Basic Pancake Style Holster Making

While this is not intended to be a class on holster making, some guidelines can be used with my designs.

Patterns state the weight of leather used for the model shown. This is the **total** thickness desired, and can be a single-ply piece that thick, or some combination of thinner pieces adding up to that thickness.

Pattern is shown full size. A scale is provided and prints with the pattern: **measure this scale to verify correct print size**. If you are getting a different size, make sure your printer is set to print full size (not “scale to fit”, or similar). Any dimensions shown are for quick reference only; a glance at how much leather is needed. When cutting use the line, not the dimension.

Patterns are right handed if the pattern is text side up and the leather is grain side up. For left hand use, simply flip the pattern over (or use on the flesh side of the leather).

Solid lines are cutting lines, dashed lines show stitch lines. For lined holsters, stitch on all outside edges. I use 5-6 stitches per inch on most holsters. Once assembled, slots can be punched through all layers at the same time.

A reinforcement piece can be made from the pattern (cut any slots in the reinforcement, not the holster body). If making a holster without this external reinforcement, a separate belt loop can be added. The reinforcement panel (or belt loop) is sewn to the holster body as shown.

Belt loops on hip holsters are usually integrated as part of the holster body. If you prefer, any holster can be cut at the top, and a separate belt loop or clip added to the body of the holster.

**TIPS:** Print an extra copy of the holster body and cut on the inside dotted stitch lines. Lay the remaining pattern on the flesh side when gluing. Apply cement to both ends from the paper outward.

On patterns with safety straps – including thumb break straps - mark the position of the stationary (non-moving) part of the snap. Then, with the gun inserted, dampen the leather a bit where the other half of the snap will be located and press it into position with your fingers. This will leave an impression marking the location of the other snap part, eliminating any issues with location due to varying leather thickness.

**NOTES:**
The slots on the pattern are shown 1/4” wide. In actual practice, these are slightly narrower and then edged and burnished, leaving the FINISHED size approximately ¼” wide. Slot size will be a snug fit on a 2-layer belt. Some prefer to stitch around (and close to) the belt slot.

Where patterns are too large to fit on a single 8.5” x 11” sheet of paper, the pattern will be presented in two formats; one can be printed on home computers and “tiled” together to make the full size pattern, the other can be printed at about any print shop. On multi-page printouts, the 6 inch scale markings will be arranged so they can be used for aligning the pattern pieces.

It’s recommended the user view all photos before beginning. Specifically, this is an unlined pancake style holster with a reinforcement panel “stiffener”.

Print the pattern and confirm the correct print size with the scale. Cut out paper pattern.

Cut out all pattern parts including optional reinforcing panel if used and trace interior stitch lines onto the leather (I used a stylus). These lines do not go all the way to the edges, leaving room for the outside perimeter stitch lines which are marked later.

The slots are marked with a single line showing the center of each slot, so when slot is punched the line is eliminated.

**NOTE** the line for the reinforcing panel is the **STITCH** (dotted) line of the panel, NOT the outside cutting line.

Place paper pattern on the leather and transfer witness marks to **EDGE** of the leather (black ink shown here).

If you are using the optional reinforcement, mark those witness marks as well.

It’s only important here to keep the marks off the grain of the leather. Marks on the edge will be removed later.

Edge and burnish back piece between witness marks where shown in red.

Edge and burnish reinforcement panel (**EXCEPT** the top) where shown in red.

Set these pieces to the side. The front panel is not edged at this time if using the reinforcement panel.

Scuff grain of the holster body inside the **stitch lines** of reinforcement (not outline of panel) with course sandpaper to allow the glue to stick better than to a smooth surface.

**Note** Red line is added to photo—**not on leather** - for clarity. Do not scuff outside stitch lines.
Apply contact cement to scuffed area of holster body.

Here, I have cut the pattern of the front panel on the reinforcement STITCH LINE (NOT the cutting line). Align this pattern with the edge of the leather and the scuff mark previously made. Use this paper to block areas which should not be glued.

Apply cement also to the back of the reinforcement panel, and stick parts together, aligning top edge and witness marks.

Mark stitch line around reinforcement with divider or groover and stitch using your preferred method.

Edge and burnish top and bottom edges where shown. Do not edge outside vertical stitch lines.

Flip the assembly suede side up and lay paper pattern on leather. Carefully cut on stitch lines of pattern and remove the ends. This is the area to apply contact cement.

Leaving the paper in the center will keep the cement off of the weapon area of the holster.

When contact cement is ready, join pieces flesh side to flesh side, aligning outer edges and the witness marks on the edges. Be sure to press firmly in all glued areas.

Edges are trued up with coarse sand paper (removing edge marks) and rounded with an edger.

Slots punched through both layers and the outside stitch line is added. This stitch line was done with a creaser (some will prefer a groover).

Stitch using your preferred method (6 stitches per inch shown).