

50 Handy Tricks

by [TimAnderson](#) on November 14, 2006

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Tim Anderson is the author of the "Heirloom Technology" column in Make Magazine. He is co-founder of www.zcorp.com, manufacturers of "3D Printer" output devices. His detailed drawings of traditional Pacific Island sailing canoes are at <http://www.mit.edu/people/robot>.

Tim's philosophy involves building minimum-consumption personal infrastructure from recycled scavenged materials. Redirecting the waste stream. Doing much with little. A reverse peace-corps to learn from poor people all over the world.

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Intro: 50 Handy Tricks

Here's a collection of fifty how-to tricks that can be understood from a photo or two.

To see even more of them, check out

[Handy Tricks 8: Island Handy Tricks](#)

and [40 More Handy Tricks](#)

and [Yet More Handy Tricks](#)

and [Australian Handy Tricks](#)

and [Guatemalan Handy Tricks](#)

and [Handy Tricks Volume Six!](#)

For a bunch of things that didn't work, check out [How Not To](#).

First Trick: "The Handheld Food Processor" a.k.a a "Pair of Scissors".

Anna Blaedel chops grapes for sangria. This trick works for all types of food. Didn't shred your lettuce small enough? Sciz them up a bit!



step 1: Separate Bananas To Ripen Slowly

Tom and Millie MacKenzie, my Kenyan hosts on Lamu Island would arrange individual bananas on their kitchen shelves. I asked why and they said it was to prevent them from ripening so fast. Apparently they emit ethylene gas which signals the other bananas to ripen. When they're separated they get less exposure. If instead you want to make them ripen more quickly, put them in a plastic bag together, or with a banana that's already ripe.



step 2: Lockable Motorcycle Pannier Made from Jerrycan

Spotted at Emeryville Marina, California. The maker cut the jerrycan just below the top, beat some shape into the upper lip so it slides over the lower portion of the can, and added a locking hasp. I couldn't see any sign of a hinge on the other edge. There must be some kind of hook or internal chain to keep the lid down on that side. A very nice way to protect your valuables on a motorcycle.



step 3: Clean Carpet with Powerwasher

Lorraine Palmer got an amazing deal on a big persian carpet because it smelled bad. So she washed it with her gas-powered high pressure washer from costco.

First she sprayed detergent all over it, Then pressure washed it with the sprayer. Now she's squeegee-ing the soapy water out of the rug. There's a slight incline in the parking lot so the water will drain out. Then the carpet drained and dried in the sun for a day or two. She propped it up to get more airflow around it. In some places the pressure washer damaged the rug because she got the nozzle too close, but overall it was very successful. It might be good to put a wire guard around the nozzle to keep from getting it too close to the rug.



step 4: Cell Phone in Wetsuit

When Corwin Hardham goes windsurfing, he brings his cellphone along. He zips it under his wetsuit between his shoulderblades in a waterproof bag. He used to just use ziplock bags and it wasn't a problem. Usually not much water gets into that part of the wetsuit.



step 5: Beeswax Wetsuit Zipper Lube

Wetsuit zippers have problems with jamming and corroding. Rub yours with beeswax to make it work better and last longer.



step 6: File Handle from Crutch Handle

Crutch handles make great file handles. Just pound the file tang in there and start filing. To make it fit extra well heat the tang up with a blowtorch before jamming it in. Dip the whole thing in water if you think it might burn too much.

don't worry about wrecking the temper of the tang, it's already annealed.

Skipole handles make good file handles too.



step 7: Sharpen Sandpaper with an Old Tire

When the sandpaper gets clogged I sand a chunk of old tire with it, and then it cuts well again. The rubber works like a big eraser to scrub the sawdust out between the grains of abrasive on the sandpaper. You can buy products that are meant to do this, but an old tire works plenty good, and you'll never have trouble finding one.

Here's my favorite power sander. It's an old floor sander. I turn it upside down and use it for a drum sander. It's loud and dangerous but it does a nice job.

Here I am touching a tire tread to the spinning drum. See how much cleaner the sandpaper is where the tire hits it.

an exercise for the reader: what makes this particular tool dangerous?



step 8: Car Seat Cover on Office Chair

Office Chairs start out looking pretty boring, and after you've spilled enough contrasting foods and liquids on them they get pretty nasty looking. They happen to be about the same size as car seats, and car seat covers fit them well. Car seat covers come with all sorts of festive decor. Mine is velvet with blue flowers.

Now you can eat sloppy food at your desk without fear of messing up your nice chair.

If you spill something just throw the seatcover in the wash or buy a new one.

Or you can now get a nasty chair that's mechanically fine, put a swank cover on it and make it nice.



step 9: Water Dish Ant Barrier

Ant problems?

Honey jar covered with ants?

Ants can't swim.

Put the honey jar in a dish with water in it. Problem solved.

