



## SOAP CARVING

An incredibly relaxing activity. Soap carving can be a great way to achieve mindfulness. Focus on the soothing act of carving. Try not to worry about the end results. If you're pleased with the result, that's great. If not, I hope you enjoyed the process. Now you can use your creation to wash with!



### You will need:

- Bar of soap
- Pencil
- Paper to sketch your design on (or print out the design sheet on page 6)
- Wooden skewer (if not, a pencil will do)
- Blunt carving tool such as a plastic knife

### Optional:

- Coloured pigment such as eyeshadow
- Small paint brush

### Top tips:

For something which gets you clean, soap carving is messy! Always carve over a table and over a wipeable floor such as in a kitchen.

### Safety:

- Regularly sweep any shavings from the floor. It can be slippery!



## HISTORY



Based on traditional fruit and vegetable carving from Thailand. Developed in Royal palaces around 700 years ago. Ladies of the court would carve beautiful flowers and animals from carrots, melons, papaya, squash. It spread to ordinary Thai people in more modern times. Some artists swapped to soap as it lasts longer. It has become very popular in Japan in the last 20 years.

## CONTEMPORARY SOAP CARVING



### AMSR- Autonomous Sensory Meridian Response

Youtube is full of videos of people carving soap. Viewers say it helps their anxiety, insomnia and depression.

Studies found that participants watch these videos to relax, deal with stress and to fall asleep.

Some viewers even felt the videos were helpful to their depression and chronic pain.

One study found viewers reported feeling more calm, less stressed and less sad. Tests showed that their heart rates slowed down in the researchers' lab.

INSPIRATION



## TECHNIQUE 1



1 Draw around your soap a few times. Or print out the design sheet on page 6.



2 Draw some designs into the shapes on your paper.  
Will it work best in "landscape" or "portrait"?

Make sure you fill the space, drawing right up to the edges.

Stuck for ideas? Think about your interests, favourite food, an animal, an inspirational word.



3 Using a wooden skewer or pencil, draw a design onto your soap.



4 When you're happy with your design, you can make it stand out by brushing some eye shadow over it. Ask permission before raiding someone else's make up!



## TECHNIQUE 2



1 Draw a simple, chunky design e.g. bubble writing.



2 Use a skewer or pencil to draw the main outline into your soap.



3 Use a blunt knife to carve out the background, so that your design stands out.



4 A dustpan and brush is useful for cleaning up the shavings.



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