

Make your own whistle

by **Tool Using Animal** on March 13, 2008

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intro: Make your own whistle

How to make your own whistle, and put those war profiteering global whistle manufacturers out of business. With this instructable we can free America from it's dependence on foreign made whistles.



step 1: Get wood

Got wood? Great!

I used a "pen blank", that's a 3/4 x 3/4 x 5 inch piece of wood. Woodcraft sells a five pound grab bag for \$13, so I have plenty of wood.

In addition to the wood, you'll need a 5/16th drill bit and a 5/16th hardwood dowel.

You can start by drilling a 5/16ths hole down the center of your piece of wood. How deep? Less deep than the wood, or if you need exact numbers, the hole should be $x-1$ inches deep, where x is the length of your piece of wood. Use a drill press and a vice, if you choose to freehand it, please clamp the wood in something, you don't want splinters do you?

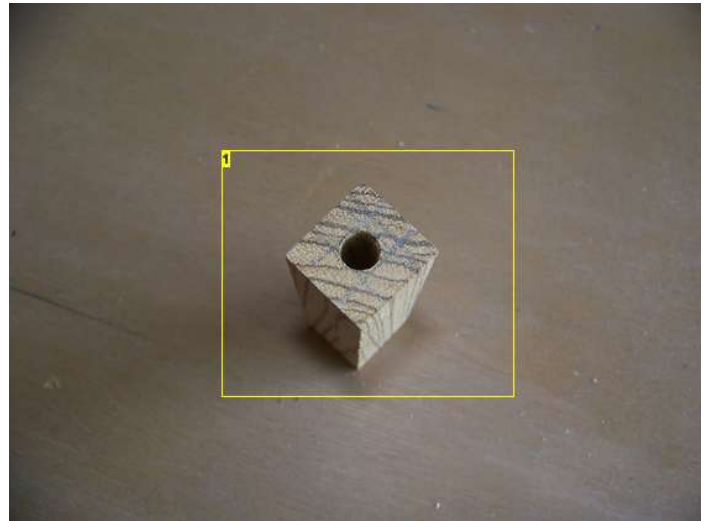
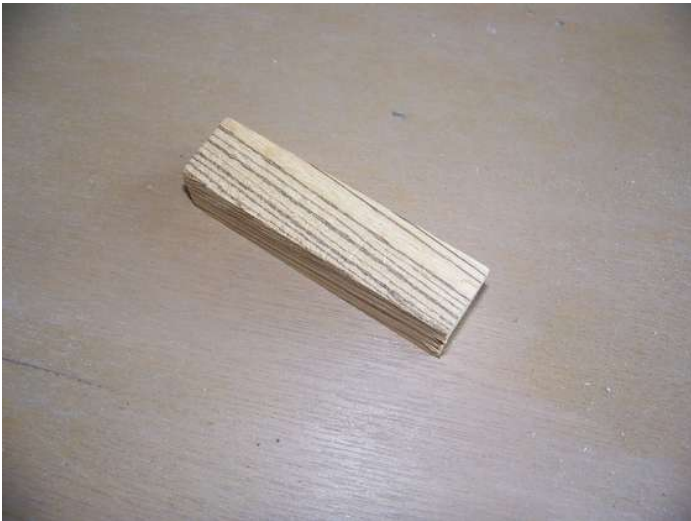


Image Notes

1. Dead solid perfect...ish

step 2: The window and lip

Did you know the parts of a whistle have names? I didn't, but I learned some. So in this step, we'll be making the window and the lip, one is the consequence of the other, so let's just make the window.

Start by using a razor saw to make a transverse cut approx one inch from the drilled end. Cut down as squarely as possible. Stop when the blade of the saw extends approx 1/8th of an inch into the hole.

Now using a chisel (mine are muy dull), cut towards the slot you just cut, making about a thirty degree incline, make the cut as smooth as possible. Stop when the you have sliced into the bore hole about an 1/8th of an inch.