To keep ants or other insects from climbing tables, beds, or other furniture, put the legs in a dish, can, or bucket with water in it. If the water doesn't stop your bugs use bleach or other stuff bugs don't like. You'll also want to pull your bed/table away from the wall and keep the bedspread/tablecloth from touching walls and floor.



step 10: Accidental Ant Trap Freezer

Our kitchen used to have an ant problem.

Then some ants found the freezer. There must have something in there that smelled really good to ants. The ants walked in through little gaps in the gasket and froze. It took a few weeks for all the ants to find their way there. Most of them froze just inside the gasket and piled up right there.

Now we don't have an ant problem any more.



step 11: Tennis Ball on Stick Rubs out Scuff Marks

Just a regular tennis ball with a hole in it so it can be stuck on the end of a broom handle.

The maintenance people on the airport walk around rubbing the black scuff marks from shoes off the floor. Works great. Photographed in Ohare airport Chicago (I think) in 2002.



step 12: Remove Bumperstickers and Pinstripes with Hot Air

A regular hairdryer works well for most bumperstickers.

For some pinstripes you need more heat, and a formal "hot air gun" is better.

If the bumpersticker isn't too old, the heat makes the glue soft and the decal flexible, so you can pull it off without ripping it. If your kungfu is good the glue will come off with it.

Otherwise you'll need to use laquer thinner or some other toxic laborsaving chemical to help remove it.

If the decal is very scratched or damaged by sunlight, you'll be scraping it off with a knife or razor like this gentleman at a boatyard in Richmond, California.



step 13: Spill Wick and Faucet Aiming Device

Put a paper towel hanging over the edge of the sink to wick spilled water back in.
Put something over the faucet to redirect the water toward the middle of the sink.
result: less water spilled, and spills get cleaned up automatically.

The sinks at our office are a bad design. They're very messy.

The faucet is too close to the edge of the sink.

When you wash your hands water gets all over the counter. When you turn off the water with your wet hands the water also drips on the counter. The counter doesn't drain back into the sink.

So huge puddles develop on the counter.

By the end of the day the puddle has covered the counter and run onto the floor and there are muddy footprints on the wet floor.

Some anonymous genius put a bent hose over the faucet to redirect it.

That helped a lot.

Some anonymous ignoramus took it off and the mess was bad again. Maybe it's a jobs program for janitors.

So I cooked up this method, which works great, and I can re-install it whenever the anonymous ignoramus takes it away. (that's happened about three times so far.)



Image Notes

1. rivulets of spilled water running back into the sink
2. faucet water now goes toward middle of sink
3. spill wick
4. the smallest puddle in months.
5. soda bottle with hole in side to redirect faucet water in the right direction

step 14: Faucet Aiming Device Take 12

Someone named "malicious ignoramus" continues to remove the improvements from the sink, and I keep putting on new ones. This one looks particularly nice, but gulps and slops water back under its chin when you turn it off, making a bit of a mess. So it'll probably be left on there forever. That's humanity for you.



step 15: Stairway/Cabinet

Need some storage space? Need a staircase?
This piece of furniture solves both problems at once.

photographed in the Shitamachi Museum, Ueno, Tokyo, Japan



step 16: Shiny Nail Heads Mark Distance on Floor

At Pastime Hardware in Albany California, they have a giant ruler on the floor, made by pounding in nails to form the numbers and lines.

They use it to measure rope, wire, etc for customers.

The shiny nail heads look really nice and old-timey.
You could do other types of artwork this way also.



step 17: Bar Soap is Screw Lube

This is a boatbuilder's trick. If you lubricate a screw with soap, it goes in a lot easier and holds just as well. You're much less likely to break the head off when putting it in.



step 18: Rain Water Car Wash

It's dark, it's cold, and it's raining. People scurry from door to door like big wet rats.

This bright young man from Mexico realized that his world had turned into a giant carwash.

So with an old teshirt, some shampoo, and some laundry detergent, he went to work and scrubbed his car in the rain. Good idea Juan Garcia!

p.s.

Note to environmentalists: If you worry what runs into the bay when you do this, use eco-soap or make sure your sudsy water runs into a real sewer rather than a storm runoff drain.

p.p.s. The stuff that looks like snow in the photo is raindrops lit up by the flash.



step 19: Flannel Camp Towel

Here's Dr. Nina Aldrich-Wolfe with everything hung out to dry after a day sailing in my leaky boat.

We're at Pa Muul, in the Yucatan. Behind her left shoulder is her flannel camp towel.

It's small, light, soaks up an amazing amount of water, wrings out easily, and dries quickly, compared to other towels, because it's much thinner.

It's made from cotton flannel from a shirt. Look for one that's soft and fleecy and made from 100% cotton. This towel is bigger and more useful than the newfangled diaper-chemistry camp sponge towels. For instance you can wear it as various articles of clothing.

