technique for carving this part. Use the straight knife at an angle.
- E. Round all sides of the grip working across the grain.
- F. Finish the paddle by sanding it with 100- or 120-grit sandpaper until you have removed all bumps and shallow areas. You can go back over it and whittle away more wood if required. Continue sanding, finishing with the 220-grit paper.

Option 2: With a belt sander

Working with a belt sander is faster and will quickly remove the wood. The sander's efficiency will require you to pay close attention to the paddle's dimensions. It can thin out in a short amount of time. I use a 36" bench belt sander with a 120-grit sanding belt that can be found at most hardware stores.

SAFETY * Use a dust mask, eye, and ear protection when operating the machine. Do not wear loose clothing while using a belt sander.

- A. Start shaping the paddle using a belt sander. Hold the paddle length ways and allow it to contact the sanding belt at a slight tilt away from the belt. Sand material from the edge center line to the top center of the paddle. Sand from paddle's tip to just before the grip. Rock the paddle back and forth, slightly, to help create an oval-shaped paddle. Use this procedure to shape the adjacent side.

NOTE: Using the belt sander allows you to sand parallel to or across grain. Whereas using a knife to carve, grain direction is important to consider.

- B. Flip the paddle over and repeat the procedure on the opposite side.
- C. Round the top of the grip on the band sander—pay careful attention because the belt sander will remove material quickly.
- D. Finish the paddle by sanding it with 100- or 120-grit sandpaper until you have removed all bumps and shallow areas. You can go back over it and whittle away more wood if required. Continue sanding, finishing with the 220-grit paper.

One Step Further

Paint a design element on the paddle using acrylic paint. To protect your project, you can use a Danish oil in clear or natural finish. Once complete, set the paddle aside to let the wood absorb the oil. This process will take a couple days.