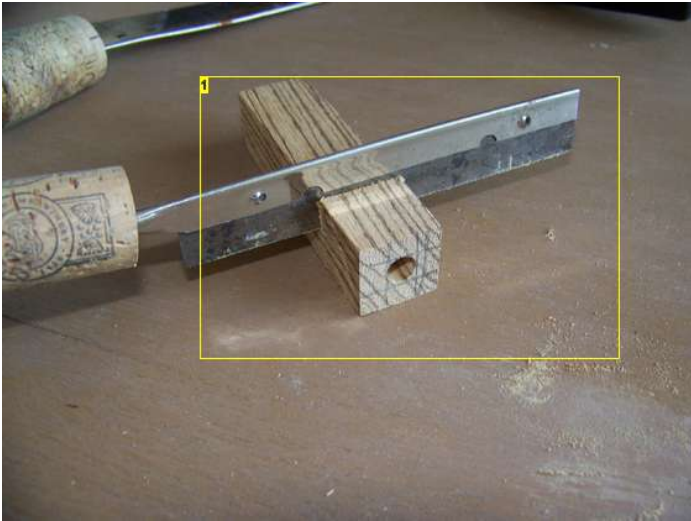
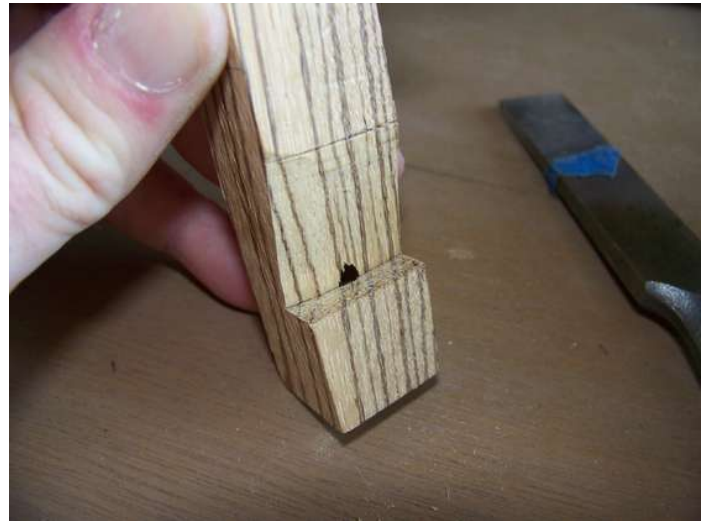
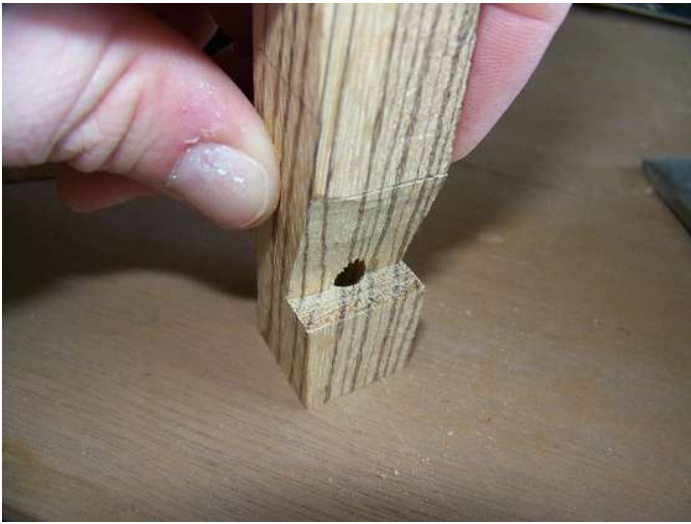


Image Notes

1. Waxing your saw makes this easy





step 3: Fipple and windway

If you blow into your whistle now, nothing happens, we need to create a windway that guides the air over the lip, this is called a fipple. The fipple is made from a piece of 5/16th hardwood dowel about one and a half inches long. Using your chisel, slice a flat onto the top of the fipple, now slide it into the hole with the windway on the same side as the window and lip, insert the fipple until the interior end is just inline with the window.

