

Wooden weapons

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31 October 2006
version 0.5

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In many martial arts wooden weapons are used to train with, either as a real weapon or as a safe alternative for too dangerous sharp metal weapons. This article discusses how to select a wooden weapon, how to personalize it and how to maintain it properly so as to keep it in sound condition. It will not discuss any etiquette or techniques for handling weapons, only the practical bare essentials for caring for your wooden weapon. Over the years you will develop a long lasting respectful relation with your weapons in which they will give you skills, knowledge and wisdom.

Selecting

A wooden weapon can be obtained as a gift but it is also possible to buy one yourself. When selecting a wooden weapon pay attention to the following features:

- wood is of a good quality like white oak
- object is straight and has no cracks
- veins run along the weapon and not across
- veins in the wood are dense and the wood has no knots
- varnish on the wood is transparent
- weapon feels good when trying some basic techniques

Of course these will all have to be weighted according to your personal wants and to what is available in the store. But, be critical and if you don't like any of the weapons on offer, simply look in another store. As said before, you will develop a relation with the weapon, so make sure it feels good. Also tend to go for the heavier weapon of the collection you are selecting from.

Impregnation

After a wooden weapon has been obtained it is important to impregnate it with linseed oil. This will prevent the wood from splitting or bending due to weather changes, but will still allow it to breath. Follow the next instructions to ensure your wooden weapons have a healthy life. And please do this before you use the weapon because too many dents will make sanding the wood more difficult.

Materials:

- 1 fine sandpaper, number P 100
- 2 finer sandpaper number P 220
- 3 cold pressed linseed oil (you will not need a lot, perhaps this could be purchased by your group)

Procedure:

- 1 Unpack the new wooden weapon. Remove the protecting plastic covers and carefully remove any sticking labels. Glue residue left behind by these labels can be removed carefully with a bit of colourless nail polish remover.
- 2 Remove the protecting synthetic varnish from the wood with fine sandpaper number 100. Only remove the varnish and leave the wood as much as possible intact, pay extra attention not to round off the edges. When the wood is treated with a water base varnish, most of the varnish will come off after cleaning the wood with a wet cloth or by having water running over it. This will save a lot of time consuming sanding, because some varnish sand dust might quickly clog the sandpaper.
- 3 Sand the wood again with a finer sandpaper number 220.
- 4 Make the entire wood wet with water and leave it to dry slowly overnight in a moist environment like a shower. This will make the outside fibres of the curb away from the surface which can be sanded again.
- 5 When the wood is dry, sand it again with the finer sandpaper number 220. Remove all the sand dust with a wet cloth.
- 6 Heat a cup with half a centimetre of linseed oil so it becomes more fluid. This can be done in a bain-marie or with a microwave, with the latter be careful not to overheat the oil.
- 7 Dip a piece of toilet paper in the oil and impregnate the whole weapon with the oil. The wood can be left to dry resting on two pens. This step should be repeated at least two times. When doing this you might as well impregnate wooden weapons you already have which have become a bit dry.

8 After the last impregnation and drying, remove all excess oil with a piece of toilet paper and store the wooden weapon in the weapon bag.



Figure 1: Heat a cup with linseed oil in a bain-marie.

For very deep and high quality impregnation, one can fill a PVC pipe with linseed oil and leave the wood in there for a considerable number of days. Use a 5 cm in diameter and 140 cm long PVC pipe sealed on one side with a correctly glued PVC pipe ending. The top side can be closed with a rigid plastic bag and strong elastic bands. Now you can safely turn the entire pipe filled with oil and wood upside down and grab the wood with the plastic bag. Turn the pipe back upright and lift out the wood with the plastic bag. Usually these PVC pipes come in lengths of 200 cm, so the 60 cm left can be used in the same way for smaller wooden weapons.

This whole process will make you more familiar with the details and character of your wooden weapon. Now your wooden weapon is ready for use.

Brandmarking

This article will describe a possible way to personalise wooden weapons. It will focus on making your wooden weapon easily recognisable during a training among lots of very similar wooden weapons.

Materials:



Figure 2: Materials which are needed.