Of course, if you want an article of clothing that doesn't soak up tons of water, get wool, nylon, polyester, something that makes a terrible towel.



step 20: Bamboo Utensil Holder

A few cuts in a big chunk of bamboo, and you've got a handy utensil holder that'll last for years. The node wall between each bamboo segment is the floor of each compartment. photographed in the Shitamachi Museum, Ueno, Tokyo, Japan



step 21: Poor Man's Futon, Grounded on one Side

Scavenged couch cushions make a fine modular futon. They're perfect for sleeping in a lab after a late night of hacking. They store easily on a high shelf and don't look domestic. This spares the feelings of people who think "living" doesn't happen at work.

To get extra fancy you can sew the covers together so it folds up in a hinged-couch fashion.

That will keep the cushions from drifting apart under you when you sleep. Otherwise a piece of cord tied around them will do the job, or most likely there will be enough stuff in your lab to block them in place.

In case your janitors or labmates aren't good at cleaning, you might want to pick one side that goes on the floor and another side for yourself. Mark Tobenkin of MIT had the bright idea of marking the ground side of the cushion with the "ground" schematic symbol.

After a few years your bed might get kind of dingy. You can usually take the covers off and launder them. If that isn't enough, scavenge some latex paint and paint them. That works for upholstered furniture in general. Go nuts and paint them with sunflowers, dragons etc. Remember, reduce, reuse, recycle, relax, recreate!



step 22: Kiteboard Shelf

A kiteboard makes a great shelf- the bigger the better.
This one is the top shelf on a rolling baker rack.
I drilled holes in a pair of cross sticks to support it on the standards.



step 23: "Furoshiki" Instant Backpack

Pronounced "Froshki", it's an ancient Japanese trick to use a big square of cloth as a backpack or bag.

They come in all sizes from hanky size up to giant sheets used by furniture movers.

Just pile the stuff in the middle of the cloth. Bring two opposite corners diagonally together and tie them together with a square knot. Then repeat with the other two corners. Now you have a bag with two straps.

Then you can carry it like a bag, hang one or both straps over a shoulder or wear it like a backpack as seen here. If it's full of a dozen pigs or something really heavy, you'll loop a strap over your forehead and pile the huge bag on the small of your back.



step 24: Diego's Sawhorse-Bench-Table

Here's a slick item of instant furniture designed by Diego Saavedra of the MIT Electronic Research Society. It's nice and solid and doesn't have any tricky joints. Use it for a table, a bench, or a sawhorse.



step 25: Instant Folding Sawhorses

Cut two rectangular chunks of plywood, drill some holes, and tie them together like this. The chunks of pipe insulation pad the top for this use as boat stands. Not that my boats would suffer in any visible way from contact with plywood.



step 26: Pallet Sawhorses

Here's Josh Kuempel with his pallet sawhorses.

He's a big guy and he needed big sawhorses.
A few minutes later he had them.
Go Josh!



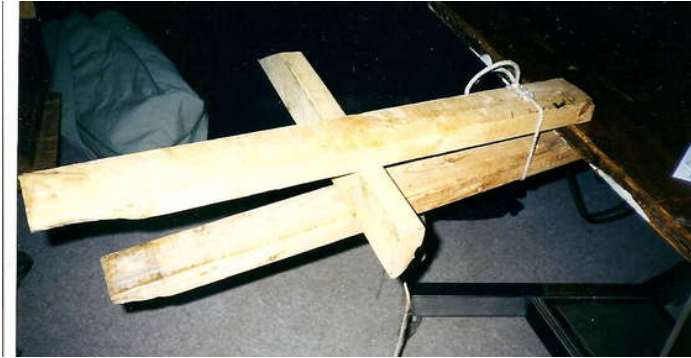
step 27: Instant C-Clamp Substitute

Inspired by some Norse clamps I saw in a museum exhibit somewhere,

This particular clamp is made from 2x4 scrap lumber.

If you need to clamp really hard use more turns of rope around the end.

Make it any size, use sticks and string sized to match your job.



step 28: Tool Bucket

I've spent my adult life working in shared workshops.

No one ever puts tools back where they came from.

If tools are kept in drawers, get ready to look in every drawer every time you need a tool.

It's good to keep all the tools in one place so you don't have to walk so far before sending the "who stole the tools" emails.

The tool bucket works well in a shared workshop.

Not for any solid theoretical reason, but in practice it works well.

You can fit lots of tools in a small space and move it to where the project is.

You can look at it from above and find the tool you need.



step 29: Machete or Knife Handle Made from Old Tires

The chunks of old tire are carved to shape with a knife and riveted in place with nails.

The ends of the nails are bent over and pounded flat.

Seen in Kilifi, Kenya.