Now what you've been waiting for, blow your whistle, sound okay? Great, if not, back out the fipple, or push it in a little farther, still bad? make another fipple, try two or three, see which sounds best. A pair of vise grips makes adjustment easy.

Once you are happy, change nothing! Use some thin super glue and wick it in around the fipple, don't get it in the wind way.

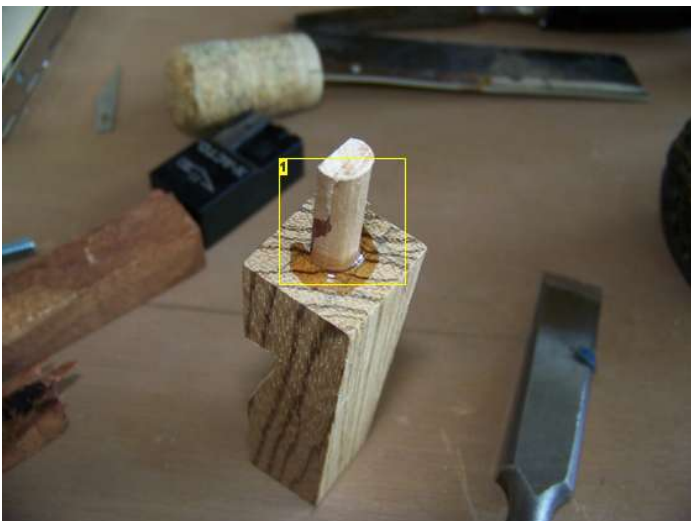


Image Notes

1. Fipple

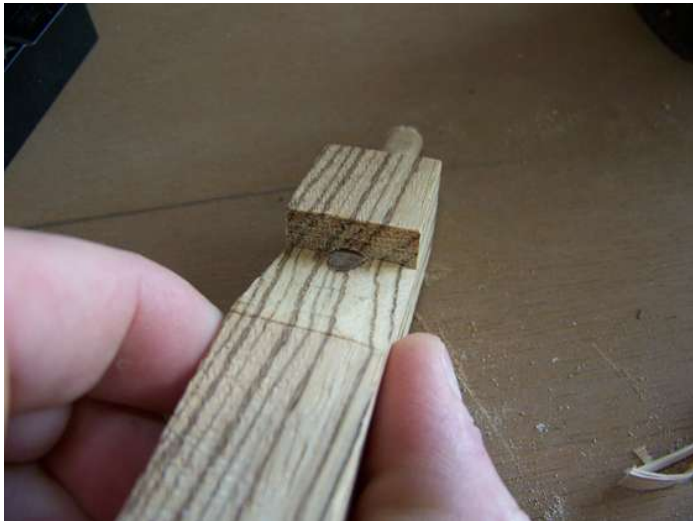


Image Notes

1. windway

step 4: Make it pretty

If you want, you can stop at the previous step, just trim down the fipple flush and you have an ugly whistle. But I chose to try turning my whistle.

A confession, I didn't use my drill press lathe, I had such a good time using it, that after careful accounting and discussions with the wife, I went to Woodcraft and bought a Jet mini lathe. I just have to give up beer for a year.

So without further ado

I chucked the whistle into my lathe, using a scrap block to prevent the tailstock from pushing the fipple out of place.



Image Notes

1. Hole to fit over excess fipple.

step 5: Shaping

Next I roughed it to round and shaped the mouth piece



step 6: Finally

I rounded the end, and added a groove for a lanyard.

A little sanding and a buffed on coat of lacquer and it's ready to slip into my pocket.

Hope you enjoyed it!!!

