

ART FROM THE BARK

Nothin' But A Hound Dog

(1st Edition)

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3/18/2014

Instructional guide on carving a hound dog from basswood.

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Overview

Nothin' But a Hound Dog instructional guide covers how to carve a howling hound dog. The hound dog is a modified version of the "Homer the Hound Dog". I had to rush putting this together while traveling, so I hope it is understandable still. I'll clean it up later.

Recommended Tools

Use tools that you feel comfortable carving with. I prefer to use a detail knife palm tools when carving the dog. The following is a list of tools that I use to carve the hound dogs.

- A carving glove and thumb guard.
- Detail knife (1" to 1.5" blade).
- I use a variety of v-tools.
 - I use a medium size 70 degree v-tool to outline my cuts.
 - I use smaller v-tools for detail work, normally 75 degree angle.
- I use a small flat sweep gouges (1/4" #3, 3/8" #3 or #5, 1/8" #3).

- I use a 1.5" knife blade during the roughing stage and then move to small detail knives for making stop cuts and detailing.
- I use a #9 or #11 to create the eye socket.

Hound Dog Pattern

The pattern is located on the last page of this guide. Draw the pattern onto a block of basswood. The block of wood used for these instructions was 3" wide, 4" height, 1.25" wide. Use a bandsaw or coping saw to cut out the side profile of the dog. Draw a centerline down the back and front of the dog. Repeat drawing the centerline whenever you cut the mark off. Draw in the position of the ears, shoulders, legs, tail, and back. Mark the nose, about 3/8" wide, centered on the centerline.

Dog's Snout

Use a detail knife to rough in the hound's snout starting from the bottom of the eyes and widest part of the cheek bone to the edge of the marked nose.



- Round the nose. I use a v-tool to cut around the base of the nose. I usually will switch over and begin using a knife to round up the nose. I make small stop cuts around the nose and cut toward the stop cut to shape the nose. Watch the grain of the wood.

- Once the nose is in place, round out the remainder of the snout to the top of the nose.



Rough-In Hound Dog's Ears

Use a v-tool to outline the top and bottom of the ears.

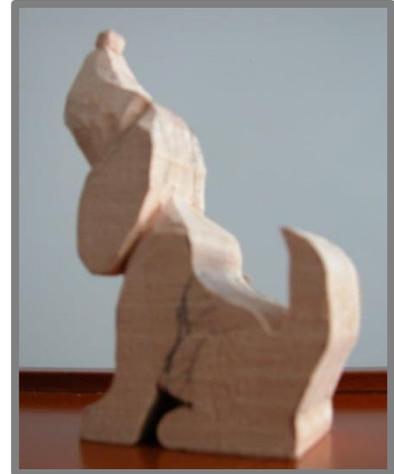
- Top Outside of Ear: On the outside of the ears, cut the top of the ears back towards the dog's eyebrows, approximately 1/4" from the outside of the block.
- Bottom Outside of Ear: Cut the bottom of the ear about a 1/4" from the outside of the block towards the neck. Rounding the shoulders will help carve the ear to the proper depth.
- Underneath Ears: Remove the wood between the ears on the underside of the dog. Carve the neck between the ears, creating a smooth transition between the neck and the dog's chest.



Ear Front Side View.



Ear Front View.



Ear Back Side View.

Block-In Tail Area



Before we carve the back of the neck and between the upper portions of the ears, we need to remove some of the excess wood from the tail area (marked in red in the image). Don't carve the entire tail at this stage. Leave the tail about a $\frac{1}{2}$ " wide to prevent accidental breaking of the tail. Draw a parallel line from about $\frac{1}{4}$ " on each side of the centerline on the tail. Maintaining the curvature of the dog's backside cut away the excess wood from each side of the dog's tail. Don't cut off his hind quarters or feet.

Back of Neck, Ears and Shoulders Blades

Now that the excess wood on the tail has been removed, let's go back and carve in the back of the neck and ears. The area we are cutting is shaped like an



upside down funnel. Use a v-tool to outline the area. The funnel shape starts between the dog's eyebrows, expanding down along the dog's ear, onto the shoulder. On the back side of the dog, cut out from between the dog's eyebrows to between the dog's shoulder blades. Use a #3 gouge or knife to shave down the inside of the funnel shape. The top



of the funnel will be shallower than the base of the neck (about 1/8" deep). The ears droop down in front of the shoulders. Separate the dog's ears from the edges of the shoulders.

Shoulders and Front Legs

At this stage we will begin to shape the front legs. Round the shoulders to the back and up under the ears.

