

## How To Find Your Animal Totem

An Animal Totem is an important symbolic object used by a person or group to get in touch with specific qualities found within an animal which the person/group needs, connects with, or feels a deep affinity toward.



You can have several animal guides throughout your life. Sometimes an animal guide will come into your life for a short period of time, and then be replaced by another depending on the journey or direction you are headed toward. Your guide will instruct and protect you as you learn how to navigate through your spiritual and physical life. When you find an animal that speaks strongly to you or feel you must draw more deeply into your life, you might fill your environment with images of the animal to let the animal know that it's welcome in your space. Animal guides can help you get back to your Earthly roots, and reconnect with nature by reminding you that we are all interconnected. To first do this you need to know what your Animal Totem is.

### If You Don't Know

All of the questions below are designed to get you thinking about a prominent animal in your life. There are no right or wrong answers. Only you can truly know which Animal Totem(s) are right for your journey.

- Since we are drawn to that which resonates with us, what animal, bird, or insect are you drawn to? (See final page with list of animal qualities.)
- When you go to the park, forest, or zoo what animal are you most interested in seeing?
- What animal do you most frequently see when you're out in nature or in the city?
- What animals are you currently interested in learning about?
- Which animal do you find most frightening or intriguing?
- Have you ever been bitten or attacked by an animal?
- Is there a recurring animal in your dreams or do you have one you have never forgotten?

### Still Uncertain?

If you are still uncertain which animal is your totem, here a few exercises to help you come closer to the answer. You must not try to force the animal to come, it can pick up on that energy and be put off. Being patient and doing the following exercises will draw your animal totem to you.

Ask yourself what animal has played a meaningful part in your world? If you're unsure, make a list of animals that have drawn your interest or have left a deep impression on you from paintings, photographs, stories, movies, carvings, etc. Which animal shows up in your life most frequently? (If you want to reflect further, keep a journal of the animals present in your dreams or that you encounter through the day for the next month. How did the animal behave? Did you interact with the animal?)

Find a place where you can be alone to contemplate. Sit quietly and ask your animal to make its nature known to you. If available, feel free to use tools such as incense, smudge, and candles to help you.

Don't give up. Sometimes your animal totem is nearby watching to see if you're serious about connecting with it. Keep doing the above exercises until your animal totem is revealed.

## Pure Fun: Soap Carving Instructions and Tips

Any family member who is old enough to work with a carving tool can enjoy carving soap. The shape and texture of Ivory Bar Soap make it ideal for creating fun, memorable soap sculptures, from the simple to the extraordinary. Here are a few suggestions to help make your soap sculpture its best.

### What You'll Need to Begin

Soap carving can be simple and inexpensive. You'll need:

- A large bar of Ivory soap – Ivory's shape and texture are ideal for carving
- A paring knife
- 1-2 orangewood sticks used for manicures
- Pencil and paper for sketching
- Optional – Large tray to hold soap chips from carving

Unwrap the soap and let it dry for a day. Scrape off the lettering and any raised edges before beginning.

### 1. Developing Your Design

Begin with a simple design. Start with solid, basic shapes with simple cuts or extensions. Sketch your idea on paper first.



### 2. From Design to Soap Carving

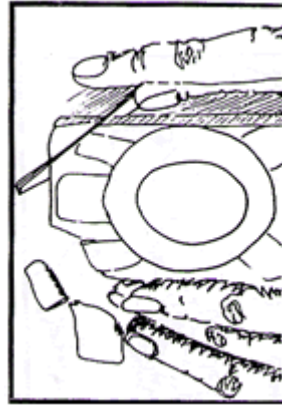
- If you have a clear mental picture of your idea or have carved before, you can begin by carving directly on the soap.
- Or, you can use the orangewood stick to outline a rough sketch on each surface before you carve.
- Beginners may want to sketch a pattern on paper and trace it onto the soap.



### 3. Begin with Rough Cuts

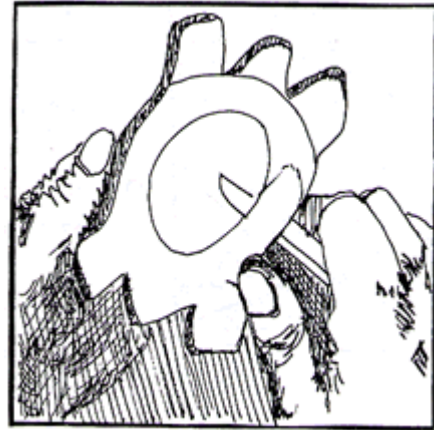
The actual carvings begin with rough cuts that remove the large parts of the soap not necessary for your design.

