

THE LEARNING CIRCLE

by Loren Woerpel, Noc Bay Trading Company

MEN'S BREASTPLATE

The amount of materials needed will depend on the size breastplate being made. Variations can be made by adding more beads to the design, making patterns with colored beads, lengthening the breastplate by adding hairpipe, or adding decorations such as shells, ribbon, or medicine wheels. Some people put tin or brass cones on the ends of the side leather fringes.

The following are suggestions for a basic design using plastic hairpipe and very easy to use methods:

SIZE	NUMBER OF HAIRPIPE	CROW BEADS
Child	50 (3 inch)	250
Teen	60 (4 inch)	300
Medium Adult	70 (4 inch)	350
Large Adult	80 (4 inch)	400

Also needed are two 60 inch latigo lacings, 40 yards of simulated sinew (20 yds Child), some soft leather scraps, and four lengths of 3/8" wide strap leather. (Child-14", Teen-17", Medium-19", Large-21")

If you are planning this design for real bone hairpipe, you will need to add more bone for the same length, as the bone is thinner than the plastic hairpipe. The large adult kit would need 100 bone, the medium adult kit would need 86 bone.

STEPS:

Using a ruler, mark the four lengths of strap leather for punching the holes. For plastic hairpipe, the holes are 1/2" apart (center to center). For real bone, 3/8" apart. The extra top holes and the bottom holes are for the ties. Punch out the holes. You can use a leather punch for this or a large nail, scrap board, and hammer.

Take the scraps of leather scraps and cut leather fringe, approximately 3/16" wide and 6 inches in length. You will need one for each end of a row of hairpipe.

Begin by tying the neck ties to the top of the strap leathers. To do this, cut two pieces of latigo lacing about 12" in length from one piece of latigo. Lace each of these through the top holes of a pair of straps as in Figure 2. Tie a knot on each end to hold in the hole. Cut the remaining part of the lace in half and tie each to the top of the loop as in Figure 3.

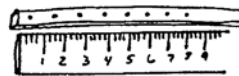


Figure 1

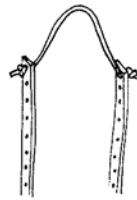


Figure 2



Figure 3

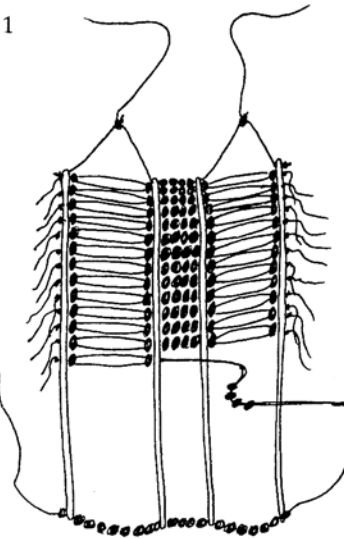


Figure 5



Figure 4

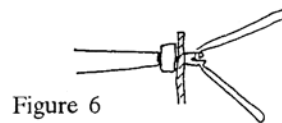


Figure 6

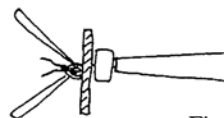


Figure 7

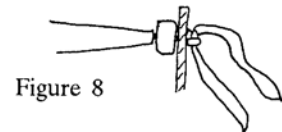


Figure 8

Cut a 4 foot length of sinew. Fold over in half and use a "wire needle" (Figure 4) made by bending a 10" piece of wire in half. Use the wire needle to thread the sinew through the second hole of the strap leather, bead, bone, bead, strap leather, and beads etc., as in the pattern shown in Figure 5. When the first row is strung, pull some slack sinew through the strap leather on the right side. Take off the wire needle and wrap the sinew loop around a leather fringe several times as in Figure 6.

Now pull the slack sinew back to the left, pulling the sinew taut. In Figure 7, on the outside of the left strap leather, wrap each thread of sinew around the center of another leather fringe in opposite directions so you can firmly tie a strong overhand knot. To be safe, tie several knots. Put a drop of super glue on the knot and let dry.

To finish off these ends, tie the leather fringe in a single overhand knot, covering the sinew wrappings and knots. See Figure 8.

Complete each row in the same way.

After stringing all of the rows of hairpipe and beads, use the bottom holes to fasten the waist ties as shown in Figure 5. Using the second latigo lacing. String this row entirely with beads, using enough so they loop down, being longer than the hairpipe rows. Tie a single overhand knot on the outside of the right and left strap leather. This will hold everything in that row in place.

If you are planning the length of the breastplate to be longer than your waist, this tie thong should be strung through an extra hole at the waist position. You can still end the bottom of the breastplate with the looped bead string.

You can expect the sinew to fray in time, especially if you do a lot of hard dancing. Inspect the stringing from time to time and replace as needed. When strung this way, if one string breaks, the damage is limited to one row.

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