



Make Your Own Vintage Runes for Under \$10 **By Robert Ing, DSc, DLitt, FAPSc**

Here's everything you need and need to know to make a set of vintage rune strips.

The casting of runes for divination dates back to 1300 BCE. The earliest set of runes were made from wooden oak strips that measured approximately 3.5" x 1" x 0.125". The rune symbols were carved on the strips and coloured in, using a red tincture made from berries and natural oils. In early Icelandic these were referred to as "blotspan" (sacred sacrificial wooden strip), from Odinic legend. It wasn't until decades later that stone, clay and bone runes became popular. While a set of runes may number anywhere from sixteen to thirty-three symbols, for this article we are only concerned with the practicality of making a traditional wooden rune set of any number of symbols the user wishes.

I first got the idea of making a reproduction of a "vintage" set of runes based on real and rare sets I had viewed but could not afford to acquire during one of my artifact hunts in search of items for my own collection. After about a year, I came up with a way to replicate a pretty interesting set of runes that would be worthy of being movie prop quality, with the added bonus of being able to do so for under \$10. The runes we are going to make are both rugged and ready for daily divination use, and since you have created them personally, they have been given life by you and are yours to command as legend would have it.

Materials Required:

Wooden paint stir sticks - These are available at most home improvement centres for free, and for the most part you can just grab a half-dozen or so without any problems. Each stir stick will yield two rune strips, so if you need to make a thirty-three rune set, you will need seventeen of these and will no doubt be making the rounds of these stores or a few trips to a larger centre until you get the quantity you need.

Razor knife

Pencil

Ruler

Red medium ballpoint pen - not roller ball!

Medium grade sandpaper



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Small can of Amber Shellac

0.5" wide brush - (quantity of two)

Let's Make Them in 7 Easy Steps!

Step 1: Carefully measure out from the bottom of each paint stir stick 3.5" and use your ruler to draw a pencil line across the stick at this point on the imprinted side of the stick. Measure and draw another pencil line 3.5" from this line towards the top of the stir stick. Do this for each stick until you have the quantity of rune strips you need. Each stick will have the pencil outline of two rune strips each.

Step 2: Using your ruler as a guide, take your razor knife and carefully cut the strips off of your stir sticks where you have marked them off with pencil. Do this with each stick. Be sure to cut right through with your knife and avoid the temptation to make a shallow cut and "snap" the pieces off as the wood will splinter and this will ruin your rune strip.

Step 3: Take the sandpaper and sand off any logos or pencil marks on the rune strips you have cut. Also use the sandpaper to soften any rough surfaces and to round the edges of the rune strips by lightly sanding these areas. Be sure to take a damp, not wet cloth to wipe off any sawdust from your sanding and cutting of the strips.

Step 4: Using a rune chart of your choice for reference and a medium red ballpoint pen, press firmly on the rune strip and carefully draw the first rune onto the centre of the strip or at each end of the strip on one side only. When you press firmly, the soft wood will indent and the red ink will clearly mark the rune on the strip. You may retrace this image on the strip again with a firm pressure to ensure a desirable depth and legibility. Repeat this for the remainder of the strips and runes you need to create.

Step 5: Use the Amber Shellac and brush to finish your rune strips.

Step 6: After at least 24 to 36 hours, use the Amber Shellac and brush once again to put a second coat on your rune strips. This will not only ensure the best protection but will also give them their final "vintage" appearance.

Step 7: Let your rune strips thoroughly dry for at least 36 hours or until there is absolutely no "sticky-ness" to the touch.



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Congratulations, you now have a "vintage" set of runes that are uniquely yours.

Keep your set in an old leather pouch, metal tin, or wooden box and you will be ready to reveal tales that you never thought you knew!

An empowered instrument for the diviner, a mysterious prop for the magician and an artifact to the past for the storyteller!

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