

# Braiding Rawhide Horse Tack

**Braiding Rawhide Horse Tack** The Art of Braiding Rawhide Horse Tack A Comprehensive Guide So you're looking to delve into the world of braiding rawhide horse tack Fantastic This ancient craft is both rewarding and beautiful resulting in durable stylish and uniquely personalized equipment for your equine friend While it might seem daunting at first with patience and practice you'll be crafting stunning bridles reins and more This comprehensive guide will walk you through the process from selecting materials to mastering the braids

**Why Choose Rawhide** Rawhide offers several advantages over other materials its incredibly strong and durable develops a beautiful patina over time and is naturally water-resistant though proper care is still crucial Its also pliable enough to be shaped and braided allowing for intricate designs However it requires more preparation than some synthetic materials

**Gathering Your Materials** Before you begin gather the following Rawhide Choose high-quality rawhide specifically designed for braiding Thickness will depend on your project thinner rawhide is suitable for reins while thicker strands are needed for bridles Consider the colour natural dyed brown or even black are all popular choices Suppliers often sell pre-cut strips saving you prep time Braiding Board or other flat surface This helps keep your braids neat and even A smooth flat piece of wood or even a large sturdy cutting mat will work Sharp Knife or Razor Blade Essential for trimming and preparing the rawhide A very sharp blade ensures clean cuts preventing fraying Heavy-Duty Needles and Thread For stitching your finished braids together Use strong waxed thread to prevent breakage Rawhide Dressing optional This helps condition the rawhide making it more pliable and increasing its longevity Measuring Tape Accurate measurements are crucial for consistent braiding Clamps or Binder Clips To hold strands in place during braiding

**Preparing the Rawhide** 2 Proper preparation is key to successful braiding If you're starting with whole rawhide strips they will likely need to be soaked and scraped This process softens the rawhide making it easier to work with

**Soaking** Submerge the rawhide strips in clean cool water for several hours or even overnight The soaking time depends on the thickness of the rawhide

**Scraping** After soaking gently scrape the rawhide using a dull knife or a specialized rawhide scraper to remove any excess flesh or fat This process cleans and smoothes the surface ensuring a consistent braid

**Cutting** Once scraped cut the rawhide into the required lengths and widths using your sharp knife or razor blade Aim for consistent widths for even braids

**Basic Braiding Techniques** Several braiding techniques can be

used for rawhide tack each resulting in a unique look and feel. Let's focus on two fundamental braids.

- 1 The Three-Strand Braid**  
This is the most common and easiest braid to master.  
**Preparation:** Take three strands of rawhide of equal length and thickness. Secure one end with a clamp or binder clip to your braiding board.  
**Braiding:** Cross the right strand over the center strand, then cross the left strand over the newly formed center strand. Repeat this process consistently, crossing the outer strands over the center until you reach the desired length.  
**Securing:** Once finished, firmly secure the end with a clamp or by stitching it tightly.  
**Visual:** Imagine plaiting your hair; this is the same principle. The right strand goes over, then the left, and you repeat.
- 2 The Round Braid or Turks Head Knot**  
This braid is more intricate and produces a rounder, thicker braid. It usually requires more experience. While a detailed explanation exceeds the scope of this entry, numerous online tutorials visually demonstrate the process.

**Assembling Your Tack:** Once you've mastered the braiding techniques, you can start creating your tack. This often involves combining multiple braids, adding buckles, and stitching components together. This requires patience and attention to detail.

- 3 Example: Creating Simple Rawhide Reins**
  - 1 Braid three strands of rawhide using the three-strand braid technique.**
  - 2 Once braided, measure and cut the reins to your desired length, allowing extra length for attaching buckles.**
  - 3 Attach sturdy buckles to either end of the reins using strong stitching.** Pre-punched holes in the rawhide make this step easier.

**Maintaining Your Rawhide Tack:** Proper care extends the life of your rawhide tack.

- Cleaning:** Wipe clean with a damp cloth after use. Avoid harsh chemicals or excessive water.
- Conditioning:** Periodically apply a rawhide dressing to keep the rawhide supple and prevent cracking.

**Summary of Key Points:** Rawhide braiding requires patience and practice but results in strong, durable, and beautiful tack. Proper rawhide preparation is crucial for easy braiding. Mastering basic braiding techniques, the three-strand braid, is a great starting point. Assembling tack involves combining braids, adding hardware, and stitching components. Regular cleaning and conditioning will extend the life of your rawhide tack.

**FAQs**

- 1 Where can I buy rawhide for braiding?** Specialty leather and tack shops, online retailers specializing in leather crafting supplies, and some saddleries carry rawhide suitable for braiding.
- 2 How do I prevent my rawhide braids from fraying?** Use a very sharp knife for clean cuts and consider sealing the ends with a rawhide sealant or even a dab of beeswax.
- 3 What type of thread should I use for stitching?** Use heavy-duty waxed nylon thread or a strong linen thread designed for leatherwork.
- 4 How do I add buckles to my rawhide braids?** Use strong stitching, ideally with a stitching pony, to ensure even tension. Pre-punched holes are helpful.
- 5 Can I braid rawhide myself even without prior experience?** Absolutely! Start with simple projects like reins and gradually progress to more complex items like bridles. Online tutorials and practice are your best friends.

**4 With dedication and the right techniques, you can create stunning and functional rawhide horse tack that you'll be proud of. Embrace the process, enjoy the creativity, and soon you'll be crafting beautiful pieces for your horse. Happy braiding!**

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here is an instruction manual for the novice worker in rawhide unlike many other works on the subject this book assumes no previous knowledge or experience the reader is shown in drawings and photographs every step of the procedure starts with a fresh cowhide continues through cutting strings and braiding and ends with finished reatas bosals hobbles or reins along the way the author discusses the needed tools and implements which the beginner can make for them out of readily available materials by following the directions in this book the chapters on braiding provide simplified techniques for producing a number of basic patterns which may be modified or enlarged upon to yield endless variations users or collectors of braided rawhide will value this book for its demonstration of what to look for when buying an article how to care for it and in a historical vein how each item was produced in the past for those who collect use or aspire to learn how to make your own cowboy horse gear dont miss woolerys book western horseman

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