

How to Make a Diddley Bow

By [Doctor Oakroot](#)

The diddley bow is a traditional one string instrument fundamental to the early blues.

You can easily make a diddley bow using a cardboard cigar box, a guitar tuner, and a few other things.

Here's what you need:

Tools	Parts
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Drill with small bits for screw starters plus 3/8" bit.• Screw driver.• Files and sandpaper for shaping the neck (optional)• Serrated kitchen knife or small saw (X-acto with saw blade).• Super glue or other hi-tech glue. (E-6000, a jewelry glue available at hobby stores, works well).	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Cardboard cigar box• Guitar tuner with small screws for mounting• A 3 foot 1"x 2" poplar project board (available at Home Depot, Lowes, etc. (the stick)• 2 screws (large, for attaching neck)• 1 small diameter 2" bolt (for the nut). May substitute a 1/8" dowel.• 1 large eye bolt (for the bridge). May substitute a 3/8" dowel.• A string. Fishing line works well. Music wire is available at hardware stores. Or you can just use a guitar string.• A small washer (to tie the string to).

Now just follow the figures below:

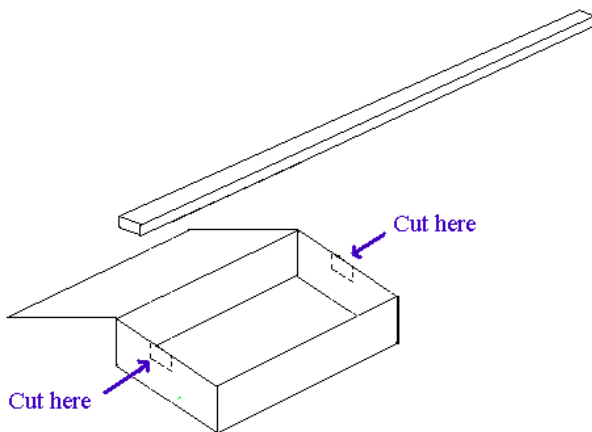


Figure 1. Open the lid of the box and make a rectangular cut at each end matching the size and shape of the cross section of your stick. With a cardboard cigar box you can make these cuts with a serrated kitchen knife.

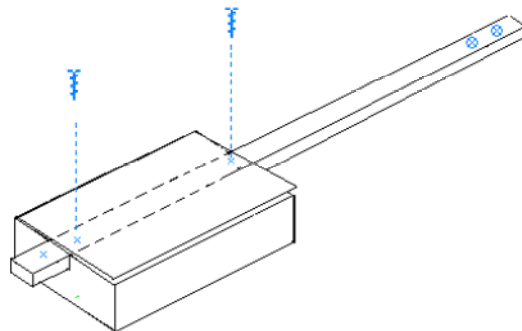


Figure 2. Fit the stick into the holes cut in figure 1 as shown. Close the lid over it.

Drill small holes at the three spots marked X. Insert screws as shown and attach the lid to the stick.

Drill holes at the two spots marked ⊗. Holes should be 5/16" or 3/8" to match the shaft of the guitar tuner.

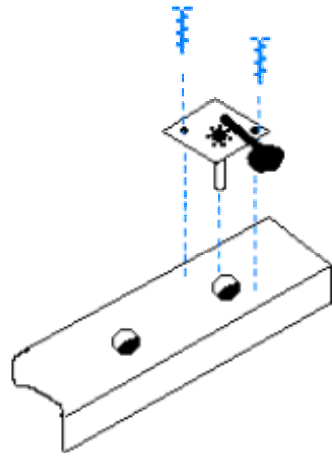


Figure 3. Install guitar tuner as shown, drilling holes for screws as needed. Note that tuner post goes down (opposite of a normal guitar installation).

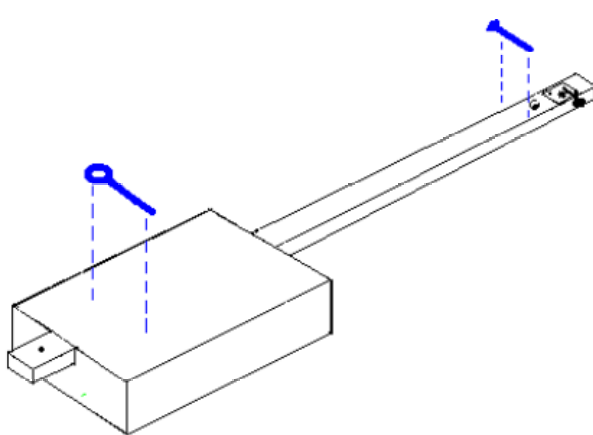


Figure 4. Super glue a small bolt for the nut and place a large eye bolt for the bridge as shown. 1/8" and 3/8" dowels may be substituted for the bolts. The bridge may be glued, but this is unnecessary since the string will hold the bridge in place.

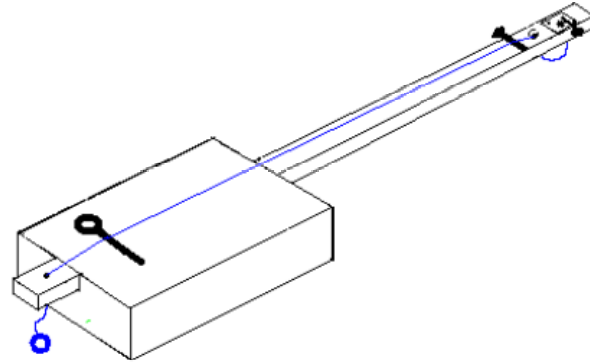


Figure 5. Tie the string to a small washer and thread as shown, pulling the string tight. Attach the string to the tuner post and tighten until it makes a clear tone when plucked.

Drill two 3/8" sound holes or four 1/4" sound holes in the top of the box (but not through stick).