

## Make your own whistle

by [Tool Using Animal](#) on March 13, 2008

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**Author: Tool Using Animal**

I'm a graduate of the University of Central Florida with a degree in Mechanical Engineering, I am currently working on my Master's. Otherwise, I enjoy building things, designing the things I'm going to build, and fishing.

**Intro: Make your own whistle**

How to make your own whistle. With this instructable we can free America from it's dependence on foreign made whistles.



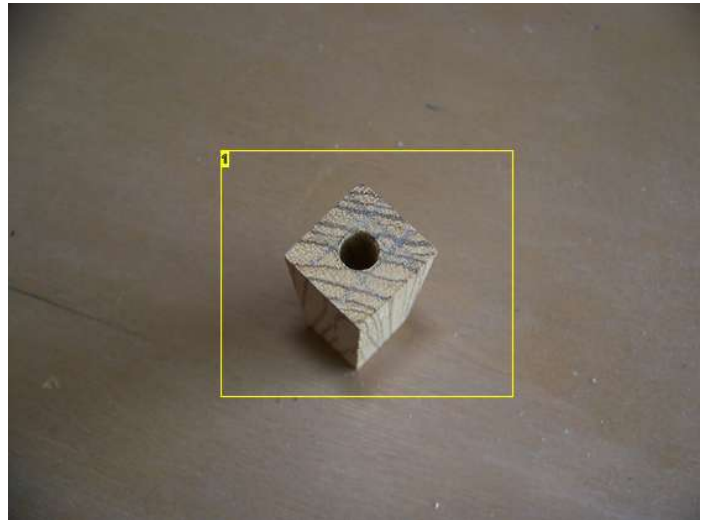
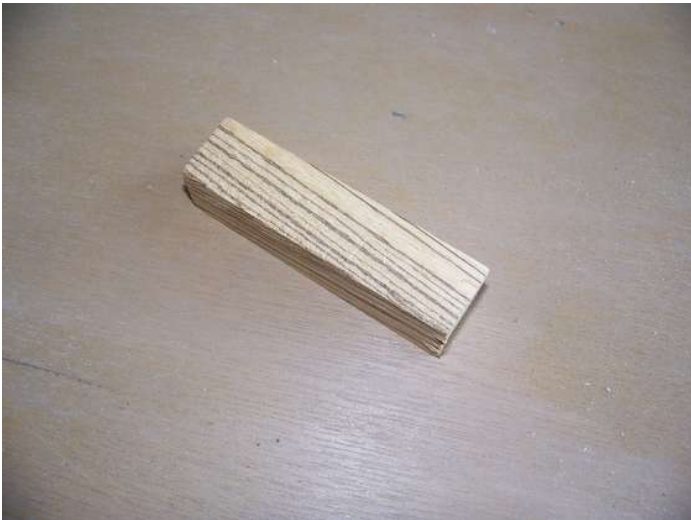
**Step 1: Get wood**

