



hawthorn

## Drawing in Nature □ Tree Trunk Bark Rubbings

The joy of taking tree rubbings is not only the pleasure of a visual reminder and a record of your walk in the wood but the natural exploration of the vast variety of tree barks you may encounter on your way.

**What to take on your walk:** pencil and paper.

You can also use charcoal, wax crayons, and experiment with paper quality, thickness and colour etc.

**Making a bark rubbing is like drawing the 'skin' of a tree.**

1. To begin with, observe the various tree trunks around you. Notice all the bark patterns.

Some might have deep ridges and valleys, others only gentle bumps.

Look for other life in the bark. Before you start rubbing make sure there are no spiders or tiny insects that might get harmed. Avoid any lichen or moss. Bark is essential for a tree's survival. It protects the tree among many other functions so be careful not to harm the bark when taking your rubbing.

2. When you have chosen a tree, before you start your rubbing take a few moments to look at the tree, **ALL** of it.

Look up at the tree top, look at the leaves, see where the branches come out of the trunk.

3. Then take a few minutes to really look at the bark. Walk around the tree, and then start touching the bark. Really take time to absorb what your fingers are feeling, press your whole hand, front and back onto the bark. Imagine if you were covered in this bark, what would it feel like?

4. Now you are ready. Start anywhere. Place the paper against the trunk and rub using the pencil or crayon over the paper to make a print of the bark pattern. After a while you will realise how some barks give very interesting patterns. Notice what is it about that particular bark, ask yourself questions. Notice the texture.

5. You might find holding your pencil differently from how you hold it when you write helps get a better rubbing. Try holding the pencil or crayon it on its side.

6. This is a tactile activity. You might experiment with pressing harder or lighter on your pencil as you keep rubbing, noticing the difference it makes.

7. After you have taken a rubbing spend time to appreciate your drawing and the tree. Write a note of anything that stands out about the tree trunk or the tree, ie. the colour of the bark, the height of the tree, the shape of the leaves, if it was windy or cold, what you were thinking about. Or detailed notes so you can identify the tree later.

*"When in nature it is possible to naturally restore ones focus and wellbeing  
Mindful drawing exercises allow you to do this in an effortless and easy way"*

blackthorn

Caro  
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