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HOW TO WOODBURN PART 1

BY LISA MILDON (<https://coffeehousewriters.com/author/lisa-mildon/>) | JULY 27, 2020 | 31 / 0

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Preparing your surface

In my previous article (<https://coffeehousewriters.com/what-is-pyrography/>), I reviewed the basics of pyrography. In this series, we'll go in-depth into how to woodburn all sorts of surfaces to decorate your home, office, or to just make some personalized gifts.

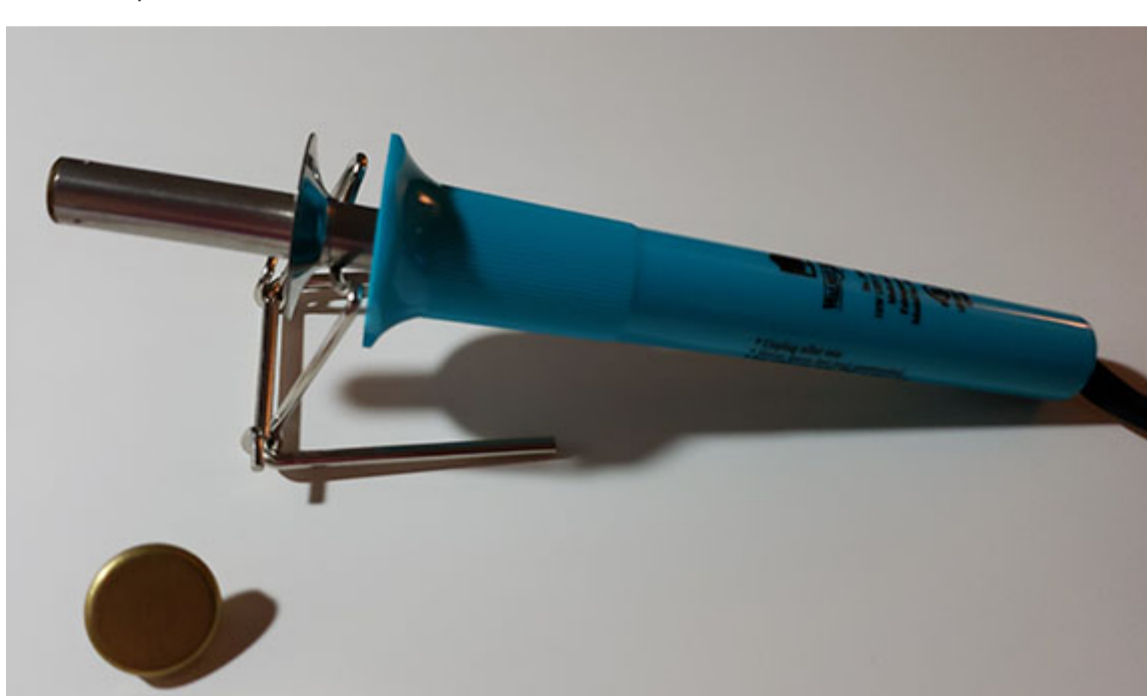
No matter the type of surface you choose to burn, preparing that surface is key to clean and stunning artwork. Some of the most common types of materials to burn are leather, bone, cork, and wood, of course. For this tutorial, we'll use a wood plaque to demonstrate the basics of pyrography.

To prepare your surface, you'll need the following items:

- Sandpaper in a variety of grits
- Tack or lint-free cloth
- Scotch tape
- Transfer (graphite) paper
- Pencil or pen (colored ink is best)
- Pattern
- Wood surface

