Carved Eraser Stamps with CBTV Live

Chapter 1 - Chapter 1
Carve an eraser stamp
(upbeat music) - Hey everybody, it's Courtney from Creativebug coming at you live like we always do on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Yesterday we had off so this is the first day of the week and I'm super excited to show you a technique that I've been playing with for a really long time. I started making my own rubber stamps when I was probably in high school. It's a combination of print making and the technique that I'm gonna show you also uses image transfers which is one of my other loves. That's what I wrote my first book on which is playing with image transfers and it's of course something I teach on Creativebug so Ally's going to be posting a link to that class in just a moment. For this it's really super simple. You can make these rubber stamps using erasers. That's what I'm gonna show you. So I've go Factis brand eraser and I pick them up in my local art supply store. You want something that's a little bit bigger so that you have a little bit of working space for your rubber stamp but you could also use Speed Ball, they're like called Easy Carve I believe. If you know Yellow Owl workshop's classes she teaches on Creativebug, she also makes a carve your own rubber stamp kit and you can check that out. So whatever you have lying around the house, I wouldn't recommend using a really old eraser because if it's really old it can be crumbly when you try to carve it and you want something that's gonna be nice and smooth. This is like carving into a block of cheddar cheese. It's really fun. So I've got some of that because I'm gonna show you how to do an image transfer, that way you have something to follow when you're carving. You need a blender pen and a photo copy, so I've got some photo copies here. These are just black. You just want a black and white photo copy and a blender pen and this is an image transfer technique but if you don't have those on hand, you can just draw an image on your stamp and I'll show you how to carve that. I also have some all purpose rubber stamp ink pads and we're gonna use that for printing, some carving tools. You can get a set where every single tool is its own type of tip. So this one happens to be like a straight edge but you can also get a set where all the tips can go in and the extras are stored inside the base. It's kind of like one of those like all in one screwdrivers. And then whatever you want to print on, you can print on fabric or you can print on paper. I have gift tags and some blank cards and envelopes here to show you. I also have some markers in case I want to lay down some color before I do my rubber stamping and because we're live that means you can write and ask us questions or ask me questions, so feel free to ask any questions along the way. All right, we're gonna start with just the smaller eraser and I've got a photo copy. I'm gonna show you how to transfer this. Now because I'm starting it with this orientation, when I transfer it it's gonna be backwards, but then when I stamp it it's gonna be right side up again. So everything should be in the orientation that you want it. We'll put that photo copy face down onto the eraser. And then we're gonna use our blender pen which is a clear marker pen. It's meant for blending two different colors together and it's what allows us to make a transfer using a photo copy. There are other methods of doing this. This happens to be the one that I think works the best most consistently but this is not an image transfer for like a final project, this is just a way to create a template for us to carve around. So this kind of an image transfer's not perfect because rubber is not porous and we're transferring onto a slippery surface. So this is just gonna give us sort of an impressionistic transfer and it's just a guide for us for carving. I drew on the back. I am with my cap burninshing to make sure that this is transferred and it has. So that's good. This is not good for another transfer. This gets

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recycled. And then using my finest tip I'm gonna start by carving around the arrow image. So anything I carve away will not have ink on it. It will not print. Anything that's left behind will have ink on it. So we're working, we're cutting away the negative space and leaving a positive image. And I think it's easiest, let's see, to outline your image first. You should try to carve away from yourself at all times. I don't always follow that rule but because this is really soft to carve into and I'm not really pushing super hard, it's less likely that I'll stab myself. So you want to be careful not to have your hands in the way. But like right now I'm carving toward myself which is, it's okay for this. But as a general rule, try to carve away from yourself. So this is just really shallow. I'm just outlining and basically what's happening is I'm creating a channel so that I can go and use a bigger tool in a minute to really carve away all this negative space. And this is just your template. So if you don't follow it exactly that's totally fine too. I think the reason people gravitate toward print making and the look of block carving is that the process of carving itself gives you a really distinct look that you can't really emulate with