I used these machetes to build an outrigger sailing canoe there.



step 30: Bow Made from Skis

Back in the dim pre-history of the mid nineties. My friend Rhett Creighton said he wanted a bow.

I lashed a pair of cross-country skis together with a bike innertube and tied loops in a kitesurf line for a bowstring and handed it to him. He liked it so much he used it in his archery class.

Here Analog Roz demonstrates the pull.



step 31: Hanging Monitor

Here's a monitor I modified so I could hang it over my desk. That way I got to use the area under it (my "desktop") as an actual work surface. Not much to it, I just drilled a few holes and fed chunks of cord through them to make loops to tie the hanging cords.



step 32: The World's Best Bicycle Storage System

Here it is, the best way to store bicycles in a shared space. They hang by hooking their seats over a horizontal pipe so they hang just overhead. If they don't have seats you can use a loop of rope or poke them over the end of the pipe.

We used to hang them over one of the water pipes, but the safety office didn't like that. So I used tapcon masonry screws to bolt a length of unistrut to the ceiling, and used chain to hang a different pipe from that.

This method gets them off the floor and out of the way, and lets you hang any number of bikes in a small space. It doesn't bend the wheels etc. etc. Assign your students to list all the marvelous ways this simple pipe is the greatest bike storage system in history.



step 33: Handy Clamp-on Leeboards

Want to sail a boat that doesn't have a centerboard trunk? Make one or a pair of these out of plywood and clamp them over the gunwales. These have a slot so they can fit over the oarlocks.

The leeboard pivots on the bolt so you can adjust it to balance the sail.

Spotted at Barnhill's Marina, Alameda California.



step 34: Kill Termites by Freezing

I water jet cut some shelf brackets from ash, then realized there were still live beetles in the wood.

I had fantasies that the insects would chew through them, dropping my axe collection on my head.

Then Jesse Hensel told me a trick his dad used. Just put the wood in the freezer and the insects will die.



step 35: Clean a Skull by Hanging it from a Tree

Steve and Nikki at Hidden Villa Ranch, California are trying out a skull cleaning method they heard of. Just hang it from a tree branch. The insects will do the rest.

This sheep skull is from an animal they butchered in November. Now in July of the next year it appears that a strong wind will finish the job.



step 36: Take Blink Free Photos

Some people (me) always close their eyes just as the picture is being taken.
The "redeye reduction" light from some cameras guarantees my eyes will be closed during the shot.

Chad Gagnon of Southern New England AAA takes a lot of photos for international drivers licenses.

His trick is to have the person blink a few times before taking the picture.
Or he says "blink" and takes the picture just as the person opens their eyes.
It worked like a charm on me.



step 37: Fix a Flat Motorcycle Tire

Alex Hornstein and Alison Murphy fix a flat on a small motorcycle.

It's a Honda TLR200 200cc trials bike. It has innertubes and doesn't have rim locks.

The process is exactly the same as fixing a flat on a bicycle. Read the instructions on the patch kit.

EXCEPT: everything is bigger and more work.

You have to lubricate the tire rim with soapy water.

The tire irons you use to pry it off the rim are the flat end (that's what it's for) of a lugwrench from an old car. Wrap a plastic bag around it if it seems like it will nick your rim or puNcture the innertube.

The other picture shows Alison checking the finished repair for leaks, using the waterjet's slack tub to look for bubbles.



step 38: How to Inflate a Tire that Won't Grip the Rim

Let's say you just got a great deal on a vehicle because it's got flat tires.

You could have gotten an even better deal on a car with no wheels at all, chickens living in it, and a tree growing through the roof, but that's for later.

If at all possible inflate the tires before attempting to drag the car anywhere.

You don't want to dislodge the tire from the rim.

Little cigarette-lighter-plug powered compressors work pretty well for this, or this homemade compressed air can

If you already dragged the tire off the rim, or the tires were already that way, you won't be able to inflate them. Here's how to get the tire seated back onto the rim.

First jack up the car so there's no force on the tire.

Then wrap a rope around the tire as shown, put a stick through the rope, and twist the stick until the tread of the tire is squished down all around the tire. That will force the edges of the tire outward onto the rim. If the tire still is too loose for the regular air chuck to fill it, you can use an airgun to blow air under the bead of the tire as shown here. This tire is now inflated.

At my tire shop they use a ratcheting cargo strap around the tire for this, and in tough cases they use really large quantities of goopy greaselike soap around the rim. If you ask for a handful of that stuff they'll be really happy to give it to you.



step 39: Boat Collage

Okay, this is a BIG trick.

Want your boat to be bigger?
Just saw your dinghy in half and fiberglass it to the sides of your existing boat!

spotted at Nelson's boatyard, Alameda California



step 40: Emergency Shutdown for Electric Vehicle

What's that extra lever in front of the gearshift?

That's the emergency disconnect! You use it to pry the main circuit breaker out.
The lever is a metal rod covered with thick plastic so it won't conduct.