- metal wire (for example a big paperclip)
- small plastic container (for storing the resulting brandmark template)

Procedure:

Use the small plastic container to store the brandmark template. Because it has been heated and used to burn wood it will be likely to leave black stains if you don't store it in a container for storage.

Maintenance

Now your wooden weapons have been impregnated and brandmarked, it is important to store them in a closed weapons bag. This will protect it from dust



Figure 3: Tools which are needed.

and from rapid climate changes which might bend or split the wood. In most countries it is also required by law to transport your wooden weapons in a closed weapon bag. To prevent the wood from drying out, you can, during a training, moisturise it by applying its own sweat to the wood.

As mentioned before, it is always possible to impregnate your weapons again when you think they are becoming too dry. Before doing so, you can clean the already impregnated wood with a wet cloth. However, do not sand the wood again, perhaps only to remove dangerous splinters. It is possible that deep dents with broken fibers can arise as a result of intense practise. Usually the best way to repair this, is to hammer the broken fibers into the wood with another stronger wooden weapon. This will make to wood more compact and prevent further deterioration. Optionally you can impregnate that area or the entire wood again.

Take good care of your weapons because they will bring you skills, knowledge and wisdom. Build a good relationship with them and use them to promote

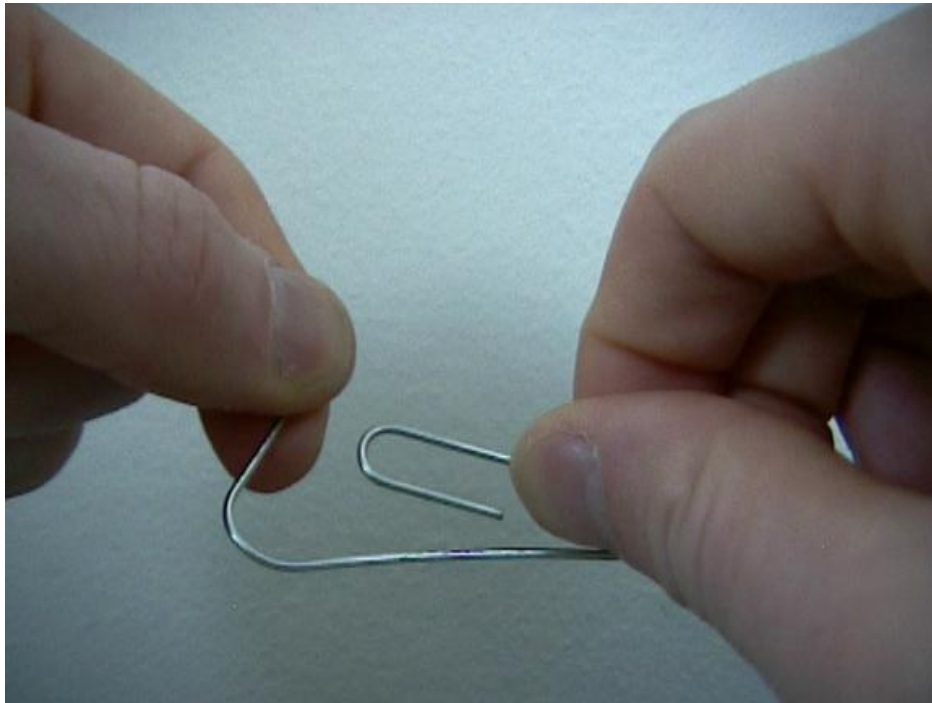


Figure 4: Unfold the paperclip so it can be used as a wire.

peace and freedom.



Figure 5: Fold the paperclip into a personal landmark, try to be as unique and creative as possible.