- Place the soap on the table or tray.
- If you are right-handed, hold the soap with your left hand and start cutting at the upper right-hand corner. (If left-handed, use the opposite hand.)
- Leave about 1/4" margin beyond your outlined sketch to allow for mistakes and more detailed work later.
- Cut clear through the bar, removing excess soap all the way around.
- ALWAYS CUT AWAY ONLY SMALL PIECES OR SLICES. Soap often breaks if cut in big chunks.



### 4. Adding the Details

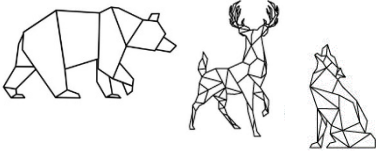
- After the first cuts, you may find it more comfortable to use the knife as if peeling a potato. Continue to stay 1/8" to 1/4" away from your sketch guidelines to allow for finer work later.
- As you work, keep turning the soap, always keeping the shape of the piece in mind. Step back from time to time to look at the entire piece.
- Watch your high points -- those that jut out farthest from the surface -- and your low points -- those farthest in.
- Carve gradually from the high points toward the deepest cuts. Your knife point is useful for this.
- Don't try to finish any one part in detail before another.
- When the piece is almost finished, smooth rough edges with the knife's edge and mark in details like eyes or ears with the knife tip or an orangewood stick.



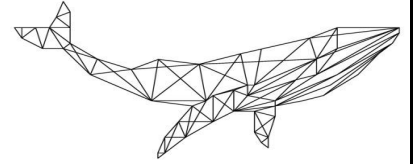
### 5. Polishing

- Allow your sculpture to dry for a day or two.
- Then, rub it with a soft paper napkin, being careful not to break off corners or high points.
- Finish by rubbing it gently with finger tops or palm.





## Some Ideas about Animal Totem Qualities



**Bear** is known for its period of hibernation. Bear can help us with the ability to turn inward to access our strength and honor your nature cycles. He teaches us when it is time to act and when it is time to be still.

**Beaver** has an amazing ability to build and create. Beaver can help you solve problems by creating solid solutions.

**Buffalo/Bison** brings abundance and healing. The buffalo is sacred to Native American people and no part of them may be wasted.

**Cougar** is a symbol of power. Cougar teaches you to balance your own. Cougar responds to any challenge with swiftness.

**Coyote** is known as the trickster. He calls on us to look truthfully at ourselves and our behavior.

**Crow** a messenger, keeper of sacred law who sees with a unified eye (non-duality).

**Deer** is alert and a symbol of sensitivity and kindness.

**Dolphin** is the messenger between water and sky. Dolphin is playful and intelligent. She brings the message of harmony and balance.

**Eagle** is the symbol of freedom and perspective. As a representation of great spirit eagle carries our prayers to the sky. They teach us to fly.

**Elk** teaches about stamina, the importance of pacing yourself enabling you to successfully complete your chosen task.

**Fox** is cunning and clever. They moves with the utmost discretion. Fox teaches us to slow down and observe.

**Frog** assists with the cleansing of our emotions. With the element of water, frog shows us how to start afresh.

**Hawk** is a symbol of observation and awareness.

**Horse** represents strength and freedom. Horse teaches us how to use our power gracefully.

**Mole** explores below the surface by digging a little deeper therefore helping us with our subconscious minds. Mole will help you explore the hidden parts of yourself.

**Moose** teaches us to be proud of our accomplishments.

**Otter** is the master at enjoying life. Otter is playful and chatty. They remind us that play is a important aspect to enjoying our lives fully.

**Owl** represents wisdom. Owl has amazing vision, bringing the gift of insight.

**Rabbit** a symbol of productivity. Rabbit helps us reveal our hidden talents.

**Raven** is the messenger from spirit world. They represent mystery.

**Snake** symbolizes transformation and the shedding of one's skin.

**Spider** shows us the connection of all life through the power of her web.

**Squirrel** is prepared for anything that life may present. They are extremely adaptable and teach us to trust that with preparation our own life will be simple and safe.

**Turtle** is protected by her shell. She represents mother earth to some tribes.

**Whale** is the record keeper of the ocean. They bring us the gift of telepathy and teach us the value of sound.

**Wolf** is a great teacher. He helps you find the answers within yourself. Associated with the moon wolf will help you develop your intuition.