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**

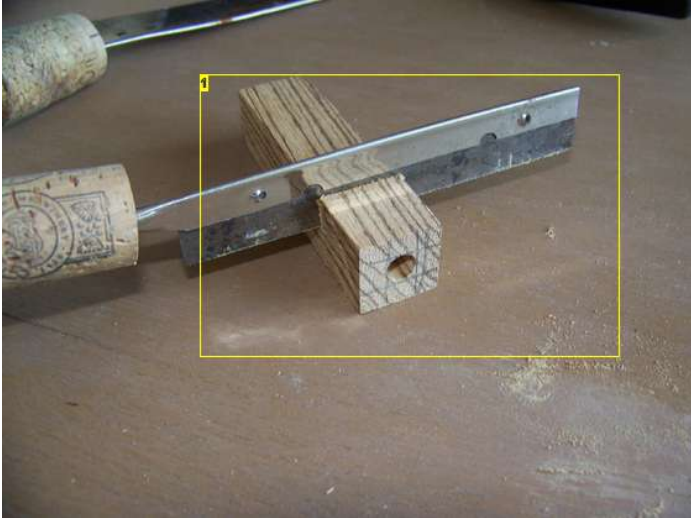
1. Dead solid perfect...ish

## 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.

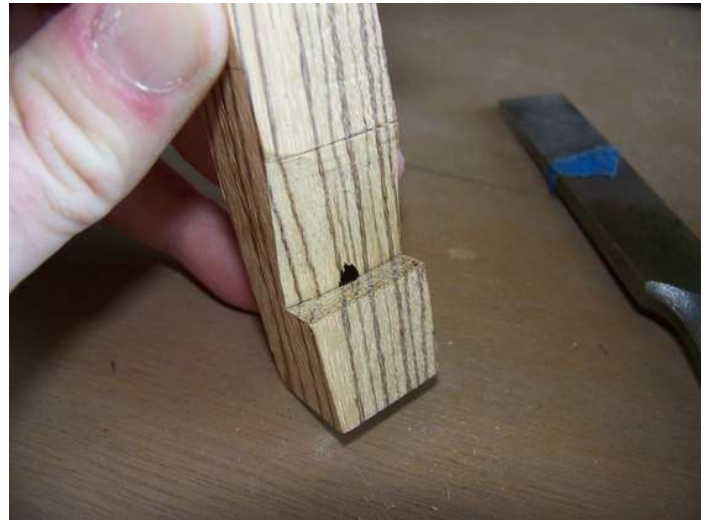
Start by using a razor saw to make a transverse cut approx one inch from the drilled end. Cut down as squarely as possible. Stop when the blade of the saw extends approx 1/8th of an inch into the hole.

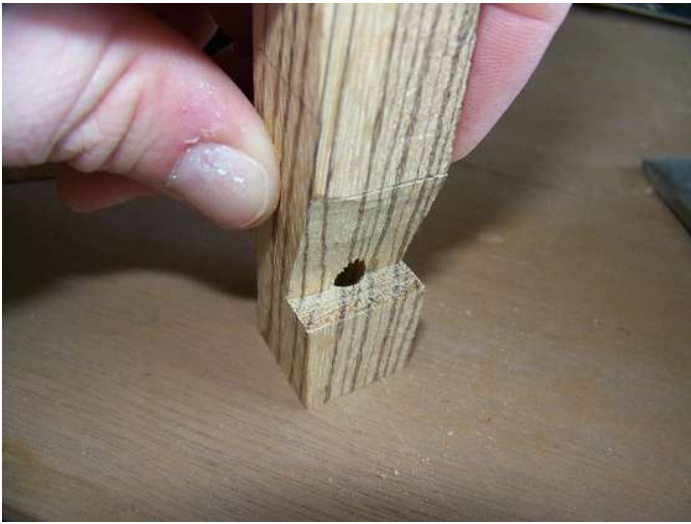
Now using a chisel (mine are muy dull), cut towards the slot you just cut, making about a thirty degree incline, make the cut as smooth as possible. Stop when the you have sliced into the bore hole about an 1/8th of an inch.



### Image Notes

1. Waxing your saw makes this easy



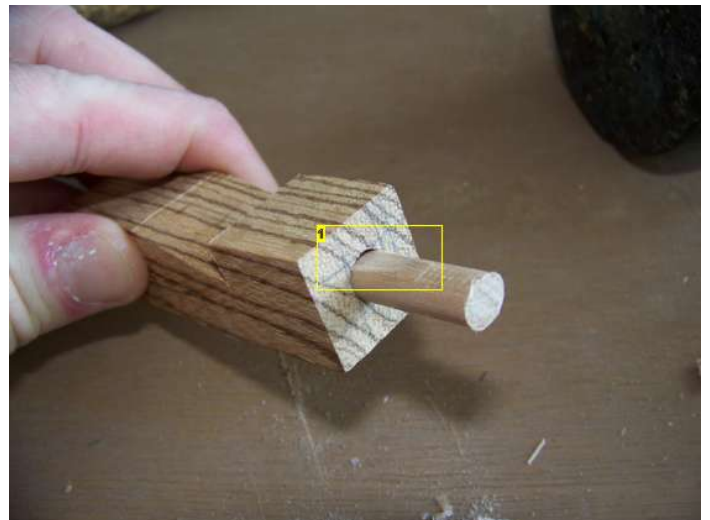
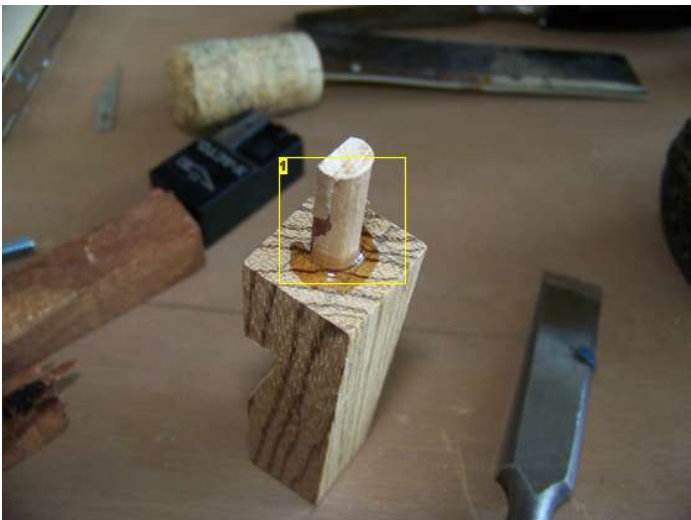


### Step 3: Fipple and windway

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.