This is in my 1972 Dodge Mitsubishi Colt EV, converted to electric twenty years ago.
I'm looking for information about the controller (PMC DCC 72C) and motor (model # 623-4BT)

let me know if you know anything.



step 41: Out of Toilet Paper? Use the Disposable Seat Covers

They're meant to be flushed down the toilet, and they do the job.



step 42: Duct Tape Couch

Couch getting ratty?

Cover it with duct tape!

sighted in Alameda, CA



step 43: "Utility" chair and stackable sawhorses

Here's a chair made from a utility company "sawhorse" and a pair of sawhorses stacked up.

The sawhorses were made from a different type of traffic barrier "sawhorse" and appear to use a removable crossbar at the top. I didn't see what the crossbars looked like.

Sighted at "The Shipyard" artist colony, Berkeley CA



step 44: Instant Mini Workbench

I don't know who made this, but it's really handy and gets a lot of use. Someone who worked in our shop needed it I guess and just made it one night. The next day there it was.

It's really quick to make. Four legs cut from 4x4 the same length, four plywood sides all the same, and a square top. Nail or screw it together. It's really strong and solid.

To make it slightly more useful, put the top on last and make it overhang the edge by a couple of inches so you can clamp stuff to it.



step 45: Instant Steambox For Bending Wood

I needed a bent rib for a boat I was fixing.

So I needed a steam box. I set one up in a few minutes and it worked well.

I set a big plastic sewer pipe on a table, propped up so it tipped toward the front.

I hung an electric teakettle from the front. I tied and draped a garbage bag over the front so the steam went up into the pipe. I plugged the other end of the pipe and draped blankets over it for insulation.

I put the sticks I wanted to bend up on cross sticks so the steam could get to all sides.

The water that condensed on the wood and the inside of the pipe ran back out the front and back into the teakettle.

The steaming part went well, but I wasn't so good with the bending. I wanted the wood too thick to bend around the radius I wanted. So I broke a lot of wood before I got the piece I needed. The second photo shows some of the failures.





step 46: "Flaming Chimney" Fire in Hollow Log

My cousin-in-law Anthony Fenner builds amazing fires at our family reunions.

After a bit of a fire is established he puts a hollow log vertically on top of it.

The rest of the fire burns away and that hollow log continues to blaze all by itself like a giant flare for a really long time.

It looks great, it's pretty safe, doesn't make much smoke, isn't bothered by wind, etc. etc.

Now we save hollow logs for special occasions just like the Fenners do.



step 47: Kenya Drinking Water

In Kenya people boil their water and then filter it before drinking it.
The ones who can afford to and care about their health do, anyway.

The details of method vary widely.
Some boil it on the stove and then pour it into a big stainless decanter thing with ceramic filter elements.
Or have their servants do it for them.

Others do it in a simpler, more energy efficient way with an electric teakettle with an immersed heating element that turns itself off after boiling.
Then after waiting for the water to cool they pour it into a Brita-type filter pitcher as seen here.

The sequence is represented by the vessels arranged right to left:

boil
cool
filter
bottle



step 48: Chained Mudflaps

This Dumptruck has mudflaps hung from chain.
That way when the box gets dumped, the mudflaps don't get folded over and broken.

They didn't use regular log chain because then the mudflaps would fly from side to side on the highway.

These chunks of chain came from a giant bicycle ridden by monsters.



step 49: Leaf and Sand Free Floating Water Intake for Micro-Hydro plant or Water Pump

Problem: Water intake can get plugged by sand or floating leaves.

Solution: Leaves tend to float on top the water and sand sinks. Position the water intake in the middle.

Problem: The water level changes.

Solution: Tie the water intake to a float that keeps it just below the surface of the water.

I saw this gadget while paddling in the Mississippi river near Brainerd Minnesota.

The owner pumps river water to water his yard and garden.

The intake pipe has a lot of little slots cut in it to admit water but exclude things that would clog or damage the pump.

The float is white plastic pipe cemented together with caps on the ends.

At the upstream end of the intake pipe is a chunk of black plastic polyethylene flexible pipe going up to the electric waterpump, positioned above the fifteen-year flood level.



step 50: Paddle a Windsurfer Board, Now It's a sit-on-top Kayak

Big old windsurfers that no-one wants anymore make great sit-on-top kayaks. Lots of fun, fast, and easy to use.

My cousins Donna and Eva demonstrate.

Donna's using an Aleutian-style paddle I made from a regular 2x4.

My Mom demonstrates high-stability technique so Eva can do gymnastics. Just hang your legs over the side and it suddenly gets a lot more stable.

To see even more handy tricks, check out [More Handy Tricks](#) and [Australian Handy Tricks](#) and [Guatemalan Handy Tricks](#) !

For a bunch of things that didn't work, check out [How Not To](#).



