

How to create a Rawhide Rattle

Materials:

- Rawhide
- Sinew
- Pattern of your choosing (shape and size)
- Blunt point needle (if you punch holes for sewing)
- Glover's needle (if you don't pre-punch holes)
- Clean sand
- Small funnel
- Awl
- Dowel for packing sand into rattle head
- Stick for handle (I prefer natural handle of wood or you can use a dowel)
- Scissors
- Beads, small pebbles, seeds or whatever you wish to put into your rattle to make it rattle.
- Sharpie marker (fine point)
- Elmer's glue
- Polyurethane

Directions:

- Create your pattern. (I use plastic or cardboard to create a permanent pattern)
- Trace your pattern on the backside of the rawhide, flip the pattern over and trace a second piece. Now you have both halves of the rattle head and they will match. USE A SHARPIE.
- Measure around the edges $\frac{1}{4}$ " apart with dots for holes to sew together. Come in $\frac{1}{8}$ of an inch from the edge. If you are too close to the edge the rawhide may rip through when you are sewing or packing with sand.
- Once you have your pattern drawn and the hole spacing marked, soak the rawhide overnight or until flexible enough to cut, punch holes and sew together. Make sure it's soft and pliable.
- If you choose to punch your holes now, do so and begin sewing right away. Begin sewing at the edge of the rawhide where the handle fits into the rattle head. If you choose not to punch your own holes, use a glover's needle and begin sewing.
- Make your stitched snug but don't pull so tight you rip the rawhide.
- Once the piece is sewn together you will now begin to pack with sand.
- I use a small funnel to fill with sand. So, begin to fill the rattle head with sand a little at a time. Each time you fill, remove the funnel and use the dowel to pack the sand. Fill and pack until the

entire rattle head is stretched out, rounded and all stitches snug. The rattle head should be firm and hard with packed sand.

- Once the head is packed place the handle into the end and snug up the long tail of sinew by wrapping it around the rattle end and the handle. I always put the handle into the stem of the rattle so as it dries it makes a nice fit for rattle head and handle.
- Set aside to dry. This will usually take between a day or three depending on the thickness of your rawhide.
- Once the rattle is dry, remove the handle and tap out the sand back into your container.
- After all sand is removed use your awl to go under the stitched and tighten them up. Begin where you first started to sew it together.
- Once you have all stitches tightened you are now ready to fill your rattle head with your choice of sound. (my personal preference is broken beads, odd size beads, misshapen beads or beads that have no place in beadwork. All beads are beautiful and everything has a purpose)
- Once your sound is in your rattle, trim up the sinew to about two inches and tuck it in the rattle end when you return the stick handle. I also add just a touch of Elmer's glue at the entrance of the rattle before I put the handle in.
- You are now finished and may decorate your rattle any way you wish.

One more thing I do: I give my rattles a light coat of polyurethane to seal the rawhide from dampness. If you choose to paint your rattle, use the poly after painting to also help seal the paint.

Do not let your rattle get wet otherwise it will soften and reshape itself as it dries.

Have fun!

Joyce

P.S. You have just created a family heirloom.

Like I say in my live workshops, "this is how I do it, if you come up with a way that works better for you, go for it". Happy creating.