

Carve it Yourself

Instructions for making your own seal carving

What you will need:

- 1) A one to two inch block of soft clay
- 2) A sharpened pencil
- 3) An image - it can be any image you like, such as a Chinese character or your name. You can even choose a picture, like a dog or flower.

How to make your seal:

- 1) Choose one side of the block of clay to be the chop, the stamping face of your seal.
- 2) Using the sharpened end of the pencil, carve the image you've chosen into the chop.
- 3) Now comes the hard part, letting the block of clay dry. Depending on the clay, this can take up to a week
- 4) When it is dry, it's time to test it out.
- 5) Choose a favorite color of ink. The color used most often in China is red.
- 6) Press the chop side of your seal into the ink.
- 7) Blow a quick breath of hot air onto the inked chop. This helps to spread the ink across the image evenly.
- 7) Press the inked chop onto a piece of absorbent paper. Paper that is shiny or has a waxy finish like magazine paper will not absorb the ink. Regular printer paper works great.
- 8) Remove the seal.
- 9) Presto! Your very own, one-of-a-kind, stamped seal.

This seal is called an intaglio seal. An intaglio seal is a seal with the stamping image carved into the stone. If you want to take your carving skills a step further, try making a relief seal. For a relief seal, instead of carving the image into the

stone, the background is carefully carved away so that the image rises above the surface of the stone. It takes patience and a steady hand.

When the finished image is stamped onto paper, it produces an image exactly the opposite of an intaglio seal. Instead of a white image on an ink-colored background, a relief seal makes an inked image on a white background. Have fun!