Related Instructables



Travel Utensil Wrap: Rockin Your Sustainability by shaloshsewseam



How to Make a Tye-Dye Shirt Using Grape Juice by Wasagi



Grape Juice! by oscarthompson



How to Clean Your Car Like a Pro. by BoondockSaint



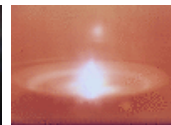
How to fix a classic American AM tabletop tube radio by ke4mcl



Chicken Salad Sandwich by noahw



Compact Home Bar by trivialandobvious



Electric sparks with grapes by gizmomaster

Comments

50 comments

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masterochicken says:

Those chains on those mudflaps look like forklift chains to me.

Nov 8, 2009. 2:59 PM [REPLY](#)



HughBothwell says:

Don't know as this is a *good* idea, but: I'd consider taking the faucet tube off (looks like you can undo the knurled nut at the back of the sink) and open (straighten) the bend by about 20 degrees.

Oct 28, 2009. 12:53 PM [REPLY](#)

Alternatively, find a second-hand shower head and a bit of tubing and make a custom hand-sprayer faucet. With a flow constrictor, could probably make it water-saving too.



HughBothwell says:

Oct 28, 2009. 12:34 PM [REPLY](#)

For smaller files, especially chainsaw files, a golfball works really well.

Drill a small hole straight through the ball, push the tang into it, then bounce the file on its end a couple of times (let the ball's inertia drive it on firmly).

I find this extra-handy as I live next to a golf-course ;-)



tadpole1 says:

Oct 10, 2009. 9:59 AM [REPLY](#)

I bet that corn cob is for "emergencies".



zygote90 says:

Mar 19, 2009. 6:42 PM [REPLY](#)

how do u get 1 bike down without all of them falling
or what if your bike is in the middle of the "tangle" of all the other bikes?
although a great idea



lazyme says:

Sep 29, 2009. 11:41 PM [REPLY](#)

It appears there's a track attached to the ceiling in the center of the photo.

A pipe is attached by a chain at each end. You pick up your bike and put the front edge of your seat over the hanging pipe and gravity makes the bike tilt forward, holding it up on the pipe. The bike hangs over the pipe by the seat like a clothes hanger over a rod. I prefer the pulley system you can buy for \$25. You just put the hooks over the rear of the seat and the handle bars and pull it up out of the way with the rope and tie it off. No lifting involved.



Whales says:

Sep 12, 2009. 5:11 AM [REPLY](#)

I used to see Janitors do this all the time at school, but nobody is juvenile enough to do it enough to create a problem about it.



NormMonkey says:

Aug 14, 2009. 6:31 AM [REPLY](#)

At our cottage the lake water is potable. Nonetheless, I use a pressure cooker to heat the water up to boiling for 5 min. Once it cools enough, I run it through a coffee filter to eliminate any little floaties.



Craigeroo says:

Aug 30, 2009. 12:01 PM [REPLY](#)

I think your filtering would be greatly improved with the addition of activated carbon to your coffee filter. Search "water filters" on Instructables for some great filtering suggestions.



Estwald says:

Oct 27, 2008. 6:14 PM [REPLY](#)

There are some nasties that merely bring the water to a boil is not enough to kill them. It is recommended to bring water to a boil and maintain it for 5 minutes.

For this reason "auto off" water boiling pots are not recommended for making water biological safe. Quite apparently they were fortunate enough that they didn't have these nasties in their area.



nakigara says:

Aug 27, 2009. 7:05 PM [REPLY](#)

Actually, this is a bit of misinformation. In most cases, simply bringing the water to boiling temperature will pretty much render it safe to drink. This link has some good info on it, along with explanations and a few other useful links: <http://www.survivaltopics.com/survival/how-long-do-you-need-to-boil-water/>

for an overview, the author states that both cooking foods and pasteurization of milk (and other liquids) happens at temperatures far below 212F

I think one of the main reasons there is so much different info about boiling times out there (bring to a boil, boil for 1/3/5/10/20 minutes, etc.) is because people want to 'make sure' so they just lengthen the given time, but this consumes a lot of fuel (and, if it's not widely available, water).



nakigara says:

Aug 27, 2009. 6:48 PM [REPLY](#)

I've heard of people doing this for makeshift forges and such (kilns maybe? I can't remember...) I think it was explained by the wood insulating it, allowing it to build up heat inside, and combined with the cylindrical shape, gets lots of air in there, leading to a really hot, clean, thorough burn. Something I'll have to try one of these days...



spyderman5413 says:

Aug 20, 2007. 7:51 PM [REPLY](#)

Put what you want to be cleaned in a bucket with an inch or two of water in it outside and maggots will do the cleaning in half the time!



killerjackalope says:

Aug 23, 2007. 12:12 PM [REPLY](#)

to get the dirt off and any minor remnants of flesh get a bucket put the skull in and add enough water to cover completely add to this fairy liquid (washing up liquid) and bleach stir that up a bit and leave for a week (putting a lid on is a good idea if you're likely to bump into it) the skull will come out a brilliant white



nakigara says:

Aug 27, 2009. 6:29 PM [REPLY](#)

I've heard that using bleach will cause the bone to continue deteriorating/decaying long after removal. I remember some of the skulls I used to have that were bleached would get all chalky and soft looking in areas later on.

