



Mag Ruffman's

Anything I Can Do

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Rack 'Em Up

Nice rack!

Most Canadian residences are closet-underprovided. Solve this chronic rack-lack by making your own pegged coat rack. You can give it a carved, antiqued finish and add character by milk-painting it first. Then, as you carve, the warm honey colour of the wood contrasts with the paint finish.



For some great examples of what you can do with a little practice and a chip-carving knife, visit [Chipping Away Inc.](#)

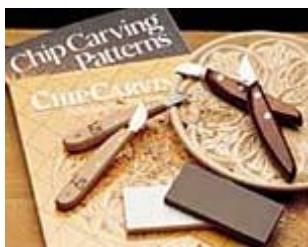
Materials:

- 1" x 8" pine board
- 80- and 100-grit sandpaper
- Seven 3" Shaker-style wood pegs (available at Home Depot or Lee Valley Tools)
- Milk paint
- Glue

Tools

- Wood rasp
- Gloves
- Gripper mat
- Electric palm sander or sandpaper wrapped around a block of wood
- Tack cloth
- Drill
- ½" drill bit (or bit to fit peg dimensions)
- Carving tools - you can either buy a set, or just a parting v-tool and/or chip carving knives

Tools you might not be familiar with:



Chip-carving knives



Parting v-tools



Wood rasp
(mine doesn't have a handle)
- these are available at Lee Valley Tools



Set of carving tools for
traditional carving
(you only really need the v-shaped
one for this project)

Steps:



Use traditional milk paint for
the surface color



Milk paint comes in many
colors and can be mixed to
create even more

Preparing the board.

Determine how long your coat-rack should be. Mine is 56" - too big for my entry way.
Don't let this happen to you. Measure first.

Cut a pine board to length, then paint it with milk paint or acrylic.



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Use a rasp to distress the corners and edges creating a worn look



Use a sander to soften the color



Tip - Reload your palm sander with several layers of paper

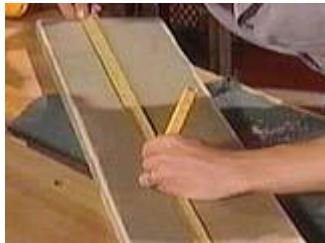
After it's dry, use coarse sandpaper (80 grit) or a wood rasp to break down the corners and edges of the painted board. Scrape and sand the paint in a random, organic fashion that makes the board look worn and homey.

The contrast between the painted surface and the exposed wood may seem a bit harsh to your eye. If so, sand the whole surface with finer sandpaper (100 grit). An electric palm-sander expedites the process.



Use a tack cloth to remove the dust

Use a tack cloth to remove dust after sanding. This brings out the grain of the wood.



Find and mark the center



Mark the board at chosen intervals



Use another board or straight edge to help mark for holes

Measure to find the center of the board and mark the point with a pencil. Place a straight-edge (another board works well) on that mark and square it to the underlying board. This will give you a good straight line along which to mark points for pegs. Seven inches is a good interval for pegs. If the pegs are too close, the coats knock each other to the floor, so be generous with the spacing.



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Choose the correct drill bit



Mark the drill bit at the correct depth



Drill the holes on the marks

Referring to one of your pegs, choose a drill bit that matches the diameter of the end that will be inserted into the hole. Drill all the holes to a depth of $\frac{1}{2}$ " (or the depth required by your pegs).

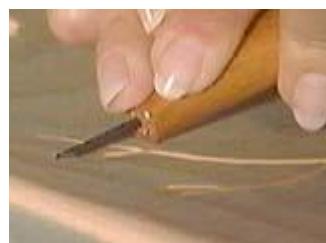
If you have trouble telling how deep you're drilling, mark the correct depth on the end of your drill bit using a piece of masking tape.



Three simple carving tools used to make the relief carving on top



Carving using a v-groove carving tool



Carving using a micro v-groove carving tool for finer work

Before you glue the pegs in place, consider the option of carving a design on the coat rack. There are lots of half-day or evening chip-carving or relief-carving courses available, and it really only takes a couple of hours to get a decent grounding in the basics.

Carving tools cost roughly \$50, and keeping them sharp is half the fun. I took a two-hour chip-carving course at Lee Valley Tools in Toronto that taught me enough to do the carving on my coat rack.



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Chip carving knife



Carving using a chip carving knife



Finished carving detail

You can work with either a v-shaped parting tool, or a chip carving knife. Pine can be sinewy to carve, so for a real treat, get some basswood from a woodworker's supply place. Basswood carves like butter, and has no knots or grain irregularities. You can also carve candles for Christmas presents. Just remember to wedge the candle securely so that it doesn't roll while you're working on it.

For safety, use a non-skid vinyl mat under the board as you carve. Here's another **safety tip**: never work on your carving late at night when you're tired. I still have a scar on my hand from carving a paddle in bed at camp when I was 17. Fortunately I had a top bunk so I could tie my hand to the rafters for the night to slow the bleeding.



Finally, glue the pegs in place



Finished coat rack

After finishing your carving, glue the pegs in place using carpenter's glue or white glue.



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