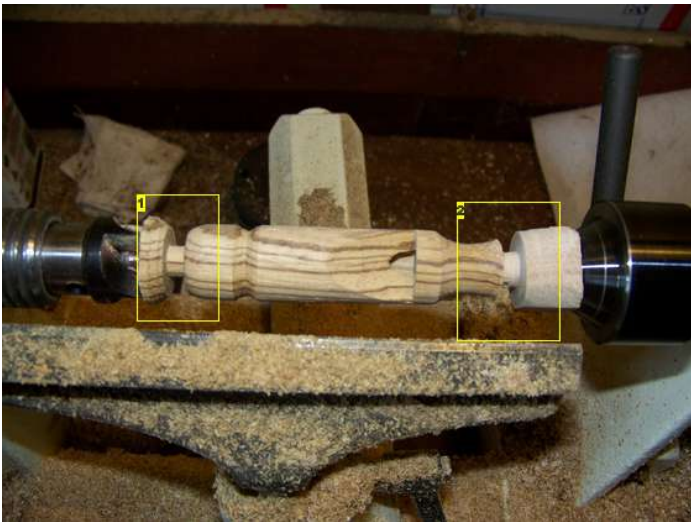


Image Notes

- 1. Cut here
- 2. and here

Image Notes

- 1. Shiny and loud

Related Instructables



Wood Shop Projects
(slideshow) by MadMechanicMike



Drill Press Lathe by Tool Using Animal



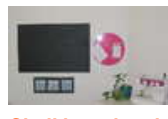
Tool Rest for a Belt Sander for Sharpening
(slideshow) by Tool Using Animal



A modern build of a medieval spring pole lathe by badger



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Pyrography: Burning Pictures into Wood by Goodhart




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Comments


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 **kaptaink_cg** says: Aug 8, 2008. 6:15 PM [REPLY](#)
How critical is the hole diameter? Does the diameter only vary the tone, or is there a point at which it will not work?


 **Tool Using Animal** says: Aug 10, 2008. 4:18 PM [REPLY](#)
Hmmm I don't know. The larger the hole, the lower the pitch and the greater volume of air needed.

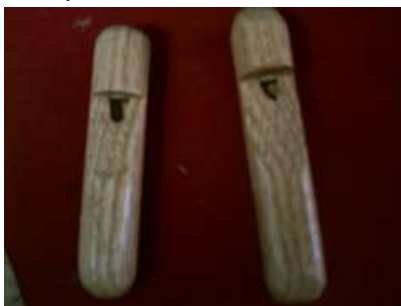
 **martymunch** says: May 11, 2008. 6:37 PM [REPLY](#)
I made a few of these this weekend. They are fairly easy to make once you get the right angles down. It was very tricky making the fipples until I got one to whistle. AWESOME!!! fav, and my two little kids love them!


 **MadMechanicMike** says: May 15, 2008. 7:04 PM [REPLY](#)
i find that making the fipple last is the best method. i use a dowel and cut it a little longer than it should be then put it in and blow it. I then move the fipple as needed. also, i cut my window and lip halfway through the barrel at a little more than a 45 degree angle. another thing to try is to drill straight through the whole whistle stock and insert a dowel. you can tune the sound of the whistle by moving the dowel in and out.

 **martymunch** says: May 19, 2008. 8:39 PM [REPLY](#)
So I forgot to post this. Over the weekend I did try the slide whistle idea. It doesn't work so well as it is to hard to get an air tight seal and still be able to slide the dowel.

 **martymunch** says: May 17, 2008. 11:42 AM [REPLY](#)
i might try the slide whistle today. I'll get back to you on that. thanks for the info.

 **peguiono** says: May 18, 2008. 3:48 PM [REPLY](#)
thank you i made 2 whistles this weekend the both work great!! thank you



 **MadMechanicMike** says: Apr 3, 2008. 1:01 PM [REPLY](#)
i made about 5 of these in wood shop but they are square. i made 2 double barrel ones, a triple barrel, and 2 single barrels. pm me if you want to see them.