I've heard of using borax to remove any oils/grease after boiling or using bugs, etc. And, I think I was told to try ammonia too, but that was quite a while ago, and I don't think I tried it...



porcupinemamma says:

Aug 26, 2009. 9:19 PM [REPLY](#)

You have made an excellent instructable!!! Wowzers. thanks for sharing



ttruu says:

Aug 16, 2009. 2:32 PM [REPLY](#)

tomatos also emit ethylene gas, so if your store bought fruit isn't ripe enough spread some tomatos in your fruit basket and enjoy!



Kathybear says:

Feb 3, 2007. 6:55 PM [REPLY](#)

The lady could just use the toe of her shoe - it works just as well to "erase" scuff marks - even if it isn't the shoe that made them. Just need a rubber sole - like the ones that usually make scuff marks. The toe doesn't scuff, but takes the scuff marks off! Honest!



MaggithaMay says:

Aug 16, 2009. 1:41 PM [REPLY](#)

Yeah, we had to do exactly that to remove the marks in my elementary school gym class. 30 six year-olds can get the job done pretty quickly!



Wolf_Demon says:

Aug 13, 2009. 5:37 PM [REPLY](#)

I thought the 1st photo was some bizarre optical illusion!



wdbass99 says:

Jul 20, 2009. 8:00 PM [REPLY](#)

needs more detail



cornboy3 says:

Jun 21, 2009. 3:08 PM [REPLY](#)

I wonder if you could hang it from the bottom?



shive55 says:

Jun 10, 2009. 3:18 PM [REPLY](#)

This works with bullet casings too



Lor says:

Jun 4, 2009. 11:34 AM [REPLY](#)

This is one of the greatest instructables ever. So much information is lost from generation to generation, etc. You're a genius and so generous to share. Thanks so much.



KingK says:

Jun 4, 2009. 6:53 AM [REPLY](#)

Yes, that's correct. It should always be P.P.S. It's actually Latin for Post scriptum, meaning "after text". So if you think of it like that, when adding P.S.(after text) onto another P.S.(after text) it would be like saying "after the after text, or Post Post Scriptum. (P.P.S). Still, I prefer to write P.S.S, because it sounds like "psst". As in, the sound you make when whispering. It's wrong, but it's just more fun that way.

Ex: Please go to the store to pickup a loaf of bread. Thanks!

P.S. We also need milk.

P.S.S. (psst) I almost forgot, please get some eggs as well.



beastieboy says:

May 30, 2009. 12:47 PM [REPLY](#)

urawaza!



METALBLADE says:

May 27, 2009. 9:59 AM [REPLY](#)

I'm a taxidermist, this works but it's extremely slow. Bugs are the best way to clean skulls but in the USA the flesh eating bugs are slow and sloppy. Even after five years you are likely to have bits of dried skin and meat on the skull that are a real bitch to get off. If you skin the head and cut off most of the meat first, bugs will do a great job with the leftovers, and a short soak in hydrogen peroxide will make the skull white and ready for display.

The fastest way to clean a skull is to flesh the head as best you can and then boil it. The remaining meat will fall off the bone, just like chicken. (It even smells similar!) This also sterilizes the skull and removes the smell.

After boiling, or "hot water maceration," the next fastest way is "cold water maceration." All you have to do in this method is put the skull in a bucket of water with no lid and the bacteria in the water will devour everything. The more flesh you cut off beforehand, the faster it goes. The drawback to this method is that it smells terrible, neighbors would not appreciate it. Also, all the teeth will fall out, so if you want a whole skull boiling would be a better option.



soapy says:
Wait, he answers his phone whilst windsurfing?!?!
What you help doing your possibility and with that?

Sep 2, 2007. 1:41 PM [REPLY](#)



roosta says:
it would be a bit inconvenient to have to pull over wouldn't it? lol. could hook up a hands free kit too.
just something off to the side, in the UK it's illegal to use a mobile phone whilst driving, yet it is perfectly legal to use it whilst on a motor cycle or a bicycle, even though you have to let go of the handle bars to do it! lol. i found it quite funny...
What you help doing your possibility and with that?

Oct 19, 2007. 10:06 AM [REPLY](#)



island_hackster says:
Blue-tooth headset with voice commands?
What you help doing your possibility and with that?

