

Preparing Unmounted Linocut Blocks for Printing

Unmounted Linoleum has a natural texture and may have some light scratches or other small imperfections on the surface. Before you begin carving, it is a good idea to sand the block with wet/dry 220 grit sandpaper (usually black). This will remove any flaws and rough up the surface very slightly so the ink will adhere to it easily.

Wrap the sandpaper around a sanding block. Go over the linoleum slowly and carefully with a circular motion, keeping the block flat to the surface. Do not use too much pressure. Think of it as polishing the linoleum rather than sanding it. You can add a small amount of water to speed things up a bit and also to increase the life of the sandpaper.

While it is not essential, you can also sand the finished carved block before proofing and printing. This step eliminates any pressure ridges or slightly raised edges around your cuts, which can otherwise show up in printing.

Linoleum blocks are cut from a long roll. Because of this, they may have a slight curve. Warming the blocks with a hair drier and then putting them under weight can eliminate this curve. You can also mount the block using wood glue to a stiff substrate such as heavy mat board, MDF or plywood. Place under a weight until dry.

After printing, clean the blocks and store them flat in a dry place.



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