



Tips for Using Design Stamps

First Things First

Make sure you practice every new stamp on copper (or another cheap metal). They are all a bit different and you don't want the learning curve to happen on an expensive metal.

Make sure you are using the proper tools:

- Use a heavy hammer weighing between 1 and 2 lbs. A brass head hammer work best but any heavy household hammer will work as well.
- Use a Steel Bench Block under your metal. You need the resistance of the hard block in order to successfully impress into your metal.

If you have both of those tools and you are still struggling, let's problem solve a little further.

Problem Solving

Some design stamps are more difficult to stamp than others.

Remember, you are not removing the metal, you are moving it so the more design to the stamp, the more metal needs to be moved evenly. For example, the Loopy stamp is one curved line and is pretty easy to stamp. The Bird House stamp has a lot of detail so it will be tougher to stamp.

Are you comfortable with your hammer?

The more comfortable you are with your hammer, the more success you will have stamping. Don't be scared...hit it hard! 😊

Make sure your work surface isn't too soft.

Do you ever get a "shadowed" look when stamping a design stamp? This may be because you are working on a surface that has a slight bounce. If you have anything between the bench block and your table (besides something hard like sandbag), it may be causing your stamp to bounce slightly and end up with a double stamp. Make sure you have nothing soft under your Bench Block, not even a thin piece of fabric.

ALSO, make sure you are working on a very strong stable table. If you are working on something flimsy like a card table, the table will be absorbing some of the blow and will add to the problem.

Use a heavy hammer.

Ok, so your work surface is better now but you are still getting a light stamp.....move to a heavier hammer. Are you using one of those "girlie" hammers? Head on down to the hardware store and get yourself a MANLY hammer, at least 16 ounces. I even have a 3 pound sledge hammer. It really gets the job done, and it impresses my friends!

Stamping Examples

Here I stamped the letter “B” three times

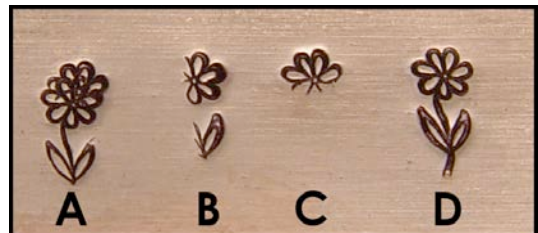
1. I stamped way too hard and the stamp sunk in too deep. You can see two little marks just above the letter because the edges of the stamp shank hit the metal as well.
2. I stamped too lightly and you can hardly see the letter.
3. Just right!



Now that you have your set up perfect and you are hitting the stamp with the proper force, make sure you are holding the stamp straight, perpendicular to the metal.

Here I have stamped the Flower Design Stamp

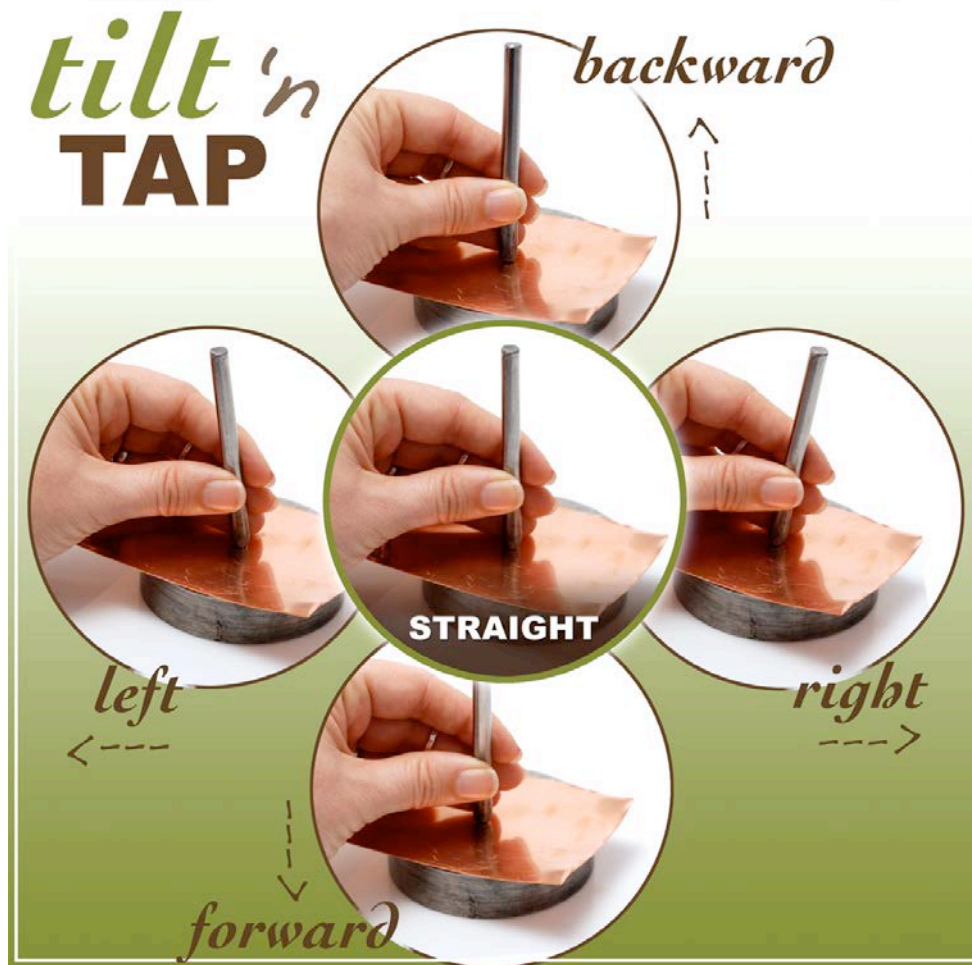
- A. I had too much padding underneath and you can see how it bounced and stamped twice.
- B. The stamp was tilted to the right and I only impressed the right side of the flower.
- C. The stamp was tilted forward and I only stamped the top of the flower.
- D. Much better, this is perfect. You can see why practicing first is important.



If you are having a hard time getting design stamps to impress well with just a few whacks of your hammer, you may want to try the “Tilt ‘n Tap” method explained on the following page...

“Tilt ‘n Tap” Method for Stamping Design Stamps

Hold the stamp steady in your stabilizing hand, pressing it lightly into the metal. Hit it once with your hammer. Now without moving or shifting the stamp, tilt it slightly to the right and strike it again. Now tilt it slightly to the right and towards yourself a bit, strike it again. Continue in this manner, changing the angle of the tilt each time and moving in a circular motion until your last tilt is slightly away from you. Even though the image only shows 5 strikes, you will be most successful with a total of 6-8 tilts and taps (strikes).



A few things to remember:

- Do not tilt the stamp too far or you will stamp the edge of the stamp shank into the metal.
- Do not hit the stamp too hard with each tilt. When using the one hard strike method, you need to strike the stamp with one hard blow, but when using the Tilt 'n Tap method described here, use more of a medium to hard strike.
- This method is perfect for our more detailed design stamps. It is more difficult to achieve a consistent image when working with a stamp that has a lot of detail. There is much more detail to transfer to the metal and sometimes it's hard to make the face of the stamp lay solidly against the surface of the metal. The Tilt 'n Tap method really makes a difference in the quality of the image.

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