Apr 27, 2009. 5:23 AM [REPLY](#)



soapy says:
Not sure if anyone makes a salt-waterproof Bluetooth headset?
What you help doing your possibility and with that?

Apr 28, 2009. 12:37 AM [REPLY](#)

Also, I find quite often that mine will randomly dial someone as I climb over a fence or lift a bulky item, and bash the button against my head, then listen to the background noise and do what it thinks is best. Which is annoying! Especially when you are really involved in something.

Also, it's likely to fall off. You'd have to put it under something like a mask strap.



killerjackalope says:
ah wait I have multiple systems to avoid stopping on a bicycle while answering a phone if you're going downhill put your feet up on the top of the forks and steer (not on handle bar but where the forks are about to meet the headset.) wear a hat like beanie and use it as a hands free kit (warm and eliminates wind noise effectively keep the fone on loudspeaker and put it in your top pocket...
What you help doing your possibility and with that?

Dec 11, 2007. 5:17 AM [REPLY](#)

just ride one handed: note I had a big crash while riding one the phone but went through a hedge and remained on the phone, as i lay on the ground i lit a cigarette and tried to figure out how many parts of my body were bleeding and if i should cancel a date later that day the most embarrassing injury was the button shapes on my face for 2hours...



soapy says:
I was thinking more that you'd do what anyone sensible would do, and turn your phone off whilst off doing their extreme sport of choice. Personally, I flick it to mute, and wait until I want to return the call. It's called free will. :-)
What you help doing your possibility and with that?

Oct 20, 2007. 2:58 PM [REPLY](#)



roosta says:
it was a joke mate.... lol. where are you going to pull over in the sea in time to still answer the call? lol. i guess he takes it with him incase of emergencies.
What you help doing your possibility and with that?

Oct 20, 2007. 3:55 PM [REPLY](#)



soapy says:
"Help! I'm drowning! I'm in the sea!"
;-P
What you help doing your possibility and with that?

Oct 21, 2007. 5:35 AM [REPLY](#)



razordu30 says:
He might be too exhausted to speak, and have to resort to text messaging.
D00D, IM N D4 OCNZ dR0wn1n WTF!
What you help doing your possibility and with that?

Dec 12, 2007. 10:17 AM [REPLY](#)



imonsei says:
I think the idea was that he could set the phone to vibrate so he'd know if he got a call. then he could steer to shore and phone back. also for emergencies
What you help doing your possibility and with that?

Nov 24, 2007. 2:04 AM [REPLY](#)



soapy says:
"I refer the honourable imonsei to the answer I gave previously."
;-)
What you help doing your possibility and with that?

Dec 8, 2007. 9:55 AM [REPLY](#)



whiteynut says:
The chain used is called roller chain, made in a large range of sizes.
What you help doing your possibility and with that?

Apr 27, 2009. 7:40 AM [REPLY](#)



Ko0LaiD says:

Wow, That tire trick Really helped on my dremal's sanding thing. Thanks!

Apr 11, 2009. 1:57 PM [REPLY](#)



Xerillum says:

for the ant barrier, is that 80/20?

Mar 6, 2009. 4:07 PM [REPLY](#)



Molant says:

I did this yesterday and it's awesome; there's so much more room on my desk now! Just remember to take apart the monitor before drilling so you know what you're hitting.

Dec 19, 2008. 11:27 AM [REPLY](#)



egriff says:

I would sew them together so they don't go all over the place during the night.

Dec 18, 2008. 1:15 AM [REPLY](#)



egriff says:

and then I read that part haha

Dec 18, 2008. 1:36 AM [REPLY](#)



egriff says:

Wow that thing would be awesome with wider steps.

Dec 18, 2008. 1:12 AM [REPLY](#)



Farewell88s says:

In step 31 with hanging the monitor what kind of rope or wire did you use to hang the monitor from the ceiling or whatever?

Nov 18, 2008. 6:47 PM [REPLY](#)



patmac says:

I had a much smaller rug and I just used a long broom. You could also get down on your hands and knees and use a brush. I rinsed it with the hose really well and left it outside to dry by draping it over my truck bed which allowed air flow underneath. It worked great. Great Instructable.

Nov 7, 2008. 9:17 AM [REPLY](#)



Tekgno says:

I tried this ages ago with my office chair (going to try the car-seat cover idea next). It worked for a while, but eventually the edges of the tape started to lift up and attach to clothing. Wearing shorts, several times it decided to pluck leg hair out. Your mileage may vary.

Oct 28, 2008. 8:13 AM [REPLY](#)



danasmana says:

if you made these out of nicer wood and cut them like real nose clips they would make cool/funny decorations

Oct 1, 2008. 5:12 PM [REPLY](#)



tristan993 says:

those ants were nasty. good idea though

Sep 20, 2008. 9:02 AM [REPLY](#)

[view all 196 comments](#)