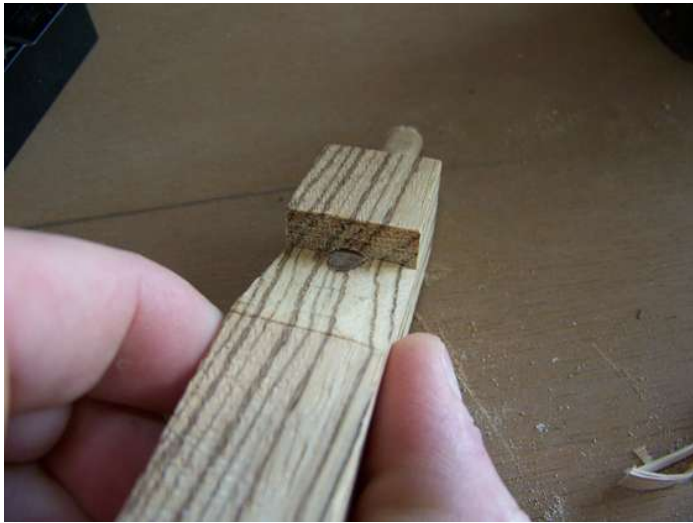
Now what you've been waiting for, blow your whistle, sound okay? Great, if not, back out the fipple, or push it in a little farther, still bad? make another fipple, try two or three, see which sounds best. A pair of vise grips makes adjustment easy.

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

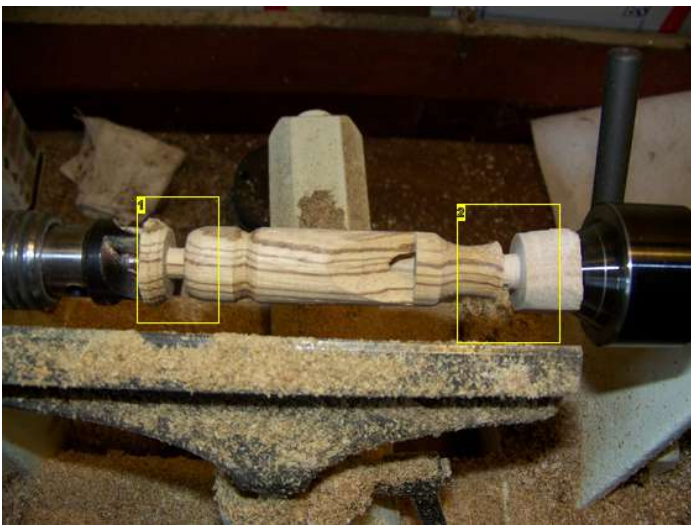


**Step 6: Finally**

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**



**Ressikan Flute**  
by Lt. Rooney



**Wood Shop Projects**  
(Photos) by MadMechanicMike



**Wood Lathe Upgrades. pt 3, friction plate.** by Dr Qui



**Small scale home production** by Omegablood



**Wood Lathe attachments & improvements pt 1, low buget sanding table.** by Dr Qui




**Wooden Ball Bearing** by kcedgerton

## Comments

50 comments [Add Comment](#)

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 **Darksabre** says: Feb 26, 2011. 1:44 PM [REPLY](#)  
I'm sorry, Maybe this has already been asked - or maybe you already pointed this out - But what is the wood you are using for this project? The grain is fantastic!! Great Instructable :D !!!

---

 **Tool Using Animal** says: Feb 26, 2011. 1:55 PM [REPLY](#)  
It's Zebrawood.


---

 **thepelton** says: Aug 24, 2010. 4:07 PM [REPLY](#)  
One thing you could do if you don't want a square whistle is to use a windfall piece of wood. Elm and Paulownia cure nicely without a lot of cracking. A good rule of thumb is to set it aside for one year for ever inch of diameter. A whistle size piece would be useable in about half a year. I am sure that some other people could make suggestions as well. Well...?

---

 **iamlopainus** says: Sep 24, 2009. 2:19 PM [REPLY](#)  
MY WHISTLE ISN'T WORKING!!!


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 **thepelton** says: Aug 23, 2010. 11:39 AM [REPLY](#)  
One problem may be that the angle isn't sharp enough. The wedge of wood that the air blows onto( = /) has to be very sharp. Look at and study a finished, working wooden whistle to get it right. I would say it has to be about 22 degrees to work well.

---

 **iamlopainus** says: Aug 23, 2010. 2:32 PM [REPLY](#)  
thanks

---

 **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!


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 **Mr. BeanyMvBeanBean** says: Mar 26, 2008. 8:49 AM [REPLY](#)  
just use a dowel instead of the rectangular piece.

