

## FAUX BONE™

INSTRUCTIONS/POSSIBILITIES/COMMENTS/SAFTEY

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The following information is given to help acquaint you with the new and versatile material, Faux Bone™. However, it is by no means complete. Every day the jewelers, sculptors, printmakers, book artists, basket makers, woodworkers, tool makers, and other artists - just like you - who have started using Faux Bone™, are letting me know about new and exciting uses they have found for this wonderful product. As for myself, I have been using Faux Bone™ for everything from jewelry to tool handles; PMC texture plates to buttons; bone folders to dies for hydraulic forming. The ability of Faux Bone™ to take on a variety of finishes, as well as its incredible strength, light weight, extraordinary impact resistance and low cost make it a natural for artists and craftspeople in all disciplines.

Below is an outline of some of the ways to work with Faux Bone™. Keep in mind that this is only the beginning and that you may well discover the next "big thing" in Faux Bone™.

Please keep in mind too, that while Faux Bone™ has many possibilities, none of them takes place without you and your creativity. For me, the material exists only to allow *you* a fuller and more varied means of personnel expression.

**Note:** when you receive your Faux Bone™, it may or may not have a plastic, protective sheet on one side. If it does, it may be left on when handling but needs to be removed for forming and finishing. The unprotected side will finish just the same as the protected.

### Cutting

Faux Bone™ can be easily cut with virtually any hand and power saw including:

- Jewelers saw (#1 blade works well, no wax needed, won't bind like Plexiglas or other acrylics)
- Coping saw
- Jig saw
- Hack saw
- Hole saw
- Band saw

### Drilling

Any type of drill and drill bit will work with Faux Bone™ including:

- Hand drills
- Twist bits
- Jewelers micro-bits
- power drills
- Spade bits (also called speed bores)
- drill press

### Filing/sanding/polishing

Any type of sandpaper can be used on Faux Bone™ however there are a number of considerations to keep in mind such as:

- All sorts of files, rasps, rifflers, and scrappers can be used to form, smooth, and impart texture to Faux Bone™.
- Polished is not the "correct" finish on Faux Bone™, it is only one possibility. The surface may be left at any degree of smoothness that will fit your needs and expression.
- A stationary belt sander (I use a 1") works very well for forming but removes material quickly .... so easy-does-it!
- Wet sanding will keep down any dust any yield the most even finish. This should be done with silicon carbide sandpaper (often sold as Wet or

Dry®). It is available in many grits, but for our purposes, #320, 400, 600 are sufficient.

- To obtain a polished surface on the Faux Bone™ (and all other non-porous, rigid surfaces) one should; file to shape, wet-sand with 320, 400, 600 grit then (and I know this sounds odd), turn the, still wet, 600 sandpaper over and rub vigorously with the paper back. Dry the piece and rub in the palm of your hand to get a bit of the oil from your skin on the piece and then rub with a soft cloth (or as I do, rub the piece on your pants-covered thigh, to get both the warmth and friction). Alternately, after sanding, you can buff the piece on with a muslin buffing wheel that has not been used with polishing compound.
- Any paste wax, shoe polish, Renaissance Wax®, or spray wax may be used to impart another level of finish to your piece.

### Surface treatments

Faux Bone™ will accept an endless variety of mark making and surface treatments that can be made using hand tools, flex shaft machines, electric drills, grinders, and more. Some you may want to try include:

- Burrs
- abrasive wheels (such as Cretex®)
- scribes
- Separating discs
- checkering files (Rio Grande catalog)
- Hammers
- coarse sand papers
- drill bits
- abrasive discs
- Saw blades (use as a scraper)
- nails/screws
- files
- Metal/leather stamps
- nail sets
- graving tools
- sand blasting

After the marks and/or texture are imparted to the surface, color may be added in a number of ways. Various forms of pigment can be rubbed into the texture/marks, allowed to dry and then rubbed off leaving the color in the low places. Many layers may be added this way and each layer will add depth and information to the piece.

Another way of adding color is by using shoe polish (not shoe cream) found in most grocery stores. The polish may be applied and wiped off immediately or left for any period of time you like. The longer it is in place, the deeper the tone. Using brown shoe polish in this way is a good way of adding an aged or ivory look to any piece, and may be used in conjunction with other coloring techniques.

