

# Leather Pouch

American Indians made small pouches from pieces of soft buckskin or small animal skins. The pouches carried personal valuables, such as small quantities of dry mineral paints, tobacco, or magical objects like pebbles. Most warriors carried bags containing good luck charms to protect them from harm. In the Woodlands, warriors' pouches held tokens of victories in battle. In the Southeast, a group going off to war carried a decorated pouch holding a sacred rock crystal, used to predict their success or failure.

Other items the pouches held were rattles from rattlesnakes, horns from buffalo, claws, or small animal figures. The Blackfoot believed that their spirit helper, an animal or bird, told each person what sacred objects to gather to carry in a pouch. The Pawnee believed that a star guided people searching for such objects. If the contents of a pouch had powerful magic, they could give a person great status and success in fighting or healing.

The healers of the Winnebago carried an otter skin pouch filled with herbs, bark, feathers, and stones. According to myth, spirits carrying otters had brought a dead boy back to life, so the otter medicine bags had great power.

Sacred pouches were not always worn around the neck or on a belt. Sometimes they were hung in the dwelling or on a horse to keep them at hand.

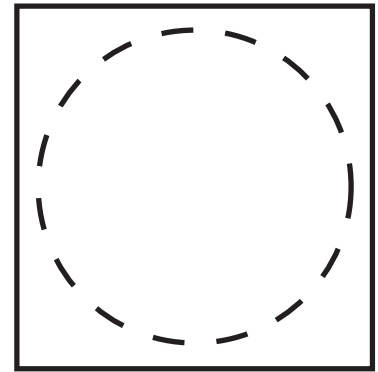
## **MATERIALS**

- Square of cloth 12" x 12" (a chamois cloth works well and has the look and feel of soft leather. You can find these in housewares or automotives at most stores.)
- Pencil
- Scissors
- Hole punch
- 24" leather thong or yarn
- Small beads (optional)
- Needle (for beading (optional)
- Paints and brushes (optional)
- Feather (optional)

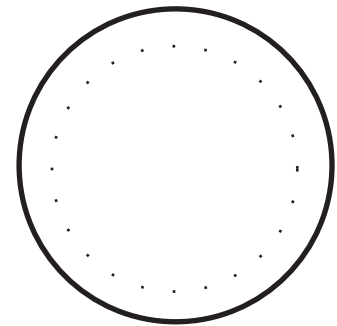
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## DIRECTIONS

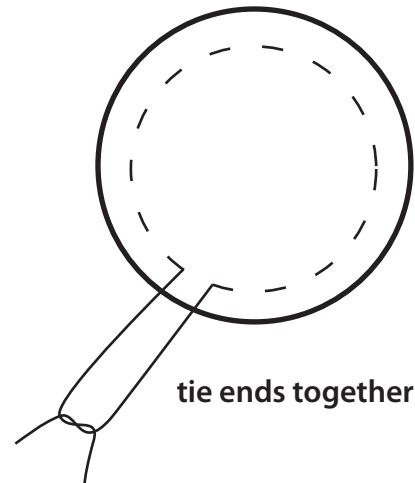
1. Draw a large circle on the cloth and cut it out.
2. Starting about 1" from the edge of your circle, mark dots all the way around. Place dots about 1" apart, but make sure you end up with an even number of dots.
3. Use your hole punch to punch out holes where you marked your dots.
4. Weave the leather thong or yarn through these holes and then tie the ends together. (see picture)
5. You can now decorate your bag any way you choose. An example is shown below. If you like, tie your feather to the end of the thong.
6. Pull the thong ends to gather your pouch. Now you are ready to search for special objects to keep in it.



cut circle out of fabric



punch holes



tie ends together