any other method. So regardless of what you transfer or what you draw on your eraser to start, the process of carving is gonna create another kind of layer to your image. Something kind of delicate here just for my initial carving. That's the outline. And now I can, you can just use your fingernails to peel up anything, I can move to a larger tip. This one is called a u gouge, it has more of a u shape instead of a v shape where my other one initially had a v shape and I'm gonna use this to carve away the negative space. And this is a place where I don't want to put my hand here right because I could stab myself. So try to hold around it. Like I said, you're supposed to carve away from yourself. Sometimes I switch that just because of the way I carve, but for this, being careful not to put my hand right in line with the carving tool. So I'm carving away the negative space. Feel free to write in and ask questions if you have any. The reason I like being able to make these custom rubber stamps is because one, it's super satisfying and it's a pretty quick project. It's awesome to be able to make something yourself right, instead of buy it, but also it allows you to customize the imagery because there's not a rubber stamp for every single thing out there which is why I love image transfers too. It allows you to create imagery in art work without having to purchase a $12 stamp. I think this eraser was like 99 cents. So as I get close to get this intersection I want to be careful that I don't accidentally cut right into that tiny little space of the arrow. So I'm gonna go back in with my smaller tool and carve away. Try to protect my image as much as possible. This I'm just lifting out the part I just cut. And you're gonna have an opportunity to do a test print and make sure that you got everything. Because inevitably you're gonna have to carve more than once. You're gonna carve as much as you can away. Now I'm not gonna cut this out because it's nice to have space to hold this when you're printing. So I'm not carving down to here, I'm just carving down about an eighth of an inch or so. Just so that these marks don't print. - [Ally] We have our first question. - [Courtney] So our first question, Ally's just gonna read it to me while I'm carving. - [Ally] Debbie asks, are those wood carving tools that you can use for rubber stamps? - Yes, hi Debbie, thanks for writing in and the question is the tools I'm using, are those for making rubber stamps or are they wood carving tools? They're wood carving tools, they're also used for line cuts or linol cuts which is a linoleum block printing process. They work for both, they also work for using with erasers. You can also find Speed Ball and Yellow Owl, they make like a carve your own rubber stamp kit and they use something much bigger called Easy Cut. It's not as thick though so you usually have to mount it on a wooden block. That's why I like using the erasers. You're a little limited to size right, because it's hard to find an eraser that's that big, but you can find pretty big erasers, so this gives you enough kind of versatility to make a whole range of stamps. You can make an entire alphabet, you can make all your emoticons, it'd be super fun to do. Like a really custom set

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and I also use these for pumpkin carving. If you watch my pumpkin carving class that came out a few years ago, these are the same tools that I use. In fact, there might even be some lingering pumpkin bits on some of these tools. - [Ally] What about cheese? Can you carve cheese with those? - You can carve cheese. In fact, these erasers kind of feel like carving cheese. Cheese will not last up though like these will. These will last a long time. I still have a lot of the rubber stamps that I carved in high school and in college and I just kept them in a little cigar box. I did a lot of like things like birds and kind of immaculate heart images and I have an entire alphabet set I carved. So this does take just a minute. We're getting there though. - [Ally] Our next question is about the blender pen. Can you use it if an image printed from a home ink jet style printer or does it need to be an image printed from a photo copier? - Yeah, good question. I teach a lot of image transfer classes, I teach obviously on Creativebug and it's what I wrote my first book on and this is a question I get all the time, can I use my Ink Jet printer and the answer is no. There are many, many ways to do image transfers. I've tried over 50 different ways and I would say the methods that I teach are the ones that I feel work really consistently and are really successful and they don't require a lot of materials or costs. There are Ink Jet methods but you usually have to troubleshoot your printer, you need expensive paper and I find them just a little bit more prohibitive. So you do need a photo copy but it's just like any other material. Go to your photo copy store, your library, your office depot and make a 10 cent photo copy and that works with a blender pen. Good question. And all that stuff is in my image transfer class if you guys watch the image transfer class. I know a lot of you out there have seen the image transfer class because I always check the student gallery. All right, we're getting close. I'm gonna do a test print in just