Block Out Front Legs: Remove the wood from the dog's side between the back knee and the front legs. You can either do this with a narrow detail knife or "flattish" gouge (#3 1/4" and 1/8" wide). Block out the curvature (knees and ankles) of the front legs and back knee. Cut the legs back about 1/4" deep from top of the back to bottom of the stomach areas. At this point it is pretty blocky looking.



Block out sides of legs.



Block out sides. Rear angle view.



Blocked out sides. Back view.



Blocked out side. Angle view.

Use a v-tool to outline the front of the dog's legs. You can drill holes between the legs to help get started. When drilling a hole between the top most part of the legs, drill the hole at an angle as the chest and stomach. Use a knife or gouge to begin separating the front of the legs. This is easiest done but making v-cuts between the legs. A small gouge (#3 1/8") can be used between the legs to smooth out the chest and stomach area.

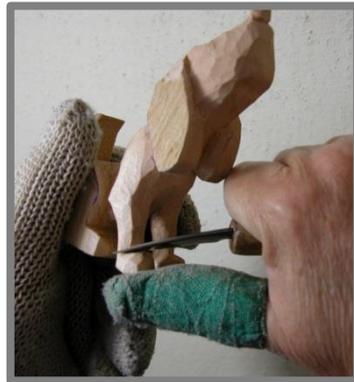
Rounding Front Legs: Now it's time to round and shape the dog's front legs and feet. Remove the corners of the blocked legs and follow the curvature of the dog's legs to include the knee.

Feet: The toes of the feet are high in the front and rounded back toward the legs. Look at the images below. Watch the grain on the feet. Carve carefully around the feet, being careful not to chop them off by accident. A little glue may be needed if the feet are accidentally cut off.

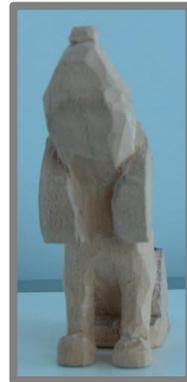
Sides: From the center of the dog's side, use a small gouge to round the side to the upper back of the dog. Repeat this same technique, but carve from the center to the bottom of the belly.



Start Rounding



Angle of toes and feet



Front of
Legs



Side View with
Heel

Hip, Back Legs and Feet

Now that we have rounded up the front legs, we'll move to the dog's hind quarters and back legs. Take a look at the images below and draw in the pattern for the side of the legs and the bottom of the feet.



Side View of Back
Legs



Bottom of Feet
and Heel

Round Leg and Hip: Bin rounding the upper portion of the dog's knees and hips to his waist. Continue to round his hip back toward the tail.

Separate the Toes: Start carving the front of toes. Using a knife and round the toes from the center of each toe to the outside of the foot. On the inside of the feet, separate the toes using "V" cuts between the toes. Following the pattern on the bottom of the dog's feet, separate the toes/feet, stopping at the dog's belly.



Shape the Heels: To shape the heel, use a knife and following the pattern on the bottom of the feet. Remove the excess wood from the outside of the heels by tapering the sides of the feet to the center of the heel. The inside of the heels are a little trickier because of the tail. Make multiple V cuts to taper the tail toward the heel and while working the heel back toward the tail.

Separate Bottom of Feet: Now we need to remove the wood between the toes and feet. You can use a knife or a gouge to accomplish this section. We will be cutting across the grain so use the tool of your choice. I find it easier to use a knife. Starting at the heel and carving toward the heel, you want to remove the wood to a depth of about 1/8" from between the feet near the



base of the tail. If you are using a knife, make a stop cut along the edge of the foot. Make your next cut by cutting toward the stop cut (foot), cutting away small slivers at a time. Make a slight angle from the base of the tail up to the stomach area that as carved earlier. The area between the feet should have a smooth transition from tail to stomach.

Relieving feet from leg: Now that the toes have been fully released, continue to



round the tops of the toes from the sides up and over the toes. Be sure to round the tops of the toes on the inside of the feet toward the stomach too. We want to create a slight separation where the feet and the legs come together to help define the feet. The upper part of the feet will come back toward the heel to almost $1/3$ of the length of the feet (see side drawing on feet above). The feet will angle down from the top of the toes to about $1/8$ " down above the bottom of the feet.

Relieving leg from outer thigh: Follow the pattern to create a division between the legs and outer thighs. From about $1/8$ " from the base of the heel to about the center of the leg/thigh, cut slightly curved line between back of the leg and the outer thigh. Round the legs and thighs toward the curved line to create the look of the thighs sitting against on the back of the legs.

Ears

Now we want to put some movement on the ears. The ears are curved, so I prefer to use a gouge to create the curves in the ears. The ears have a slight "S" shape. The center of the ears moves back toward the head while the bottom of the ears flips out away from the shoulders.



Side Center of Ear



Front Edge of Ear

The first picture shows where the center of the ear will be. The second image shows the movement on the edge of the ear.