MadMechanicMike says:

Apr 27, 2008. 7:49 AM [REPLY](#)

here they are and then some extras. the bad looking ones are my first attempts. they all work. i just recently tried one on the lathe and it worked great.



offseid says:

Mar 24, 2008. 3:09 AM [REPLY](#)

Very cool. I would have appreciated a brief "what to do" for those of us who don't have a lathe but would like to have something other than a rectangle for a whistle.

As for me, I think I would maybe chamfer the corners with my chisel (and then maybe chamfer again), and then go over it with a rasp. Never done it, so I don't know how it'd work, but I think that's what I'd do.

Nice one, though!



Mr. BeanyMvBeanBean says:

Mar 26, 2008. 8:49 AM [REPLY](#)

just use a dowel instead of the rectangular piece.



Tool Using Animal says:

Mar 24, 2008. 12:08 PM [REPLY](#)

Chamfering the corners and then again (4-8-16-32) until round would work fine, I'd not do it with a chisel, a block plane or shurform tool would be a safer choice.



Marco hernandez says:

May 6, 2008. 4:52 AM [REPLY](#)

Tool USING Animal that is so cool that you show me how to make a whistle.



funwithfire325 says:

Apr 7, 2008. 1:19 PM [REPLY](#)

be careful! you might kill yourself when u use that saw!~ can i have your stuff then?



offseid says:

Mar 24, 2008. 7:41 PM [REPLY](#)

Yeah, good call. A chisel would not give you a very uniform chamfer.



ninjaimasta says:

Mar 25, 2008. 11:31 AM [REPLY](#)

lol Tool you just inadvertently linked your comment to Lost (the TV series) lol



ninjaimasta says:

Mar 25, 2008. 11:32 AM [REPLY](#)

sorta... lol



Mr. BeanyMvBeanBean says:

Mar 26, 2008. 8:48 AM [REPLY](#)

Blah you beat me to it. I was about to make this same Instructable.



DIYmaster says:

Mar 24, 2008. 4:23 AM [REPLY](#)

Wow, this is amazing!!! Nice work!



conadia says:

Mar 23, 2008. 8:01 AM [REPLY](#)

You can probly turn this into a ocarina if you make it a little bigger.



Tool Using Animal says:
You could, or a recorder, I couldn't, as I've the musical ability of a tone deaf mole rat ;-)

Mar 23, 2008. 9:40 AM [REPLY](#)



LMO says:
This is now on my To-Do list. Great instructable.

Mar 23, 2008. 6:47 AM [REPLY](#)



Big Bwana says:
Very nice, and simple to make a bunch of them, and thanks for the link to toxic woods...

Mar 17, 2008. 1:52 AM [REPLY](#)



oll1ebaba says:
Is that Zebrawood? I turned a bowl out of zebrawood once - it's not very easy to use on a lathe because it's such a hard wood. It splintered a lot and was very scary but eventually I got down to a bowl.

Mar 15, 2008. 12:10 PM [REPLY](#)

Nice instructable by the way! I was going to make a spear that whistled but I didn't know how, I think this will help a ton.



bumpus says:
you know, someone should really make an instructable on how to water cool a dremel... that would be awesome
mine got all hot and bothered :(

Mar 14, 2008. 7:30 PM [REPLY](#)



LinuxH4x0r says:
Mine overheats only if I stall it. Put it in the freezer for 15 mins and it will be fine.

Mar 15, 2008. 10:39 AM [REPLY](#)



LinuxH4x0r says:
Nice! I never knew it was so easy. Great job!

Mar 13, 2008. 6:22 PM [REPLY](#)



LinuxH4x0r says:
I failed at making the whistle, but it inspired me to finally use my drill press as a lathe.

Mar 13, 2008. 7:43 PM [REPLY](#)



Tool Using Animal says:
What went wrong?, maybe we can figure it out.

Mar 13, 2008. 8:45 PM [REPLY](#)



LinuxH4x0r says:
The way I cut it. I think it was too deep. What were the approximate dimensions of yours?

