

Stone

Stone has been used for creating tools, weapons, and works of art since prehistoric times. Many stone artifacts have survived because stone is such a durable material. Different types of stones have different qualities. Some, like granite, are very hard. Others, like chalk, are so soft they can be carved with a fingernail.

There are basically two processes for shaping stone: percussion and abrasion. Stone carvers use percussion tools to strike the stone and remove large or small pieces. Some tools, like axes and picks, strike the stone directly. But the most common way to carve stone is using a chisel and hammer. A chisel is a long-bladed tool with a cutting edge at one end.



Carvers hold the cutting edge against the stone and hit the other end with a hammer or mallet. Stone carvers still use chisels, hammers, and mallets today. Some stone carvers today use air hammers, a pneumatically powered hand tool that makes the work of removing stone easier and faster.

Abrasive tools work by rubbing away unwanted pieces of the stone. Abrasive tools include saws, drills, grinding and polishing tools.



After the stone is carved into the shape that is wanted using percussive and abrasive tools, the grinding, sanding and polishing begins. Hand sanding can take many hours to produce a smooth finish.

Carved stone ranges from small figurines and vessels to huge architectural features.

Tim Lewis is a Kentucky stone carver who uses hand tools to shape sandstone sculptures that tell stories. This carving is 28" long x 4" wide x 15" high. It represents the story of Adam and Eve.