Inside Flap of Ear: I begin by shaping the inside of the ear first. You can use a gouge or knife to remove the bottom corner of the ear. Thin out underneath portion of the ear by following the contour of the line on the front of the ear. Curve the ear back to bring out the neck and make the ear appear to be lying against the neck.



Inside of Ear



Front Edge of Ear

Outside Flap of Ear: Because of the curve in the ear, I normally use a #9 sweep gouge to carve the center of the ear, but it can be done with a knife too. From one side of the ear, carve toward the side center line of the ear. Then do the same from the other side of the ear. Working from both sides toward the center of the line will

help prevent splitting. Create a smooth transition along the top of the ear, pushing it back away from the eyebrows and flattening it on the edge on the top of the head.



Side of Ear



Ear Curve



Ear to Head Transition

Eyes

Here's looking at you! The eye surface should be about 1/4" from the top of the dog's head to the top of the nose. You may have to deepen the location for the eyes, by cutting away some of the nose. This is easily done with a knife by following the angle of the eyes down toward the nose, make a stop cut. Come back with the knife from the top of the nose and meet that stop cut, taking out a small slice at a time. Also, make sure the eye area is flat.

Eye Socket: To make carving the eyes easy, use either a #9 or an #11 u-gouge to shape the top curvature of the eye socket. Draw the center line back in to help measure the distance of the eyes. The inside portion of the eyes are approximately 1/8" apart from each other. Take a look at your dog and adjust the distance between the eyes based on how size the dog's head. Each eye is almost 1/4" in width at the bottom of the eye - where it meets the top of the nose. The height of the eyes is about 1/16" from the bottom of the nose to the center of the each eye. Put a center dot at the top center of each eye. So if everything measures up properly, then from the center line to the dot you draw should be about 3/16" inches. And from the center of the bottom of each eye to the top dot should also measure 3/16".

Here comes the tricky part. Center your #9 or #11 u-gouge with the center dot on the eye that you drew. Gently press the gouge **straight** down to form the top eye lid.

Once that upper lid has been mark, use a knife to cut straight down to the bottom of the eye (top of nose).



We want the eyes to have some roundness to them, since dog's eyes aren't flat. The difficult part will be to round the edges of the eye back a little toward the eye socket because we are working against the grain. So, go slow on only remove small shavings at a time.

Eyebrow: Along the center line between the eyebrows, use a the #9 or #11 gouge to separate the brows. Right above the eye, use a small v-tool to carve an eye brow wrinkle between the edge of the eye and the top of the eyebrow. Follow the roundness of the eye. You can add other wrinkles around the eye too. These dogs have lots of wrinkles.

Snout Wrinkles

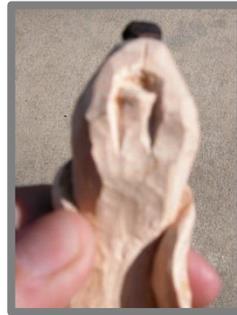
Talking about wrinkles, let's add some to the top of the dog's snout. These wrinkles aren't straight. Give them some movement. The wrinkles start at the curve of one side of the snout and go all the way across to the other side of the snout. Use a small v-tool to carve in the wrinkles. If you have room, make three wrinkles:

- One wrinkle centered entered between the nose and bottom of eye
- Another wrinkle between the nose and the center wrinkle you just made.
- A third wrinkle between the eye and the center wrinkle you made earlier.



Mouth

Use a 1/4" #9 or #7 u-gouge (something with a nice curve) to make the top part of the mouth. Turn the gouge upside down so the dog looks like he is frowning. The cut two lines (one on each side of mouth) from the where the gouge marks end to about 1/4" or longer. That will form the mouth and floppy lips. Take another gouge can for the bottom lip, this time turn the gouge right side up and meet the edges from the other gouge mark you made earlier. You want the do to look like he is howling. Hollow out some of the wood between the mouth. Using a gouge, following the shape of the lower lip to remove some of the wood underneath the lip. This helps the lip stick out and divides the mouth from the floppy lips.



Tail

Round up the tail. What else can I say about the tail? Watch out the grain. It's easy to cut off the top of the tail if you cut with the grain on the inside. On the inside of the tail make a stop cut in the center of the tail. From the top of the tail cut toward the stop cut. Then cut from the bottom of the tail toward the stop cut. Curl your knife as you get to the center to get a smoother cut.



Finish

Add your favorite finish. I like to dip my dog in Boiled Linseed Oil. I dab the excess oil off. After drying I just add a little neutral Meltonian shoe cream for the waxing.

Dog Pattern

I drew the pattern out, so it's not the best patterns, but it should give you an idea of how to shape the dog. Resize the pattern to fit your piece of wood.