Mar 13, 2008. 8:47 PM [REPLY](#)



Tool Using Animal says:
I started with a .75 x .75 x 5 inch piece, the hole is 5/16ths, I've made a bunch of whistles in the last two days (my wife's girlfriends want them) and cutting too deep killed more than one, I'd say err on the side of a shallow cut.

Mar 15, 2008. 9:28 AM [REPLY](#)



LinuxH4x0r says:
Thanks! I might try it again later (maybe tomorrow)

Mar 15, 2008. 10:38 AM [REPLY](#)



Yudo says:
that is cool!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!sighk.

Mar 14, 2008. 3:24 PM [REPLY](#)




Charger_06 says:
nice instructable +1


Mar 14, 2008. 3:01 PM [REPLY](#)





rizkyw says:
Is there really such a thing as a 'blood whistle'? :O


Mar 14, 2008. 2:22 PM [REPLY](#)

 **frazeeeg** says: Mar 13, 2008. 11:20 PM [REPLY](#)
Very nicely written. I've got the same lathe at home, believe it or not, and I'm fairly sure it also came from a Woodcraft store.
Correct me if I'm wrong, but that's zebrawood, right? I might have drilled a hole for a lanyard or something, but maybe that's what that indent at the end is for.
I'll have to try this when I get some time at home.

 **Tool Using Animal** says: Mar 14, 2008. 8:21 AM [REPLY](#)
Thanks, it is a nice little lathe, it's rated tops in it's class by every site and forum I checked. Yeah, it's zebrawood, and boy does it stink when you work it.
The indent is for a duck call style lanyard.
BTW, everyone, when selecting a wood for your whistle, you might want to take toxicity into account.

 **Kiteman** says: Mar 14, 2008. 9:55 AM [REPLY](#)
Good grief - reading that chart puts me right off wood altogether!
Resolves not to read chart again
Actually, looking at some of the effects, this Instructable could become a very subtle way of murdering a referee...
+ (Even though I'll be entering soon)

 **frazeeeg** says: Mar 14, 2008. 9:18 AM [REPLY](#)
That toxicity chart is a good thing to know. Some of that is definitely news to me.


 **thewoodcarver** says: Mar 14, 2008. 2:24 AM [REPLY](#)
it is zebra wood , if you use it please wear a mask when turning or sanding itvery nice job tool.. use to give cub scouts carving badges for making these and willow branch whistles

 **pepitosbazzeguti** says: Mar 14, 2008. 9:51 AM [REPLY](#)
Fine work!


 **MadMechanicMike** says: Mar 13, 2008. 8:41 PM [REPLY](#)
+1 & voted
Im making this is wood shop tomorrow, thanks!

 **hithisishal** says: Mar 13, 2008. 8:23 PM [REPLY](#)
cool! I can't wait to try this!

 **thinkahead** says: Mar 13, 2008. 7:59 PM [REPLY](#)
...now I know what to do with all those extra fire piston blanks.

 **SWV1787** says: Mar 13, 2008. 7:27 PM [REPLY](#)
I made one similar out of soft pine doweling and it sounded like those four tone train whistles.

 **bumpus** says: Mar 13, 2008. 7:05 PM [REPLY](#)
that is awesome
no bull
i was wondering how to make a whistle for a while
im gonna vote for you

 **GorillazMiko** says: Mar 13, 2008. 6:57 PM [REPLY](#)
Wow, nice job! The first Instructable in the contest, I'm hoping you win!
+1 vote and rating.



Goodhart says:
Very nice indeed.

Mar 13, 2008. 6:14 PM [REPLY](#)



RFilyaw says:
I really like this one. Great instructable. I can totally see putting this on my keyring with my flashlight, flash drive, tape measure, grocery store discount cards, lanyard, pen and keys. I've never been able to whistle, but this stylish little number will free me from my crippling disability. Thankfully my disability checks will cover the cost.

Mar 13, 2008. 6:12 PM [REPLY](#)



chrisrock410 says:
Wow, what a great Instructable! I'm going to try that this weekend. :-)

Mar 13, 2008. 6:10 PM [REPLY](#)

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