

By Loren Woerpel, Noc Bay Trading Company

HAND DRUM - 12 inch diameter

Hand drums vary from 12 inches in diameter to as much as 20 inches and some use two heads and some use one. These instructions use a 12 inch diameter rim that is 2 1/2 inches thick, using only one head.

The drum head is made from a piece of hide processed into rawhide. Tanned leather can not be used for drum heads for this type of drum. Rawhide becomes very soft when wet and very hard when dry.

Start with a circle of rawhide 14 inches in diameter. Slits must be made for lacing thong. Mark the positions of these slits, all which should be 1/2 inch from the outside edge of the circle. Using a yard stick, mark the lacing slits in quarters as in Figure 1. Divide each quarter into half and mark those as in Figure 2. The pairs of lacing slits should be 1/2 inch apart.

After all of the slits are marked with a pencil, cut them open using a 1/4 inch wood chisel. Tap each slit opening into the rawhide using a hammer on the chisel, with the rawhide laid over a scrap piece of wood.

You will need about 12 feet of 1/8 inch wide rawhide lacing. Soak this lacing in warm water until it is soft and pliable. One trick is to cut both ends into a point and hold these ends out of the water so that they stay stiff. That will make it easier to thread the lacing through the slits. Also soak the drum head so it too becomes very pliable. Usually this does not take as long as the lacing thong as it is thinner.

When both are ready, take from the water and drain off dripping water. Wipe off with a towel.

Start by lacing one end through one slit as in Figure 3. Pull the lacing through to about the mid point of the lacing thong. Now continue lacing with one side of the thong as in Figure 4. Pull the lacing so it begins to form the drum head on the rim. After lacing about 3 slits in that direction, begin lacing the other direction with the other thong end. Alternate until finished lacing all around as in Figure 5.

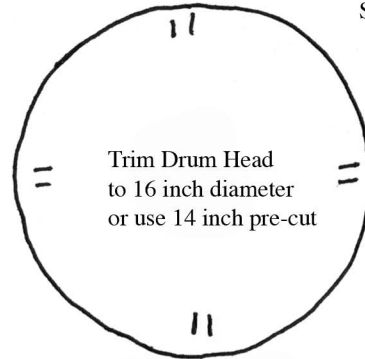


Figure 1

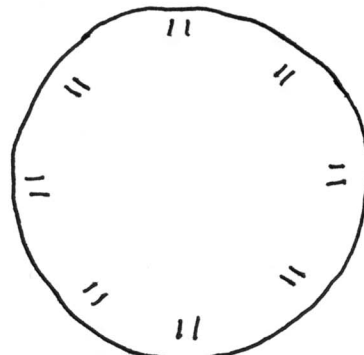


Figure 2

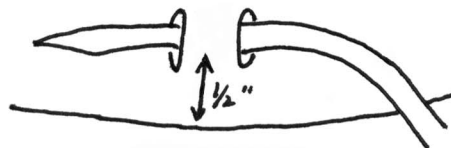


Figure 3

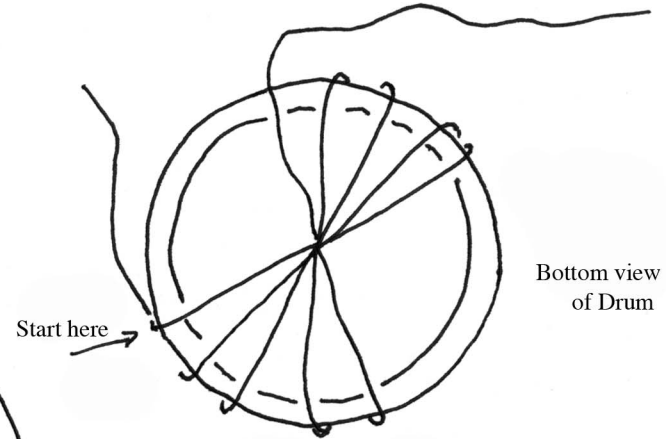


Figure 4

Bottom view
of Drum

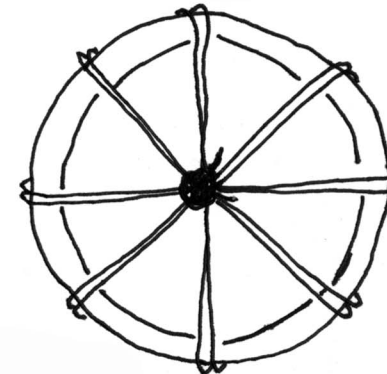


Figure 5

Bottom view
of Drum

Do not pull the lacing very tight. Both lacing and head will shrink quite a bit when it dries. When wet both head and lacing should be formed smoothly into the shape and look of a drum, but believe us, don't pull tight! This is the trick of drum making. If you discover you pulled it all too tight, you can always wet it down and do it again.

Finish by winding several turns around the center where all of the thong lacings cross. After doing this with both thong ends, tie the two ends on the inside side of these wrappings so it is hidden.

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