

Southern Turners Project Sheet

Baby's Rattle



This project explains how to make a baby's rattle. Ensure all safety equipment is used appropriately.

Before starting this project think about the end user – the child that uses this rattle is not capable of thinking about:

- Wood toxicity – if in any doubt about the species don't use it. This is not a project for that nice piece of unknown wood you have had in the shed for years.
- Finish toxicity – if in doubt leave it unfinished
- Pinch points (if you intend to pierce the body of the rattle the holes must be small enough that the rattle medium cannot escape and that small fingers cannot fit in the holes)
- Sharp edges – not good for the child or others. Not a project for crisp detail.
- Fragility of the rattle – avoid splintery timbers or ones that have little shear strength. One of the reasons I don't like captive rings on baby's rattles; I consider them to fragile for safe use by children.
- Weight of the rattle (not good if it can be used as a weighty club against siblings or others)

YOU **must** do this thinking for them.



Select a spindle blank approximately 220 mm long and 50-60 mm square. Care must be taken in the selection of the timber species as it is almost certain that the rattle will be chewed on.

Mount between centres or in a scroll chuck and live centre.

The blank in the photo is Kauri Pine from an old wine vat so is definitely food safe.



Use a roughing gouge to reduce the blank to a cylinder.

Create a tenon on the tailstock end of the blank to suit your scroll chuck.



Part off a section approximately 50 mm long. Mount in your scroll chuck and create a jointing tenon before hollowing out the interior.

Take note and record the depth and width of your hollow.



Mount the main section in your scroll chuck. Create the other half of your joint – note: go slowly to create a press fit, you do not want the joint to be sloppy or so tight that you have difficulty separating the sections.

Hollow out the blank to match the other piece.



Shape the rattle section to match your hollow or design of your choice. Remember to make the walls thin enough that the sound will transmit through them without being so thin that they are likely to break.

Commence shaping the handle. Remember that the user will have small hands but the handle must not be fragile. No sharp edges please.



Select your rattle medium. The photo shows five wooden beads as the medium. Other combinations of beads were trialled to determine the best 'rattle'.

The internet also shows pasta in the form of macaroni being used as the rattle medium, but this may break down in a relatively short period of time.



Once you are satisfied with the sound ensure your medium is in the hollow, apply glue to your joint and allow to dry completely before continuing.

Shape the head of the rattle bearing in mind the shape of the hollow; you don't want to turn through the sides at this or any other time.



Use a bead or some other feature to disguise the joint line.

Here the joint is under the burnt line closest to the headstock. It is difficult to determine this even with close inspection as the grain aligns nicely.



Part off and hand sand the top of the handle.

The completed rattle is shown in the adjacent photo.

No finish has been applied to this piece nor is intended to be at any time in the future.