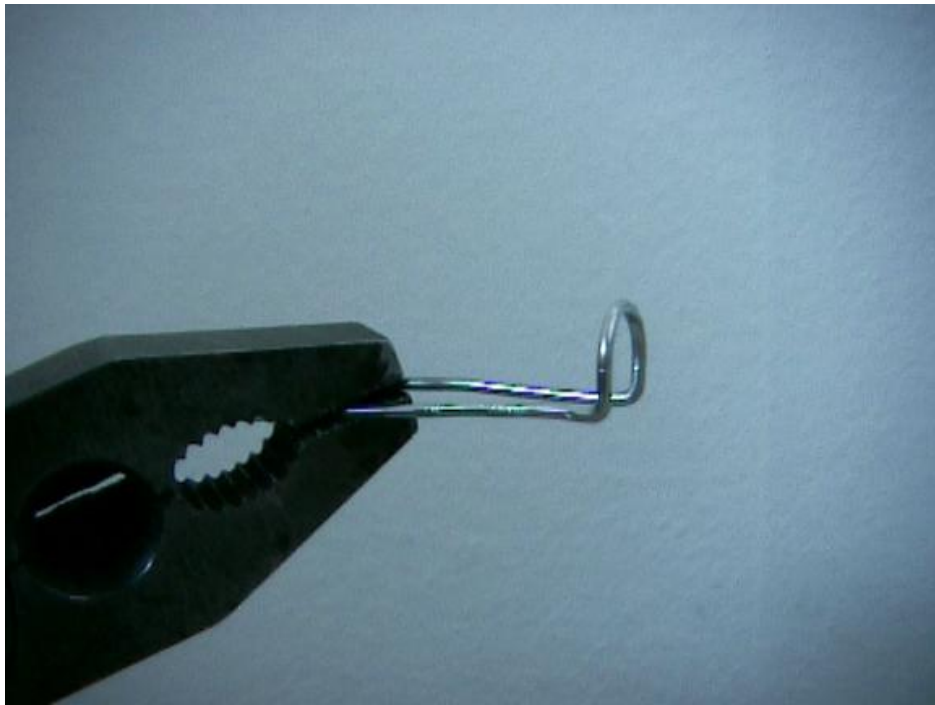


Figure 6: Make sure the resulting landmark template can be held by a pair of pliers.

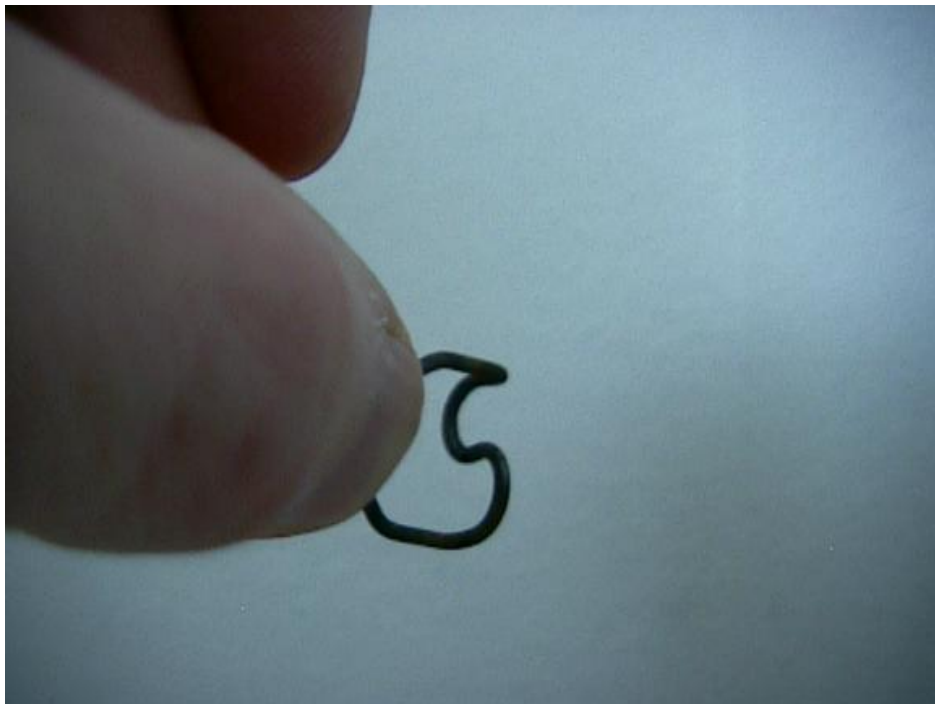


Figure 7: Example landmark for character 'S' seen from above.



Figure 8: Example landmark for character 'S' seen from below in mirror view.



Figure 9: Heat the landmark template while holding it with a pair of pliers until it is red hot.



Figure 10: The end result is a branded wooden weapon.