---

 **thepelton** says: Aug 23, 2010. 11:43 AM [REPLY](#)  
I have made whistles in wood with a round hole, and a piece of dowel for the mouthpiece that is sanded so that it lets a little air in by a hole that looks about like a crescent moon or fingernail clipping.


---

 **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 carefull! 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

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**ninjaimasta** says:  
sorta... lol

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



**thepelton** says:

Aug 23, 2010. 11:32 AM [REPLY](#)

When I make small items that could end up in the mouth, such as a whistle, I make sure that I know what the wood is, and that it isn't a variety that could cause someone a rash from contact. In making whistles, I would avoid the entire genus of Dalbergia (Rosewood, Tulipwood, Cocobolo) for that reason. Tulip poplar (Liriodendron Tulipifera) is not related and would probably work quite well for the use. It was preferred by the pioneers for making wooden spoons because it had almost no chemicals that could impart a flavor to whatever it contacted.



**yoyology** says:

Jun 8, 2010. 9:02 PM [REPLY](#)

Nice work!

Both my grandfathers were inveterate tinkerers, and would have loved Instructables. My mom's dad made me a willow whistle one summer, and your 'ible reminded me of that. User "shoemaker" shows you how to make one [here](#) .

I leave you with this thought:

I made a wooden whistle, but it wood'n whistle.  
I made a steel whistle, but it steel wood'n whistle.  
I made a tin whistle , and now I tin whistle!



**joeyjo** says:

Mar 15, 2010. 12:27 PM [REPLY](#)

Nice little project. I do pay attention to wood toxicity because every so often a student has a weird reaction to some woods...nothing serious...which is why I refer to the toxicity chart.



**kmelon** says:

Feb 24, 2010. 10:36 PM [REPLY](#)

cheers man mine works really well. if i say triple the scale will it give out a deeper sound like a trains whistle?



**Knyte7** says:

Nov 28, 2009. 8:09 PM [REPLY](#)

Thanks for the great instructable. Clear and complete. I've made whistles in the past, but with only limited success. Using my lathe and these instructions should be a big upgrade.



**luke11** says:

Apr 3, 2009. 3:04 PM [REPLY](#)

Ok i've tried this several times but every time my whistle doesn't 'whistle'. No sound. Can you tell me what i might be doing wrong? Thanks



**Tool Using Animal** says:

Apr 3, 2009. 4:07 PM [REPLY](#)

COuld you post some pix?



**SinAmos** says:

Apr 3, 2009. 3:38 PM [REPLY](#)

Sweet.



**kaptank\_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:

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.

May 19, 2008. 8:39 PM [REPLY](#)



**martymunch** says:

i might try the slide whistle today. I'll get back to you on that. thanks for the info.

May 17, 2008. 11:42 AM [REPLY](#)



**peguiono** says:

thank you i made 2 whistles this weekend the both work great!! thank you

May 18, 2008. 3:48 PM [REPLY](#)



**MadMechanicMike** says:

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.

Apr 3, 2008. 1:01 PM [REPLY](#)



**MadMechanicMike** says:

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.

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



**Mr. BeanyMvBeanBean** says:

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

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



**DIYmaster** says:

Wow, this is amazing!!! Nice work!

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



**Clayton H.** says:

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

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



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

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

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 **LinuxH4x0r** says: Mar 15, 2008. 10:39 AM [REPLY](#)  
Mine overheats only if I stall it. Put it in the freezer for 15 mins and it will be fine.

---

 **LinuxH4x0r** says: Mar 13, 2008. 6:22 PM [REPLY](#)  
Nice! I never knew it was so easy. Great job!


---

 **LinuxH4x0r** says: Mar 13, 2008. 7:43 PM [REPLY](#)  
I failed at making the whistle, but it inspired me to finally use my drill press as a lathe.


---

 **Tool Using Animal** says: Mar 13, 2008. 8:45 PM [REPLY](#)  
What went wrong?, maybe we can figure it out.


---

 **LinuxH4x0r** says: Mar 13, 2008. 8:47 PM [REPLY](#)  
The way I cut it. I think it was too deep. What were the approximate dimensions of yours?

---

 **Tool Using Animal** says: Mar 15, 2008. 9:28 AM [REPLY](#)  
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.

---

 **LinuxH4x0r** says: Mar 15, 2008. 10:38 AM [REPLY](#)  
Thanks! I might try it again later (maybe tomorrow)

---

 **Yudo** says: Mar 14, 2008. 3:24 PM [REPLY](#)  
that is cool!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!sighk.

---

 **Charger\_06** says: Mar 14, 2008. 3:01 PM [REPLY](#)  
nice instructable +1

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 **rizkyw** says: Mar 14, 2008. 2:22 PM [REPLY](#)  
Is there really such a thing as a 'blood whistle'? :O

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