Some of the coloring agents that may be used are:

- Acrylic paint
- oil paint
- inks
- shoe polish
- oil sticks
- Pastels
- Prismacolor® pencils (other brands don't work well)
- Spice pigmented wax (turmeric, henna, paprika work well)
- graphite

### Inlaying

Various epoxies, putties, and resins can be inlaid into holes and piercings made in the Faux Bone™ by cutting and drilling. Cut a hole, place some masking tape on the back to act as a base, fill with epoxy and you have an inlay. You may then proceed as above for surface treatments and finishing.

### Carving

All of the tools that were listed as surface treatment possibilities can also be used to carve Faux Bone™. Burrs of all sorts work especially well, as do sanding drums and small belt sanders.

### Faux Bone™ forming tool

There are just a few things to keep in mind when using your Faux Bone forming tool. First however, for the sake of clarity allow me to define the terms I use.

- The side is the thickness of the sheet (1/16, 1/8, or 1/4")
- The surface is the 8"x8" flat expanse
- The edge is where the surface and the side meet
- The corner is where 2 edges and a surface meet

- The tool should be held as you would a knife, and positioned pointing left across your body if you're right handed or pointing right for left-handed.
- Rest the tool easily and gently against an edge with the surface facing upward and positioned under the tool (this may be a bit awkward). The angle between the tool **handle** and the surface should be about 30°. *This means that right-handed people will be working on the left edge of the sheet, left-handed people will be working on the right edge.*
- Starting at the corner away from you, pull the tool **toward** you in one smooth action.
- Start with a very light touch as too much pressure will tend to bury the blade in the material and cause "digs" in the edge instead of nice smooth coils being cut off.
- There will be a small portion at the corner that was not rounded in the first pull. Reverse the position of the sheet to remove this piece.

With a bit of practice (use some scrap) you can get a completely rounded edge with the tool. However, as with all shaping tools sanding will have to be done to remove the tool marks and yield a finished surface (see above).

### Heat forming

Heating Faux Bone™ in an oven is a fast and safe way to make the material malleable and pliable. Shapes may be cut, finished and heated to 245° for several minutes (the time depends on the thickness), after which the Faux Bone™ becomes like thick, cooked lasagna noodles. With gloved hands, the heated material may be shaped freehand, around other objects, pushed into a cutout mold or even die-formed in a hydraulic press or vice. If the result is not what you want, reheat the Faux Bone™ object and it will return to flat. It can then be reheated, and reformed. This can take place many times with no degradation of the material.

As well as heating it in an oven, Faux Bone™ can be "spot" heated using a hand held heat gun. I have found that the heat guns made for use with embossing powders work well.

When the Faux bone™ is hot, it can also be embossed by pressing textured material into the warm material. Pieces of screen, fabric, string, paper etc. can all be pressed into the Faux Bone™ by squeezing it in a vice, a press, or even just under a heavy weight.

### A wish

As I stated at the beginning, this sheet of instructions is only a partial guide. Hopefully, you will discover just as many ways of using Faux Bone™ that *aren't* covered here. I look forward to hearing from you that you have, indeed, come up with a way of working, a use, or a technique that never would have occurred to me or anyone else. When this happens, please take a photograph and send it to me via my website. I will post new ideas on the site (with full credit to you, of course), unless requested not to do so.

## Safety

- Aside from burning Faux Bone™ there are not many safety considerations. You can heat the material up to 290° however, as stated above, there is no real need to go higher than about 265°. Caution should be taken not to burn Faux Bone™ as the fumes (ONLY IF IT BURNS) are toxic. Faux Bone™ should not be heated with a flame.
- If heating in a home oven, wrapping the material in aluminum foil is a good idea.
- When the material comes out of the oven, it is hot and should be handled accordingly.
- Wearing eye protection when cutting, grinding, power-sanding is prudent
- Though non-toxic, wearing a dust mask when sanding is also prudent

Please feel free to contact me at, [playcik@yahoo.com](mailto:playcik@yahoo.com), or on my websites [www.fauxbone.com](http://www.fauxbone.com) or [www.robertdancik.com](http://www.robertdancik.com). While there, please check out the gallery sections for new work, my workshop schedule, and new developments in Faux Bone™.

Play Well.  
Robert