a minute. But I want to just come in with my smallest tool and get close to those little points on the arrow. If I'm still not satisfied I can even go in with this flat edge tool and carve right up to that. Kind of pull that away. And then use this. I also have a really stiff bristled brush. This is like for stenciling and this is great for getting all these little eraser bits off before we print. All right, close, close. You'll see anything with more detail like this arrow requires a little more printing. If you did something really large like a heart this would go a little bit more quickly. I'm using a really wide u gouge to kind of really get all this excess eraser out of the way. Now if you make a mistake or you carve across and you can't fix it, just flip it over and use the other side of the eraser. This is not a huge investment of money or time so you just want to do this as best you can, but if it's your first time carving or even if it's your 10th time carving and you make a mistake it's no big deal. All right, one more check here. - [Ally] How much of a relief do you want to leave so that you know that only the carved image is stamping? - Someone is asking, how much of a relief do you want to use so that only, sorry do you want to leave so that only the image itself is stamping? And I would say you want to carve down about an eighth to a quarter of an inch. You don't want to do more than that because you still want a nice, substantial bit of the eraser to hold onto when you're printing. That way you don't have to mount this onto a wooden block which is a whole extra step. We're gonna do a test print in just a minute so that we can see anything that still has ink on it. We'll carve that away and it's a great indicator of how consistent and how we want to carve away the negative space. All right. Okay, I'm gonna use that bristle brush to get in there. I've got some scratch paper here. And our stamp pad. I recommend a flat stamp pad. So if you look at this surface of this, this one's kind of foamy, this one has a little bit of fabric texture to it, but they're overall flat. They're not spongy. This happens to be Color Box but usually if you look for Color Box it has the clear top. They're really spongy and very paint-like so those are more pigment based. These ones are dye based and those work much better for stamping for this purpose because those pigment-based ones take a little bit longer to dry and also, that really spongy textured surface can

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get into more of this negative space that we've carved. So the flatter the surface, and the harder the surface of the ink pad, kind of the better results you'll get. - [Man] Courtney, can you stamp below the high end of the table? - All right so I can see just here with inking that I am pretty close. I might want to come in. I'm gonna print this first just so you can see it but then we'll come in and we'll check. So that looks really good. If we had our original, it's going the way, because remember we flipped it over to transfer it, now it's getting flipped back for the stamp so it's going to the left, but because it's an arrow you can also just turn it around and you could stamp it to the right. This happens to be something that you could do all over, but you can see there are a little few places that I can still carve out and I'll just use my bigger u gouge to get rid of those. I don't mind how pointed that is. I think that looks cool. I could go back in here if I wanted with a really tiny, tiny tip and get a little more detailed. Maybe it's more on one side. Let's try that again. Stamping. Cool, I think that looks good. So let's stamp, what do we want to stamp? I think this would be a fun thing to stamp on an envelope. You do have to be careful though. There are some postal stamps that are return to sender that use red arrows so you want to make sure that you don't accidentally stamp something with something that the post office actually uses for return to sender, so just check when you go to the post office. That has happened to me once. I think that looks cool. I could also stamp again in the other direction. And then address this. To, mom and dad. Okay, so that's ready to go. I was gonna show you also stamping a word. Now I mentioned earlier that you can just go ahead and write on this and that's totally fine. So you can take a ballpoint pen, I think that actually works the best for something. If you want to use the brush marker because you like the kind of quality especially if you're writing something like a name or a word like the word love if you're coming in for Valentine's Day, you can do that but it might smear. So you have to be careful when you're carving to keep the integrity of that image as best you can. The ballpoint pen doesn't smear quite as much. I also have the word love and if your transferring it or if you're drawing the word has to be backwards because when you flip it over to make your print it'll be the right way. So this is going the correct way because we're transferring it. It's gonna go onto the eraser backwards. So let me just show you that. So you get an idea. I'm using the blender pen again to transfer the word love. And also just one thing to mention because I haven't mentioned it yet is if you're looking for images to transfer, clip