Advanced techniques

- Low temp woodburner
- Transfer tip
- Transferrable pattern



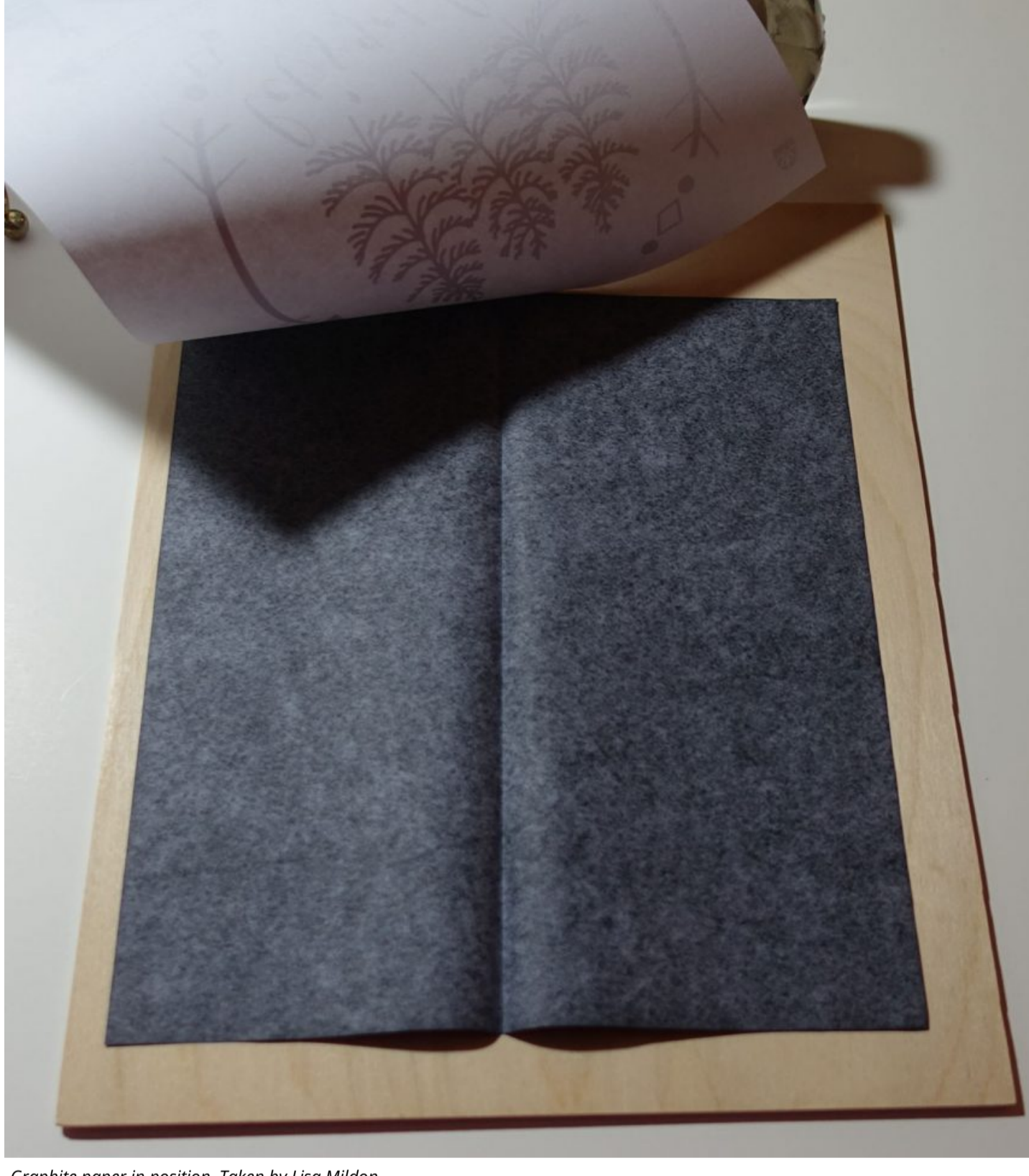
Woodburner with transfer tip. Taken by Lisa Mildon

- Starting with the smallest number grit (coarsest) sand the wood along the grain. (The grain of the wood is the natural rings of growth exhibited by lighter and darker lines or rings.) Sanding along the grain will produce a smoother surface with fewer scratches. Most wooden products meant for crafting will typically only require 320 grit at the coarsest. This grit level is meant to smooth down burrs and any snags the wood surface may have.
- Next, you'll need to use a finer grit (400+) to buff away any imperfections and give your surface the smoothest surface as possible. You'll know it's ready for the next step when you glide your hand across without any roughness.
- Once your wood surface is sanded to a nice smooth finish, you'll need to wipe down the surface with a tack cloth (or other lint-free cloth). This removes any dust and sawdust left on the surface, giving you the optimal canvas to burn.
- Now comes the important part, choosing and placing your pattern. Make sure you hold up your pattern to the surface for the best placement. To make sure your artwork is where you want to place it, try lighting the underside of your wood surface while positioning your pattern.
- Once you have an idea where you want to place your pattern, tape one side with some Scotch tape. This will temporarily hold your pattern in place so you can get your tracing paper positioned.



Pattern taped to wood. Taken by Lisa Mildon

- Lift your pattern and place your tracing paper graphite side down (darker side).



Graphite paper in position. Taken by Lisa Mildon

- Place the pattern back down over the top of your tracing paper and tape down at least one more side. This will help keep your pattern in place during transfer.
- With a pencil or pen, begin tracing over the outline and/or details of your artwork. You can trace over as little or as much detail as you feel you need. I wouldn't advise coloring in any shading or darker areas as your tracing is meant as a guide. Once you've traced enough details, remove your pattern and graphite paper.
- You're ready to burn. I'll cover the basics of woodburn techniques in the next article.

For more advanced techniques:



Transfer tool and pattern. Taken by Lisa Mildon

- Instead of using graphite paper and tracing, use a transferrable pattern (either purchased or printed from a laser printer).
- Place your pattern, image side down against the wood surface and tape it in place.
- Once your transfer tool is at temperature, iron over the pattern lightly until it transfers to your wood. You may have to lift the pattern slightly to confirm the transfer.

Note: Do not hold the transfer tool too long in one spot as you will not only burn the pattern but scorch the wood as well.

- Once the pattern cools, you're ready to burn.

Stay tuned for future articles on how to woodburn.

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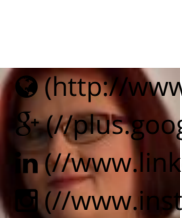
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Lisa is an offbeat geeky girl who is a weaver of words and killer story creator. She has extensive editing/writing experience in non-fiction, fiction, poetry, and technical writing. In 2018, she graduated Summa Cum Laude at SNHU in Creative Writing and English. Lisa loves PC gaming, science fiction, and is obsessed with traveling. A self-professed Whovian, she aspires to write for the TV series. With her husband, they have 3 rescues, 2 adorable Rat Terriers, and 1 fat cat.

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