# How to make a diddley bow

Not to be confused with how to make Bo Diddley

 As Bo was a one of a kind as all humas are, and even though he is no longer with us his music live son and if you want to lsiten to some you can follow this line to hear one of his biggest hits https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=17W7496230Y

## What is a diddley bow

The **diddley bow** is a single-stringed American instrument which influenced the development of the blues sound. It is said that the first diddley bows where made by hammering nails into the door frame of the shacks the slaves in the Deep South used to live in. Then a piece of bailing wire would be stretched between these nails and a bottle or can would be used to create a bridge. It consists of a single string of baling wire tensioned between two nails on a board over a glass bottle, which is used both as a bridge and as a means to magnify the instrument's sound.

It was traditionally considered a starter or children's instrument in the Deep South, especially in the African American community and is rarely heard outside the rural South, but it may have been influenced to some degree by West African instruments.

## Materials required

* Tin can ( Steel Tomato Cans work well)
* A piece of wood about 1 meter long ( a hardwood is best)
* A guitar string ( or a piece of bailing wire)
* A tuning peg ( or a nail)
* Broken pair of headphones ( or a piezo disk)
* glue, sticky tape ( duct tape) or blue tac.
* ¼ inch jack plug with lead.
* Electrical tape.
* Cable connector.

## Tools Required

* Hand Drill ( either manual bit and brace or electric) and bits
* Screwdriver ( either manual or electric)
* Hammer ( if using a nail)
* Soldering iron and solder

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## Instructions

1. Take your piece of wood and drill a hole at one end to allow a guitar string to pass through but small enough that the end ball/ring does not. About 1-1.5 mm in size depending on your guitar string.
2. Drill a hole at the other end wide enough to allow the machine head to pass through and close enough to the edge to allow the machine head to be turned.
3. Screw the machine head in place, you may need to drill pilot holes
4. Take the head phones and remove one of the speaker( if possible keep the wires attached)
5. Attach this to the base of the can using either glue, sticky tape (duct tape) or blue tac.
6. Now place the tin can on the piece of wood and then place the string over the top of it.
7. Tension the sting holding the tin in place at one end until it makes a nice twang when plucked.
8. The connect the wires from the headphone speaker to the wires form the jack plug

Now you are ready to plug into an amp and wail. Enjoy upsetting your parents.

### http://www.scholastic.com/parents/sites/default/files/field_asset_image/Diddley%20Bow%201.jpgAlternative methods

1. Hammer two nails one at each end of the piece of wood.
2. Tie a piece of bailing wire to one nail and then pull it reasonably taut
3. Then force your can under the string at one end
   * You don’t need to add the pickup if you just want to play it as an acoustic instrument
   * You can use a piezo disk instead of a speaker from a broken pair of headphones
   * You can wind your own pickup using a magnet and copper wire. ( see how to do this in another project coming soon)

Now you have a diddley bow but how do you play it well you will need something to use as a slide.

Options include

* A piece of copper or other pipe
* A glass bottle
* A socket from a socket set
* The back of a butter knife.

In fact anything that you can use to lay on the string to change its length as you twang.

See this video of Sea Sick Steve playing the diddley bow for inspiration

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JPOMYHKWGTE