

First Stone Carving Class FAQs

How hard is it to carve? It's relatively easy to break off bits of limestone with a chisel and hammer. Like every art, the success is in the finesse. It is not a difficult skill to learn, but the work itself requires persistence. One of the best ways to have success at carving is to create and execute a simple design as opposed to starting off with a complicated piece of elaborate knotwork. You can build up your skills and try more complex designs as you learn. The best way to help yourself get started is to BRING A SIMPLE DESIGN WITH YOU or create one when you get here.

What tools will I need? To do relief carving, you need a flat, thin and sharp chisel designed for carving limestone and marble. In order to succeed in the class, a student must be able to hold and learn how to use a chisel and hammer, sandbag and safety goggles in classes. The stone and use of a chisel and hammer are typically included in the materials fee. In some instances chisels and extra pieces of stone will be also for sale separately, but this is not required. The tools are not very expensive, but it is critical to have the two or three correct ones.

All students in all classes should supply their own safety goggles and sandbags. *The sandbags are critical to your success- and they are not supplied for you.* Make your own with an old pillowcase partly filled with sand or unscented kitty litter.

A number of loaner chisels, hammers and mallets are available at all classes. Once you try a few different sorts, you may want to invest in your own chisels and hammer or mallet to continue your carving. I will send information on purchasing these items during class. I recommend you wait until the beginner class is complete so you can choose tools that work well for you.

YOU SHOULD BRING:

- a pair of safety glasses or goggles, (no exceptions, all must wear safety glasses)
- one or two old terry cloth towels
- your sandbag!

If you happen to have any carving tools, especially a flat chisel about 1/2 inch wide, please bring them along. So -called 'cold' chisels, usually painted in vivid colors, will not work for carving.

ALSO HANDY TO HAVE IF YOU HAPPEN TO HAVE THEM but not required:

- dust masks
- sandpaper in various grits (wet/dry type),
- small needle files, riffler rasps, hacksaw blades, old screwdrivers
- sharpening stones,
- old t shirts for polishing cloths, a small bucket or large ice cream tub for water

You probably have many of these things hanging around in the basement or garage.

Regarding wood carving tools: Don't bring them. They are usually hellishly sharp and would break off in the stone anyway. You can try out your wood mallet if you want to bring it if its a small one.

How old do students need to be? Typically, only students over age 13 will be admitted as students. *Some locations will vary as to this rule*, so please check ahead. Adolescents need not be accompanied by parents; they are most welcome, and will find the class very suitable for them. All students must wear protective eye gear and paper dust masks. Tell your teenager.

Any other questions? E mail me at stonypath@verizon.net if it has to do with the carving class. Questions about registration, accommodation and other information for the week long classes and most weekend workshops I teach at are usually available at the hosting organizations' websites. Please contact them for more info. Stop by lauratraviscarving.com or see my Facebook page at facebook.com/lauratraviscarving and have a look around!