art is like one of my favorite sources and Dover Publications is a great resource. They make a ton of books that have images. Usually they're made from 18th Century engravings so they have a lot of great detail. You can make photo copies of those and transfer them. Remember things that are super, super fine lined might blur a little bit if you're transferring them onto an eraser. Let's give it one more pass. - [Ally] What is in the blender pen that makes the image transfer? - This particular brand, the question is what's in the blender pen to make it transfer. Xylene or xylol is the thing that makes it transfer really well. There are alcohol based blender pens and those do not work, not for this process. They work for what they're intended to do which is blend alcohol based markers. You can use other things like Wintergreen Oil for image transfer but not so much for transferring to an eraser because it's too slippery. All right, that looks pretty good. You can see it's not perfect. This is just a guide for us because we're making a rubber stamp. All right, same thing. I'm gonna do the outline as best I can with my smallest gouging tool. And like for this one instead of going this way because I might cut into that letter, I'm just gonna rotate it and try to come away from the letter and avoid the O. So again, if you mess up and you can't fix it because you've just completely sliced through your letter, just flip over your eraser and start again. You can move up to a thicker tip. This one happens to be a u gouge as opposed to the v gouge. Like I said, you should be carving away from yourself and not toward yourself, but for me this is working best just because

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it feels the most comfortable and I don't have my hand here supporting. I have my hand here. Really the reason you don't want to carve toward yourself is because you don't want to stab your thumb. I did that several times in college and it was linoleum so there was a lot more pressure. Basically a puncture wound. All right, let's go back to our little guy. Gently, carefully around that O. I wanted this one to look a little bit more like hand lettering. We'll see how it looks when I actually stamp it. In this case carving away from myself. And these stamps are so fun to make. You can customize your own stationary, you could do monograms. They're also great building blocks. Like let's say you do a lot of circles that you want to draw on top of. If you saw the creativity challenge that we did a few months ago where everyone taught kind of a different class from our creative book stamp, I did those water color circles that you can draw faces on. You could make a rubber stamp of a shape instead of doing a water color dot and then you could draw a face on top of it and that would be super fun too. If you have any questions let me know because we're live. - [Ally] Lisa asks, if you don't have a photo copier, how else can you transfer an image? - If you don't have a photo copier you can't transfer an image but you can draw an image. So you can draw an image onto your rubber stamp. I could easily have drawn love on here, I just wanted to show you the transfer method because it appears backwards now, it is backwards now but when I stamp it it will be the right side round. That means if you're drawing, you just need to draw your word backwards or your image backwards. So it's something to keep in mind when you're preparing your eraser for a rubber stamp. You don't have to do a transfer, you could totally just draw. When I made all of my rubber stamps in high school and college, I mostly just drew directly on them and I did not use an image transfer. I just thought it would be fun to combine the two to show you guys. Again, I just want to stress that if you're using a photo copy it's you know a 10 cent material. It's just like going to the art supply store for anything else that you need to pick up for your project and once you kind of get that and start doing it, I promise you'll be so addicted, you won't even notice. You won't even mind. You'll be going to the photo copy shop and making hundreds of copies at one time because you'll want to be prepared when you want to make your image transfers. It's super, super fun. Good questions you guys. Thanks for asking. We're almost there. I'm still working kind of on the outline. Okay, so here I carved in a little bit to my v so that's fine. What I'm gonna do is switch to an even smaller tip and just clean that up. So I'm just gonna alter the v a little bit. And that's fine, sometimes that happens. I just cut into my letter a little bit. Might as well, when I've got this really small tip, work in these areas too. It's easiest to kind of carve just straight lines. So instead of trying to go in and perfectly gouge out that negative space in the e, I'm just doing straight lines away from my letter. Use your scrubby brush to get any eraser peelings off. We still have a little bit more carving to do but we're getting close. Just want to carve a little bit further down. I mentioned earlier that you should be carving about an eighth to a quarter of an inch down into the eraser to prevent any of these edges from being printed. It's easier on the side. I don't care what this part looks like. I'm not printing this so I don't have to be super delicate there. I just don't want to tear the eraser in any way that's gonna cut into my lettering. So just do what you need to do to make sure that that doesn't happen. Have to work a little bit more on this E. All right, let's come back in there and just clean up closer to the letters, so that we can do a little test print of this. It's so fun to carve. It's like very, very satisfying. Come back in here and get into here a little more. And it's always gonna look a little different than you anticipated because the process of carving creates a look that you really can't mimic with any other process and that's what's so magical about it. All right. Almost done. All right, I think we're ready for a test print. Let me just get that off. Take your really scrubby brush one more time, get off any of these eraser bits. Try not to get them on your stamp pad because that's a pain in the ass. You

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can use, that's a pain. You can use a baby wipe just to wipe off your ink pad if you do happen to get any eraser bits on it. A few little taps. Oh, I forgot the negative space in the O. I could have made that a heart or I could use this opportunity now to carve it into a heart. I want to stamp it just so that I'm not carving into something that's covered in ink and super wet. We can see what it looks like. We at least know it's the right orientation. I actually like it better without the negative space so I don't think I'm going to carve out the center of the O. I like how it looks as a closed circle. I do want to go in here and clean this up a little. Clean this part of the E up and just get any, get rid of any lingering little bits that have ink on them and then we're ready to do a print onto our stationary. So anywhere you see ink on here. And you don't want it to be there, then you can go in and clean it up. And I think I want to clean this up a little even though it's gonna cut into my letter a little. That's okay. I don't mind the way that looks. Clean this up a little. All right, let's do one more test print. You can see I have some ink there. I might just carve that now in one swoop. I really like it, I think that looks awesome. Oh, maybe I want to do just right here. Carve, clean that V up. Yeah, I think that looks good. All right. Maybe we'll stamp this on the back and you can do a double. So I would just kind of stamp away on your scratch paper, extra ink. Before you switch to a new color you can also use a baby wipe to clean. And then we're here we're going to do an off register so you get that cool double effect. I love kind of an aqua or teal color with a red. I think it looks really cool. I also have a rubber stamp of a heart. You can do that. You can do it on a little tag. This'll be great for like favor tags. Obviously you can tell I'm already thinking about Valentine's Day. Oh, this little mess. If you get a misprint like that it's because something is stuck to your rubber stamp. So you just want to make sure, there we go, nice and clean again. I want to switch colors. Again, I could play with overlapping stamps to get different colors. I could try doing something upside down. That's super cute and fun. You could create an entire pattern. These could become butterflies. You could create a separate stamp for that part of the butterfly. That would be super cute. You can also put your stamps on top of water color. You can stamp on top of marker pen, so I just drew some super loose circles using a brush tip pen and a highlighter and I'm gonna stamp on top of these using this floral peony stamp that I created earlier. And I'm not wanting them to line up. I want them to be sort of off register. You can twist your stamps, it's going in different directions. Maybe this one's going upside down. This would be such a cool fabric. And then I made a rubber stamp using just a red eraser. It was a little bit harder to carve than the Factus or like the Easy Cut style. The white eraser was a little bit crumblier but I wanted to make a little leaf shape. Can play with that. I'm just gonna go right off the paper. This would be really fun for Chinese New Year which is coming up. Great for making gift tags. So here's one I did earlier. You can see in this case I switched colors to a lighter green and used that with my darker green. Did more little tags like we did earlier. I did a little bow stamp, I thought that would be fun. The arrow that we carved and an envelope. So really the sky is the limit. You can transfer an image or draw your own right onto an eraser. If you want to go really big you can look for Easy Carve or other kits made by Speed Ball or Yellow Owl is one of our instructors on our site. Really once you start you won't be able to stop. It's super super fun to be able to customize your own rubber stamps. You can give them a quick wipe with a baby wipe or just pat them on some scratch paper and store them so that you can use them for every holiday and for any kind of mail art that you want. We'll see you guys on Thursday. We have a special guest in the studio. We're gonna be filming with Camilla Dorico. She's an awesome painter and anime designer and she's gonna be in the studio later this week. So hope you'll join us at four pm on Thursday. See you guys then. (upbeat music)

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