

THE LEARNING CIRCLE

by Loren Woerpel, Noc Bay Trading Company

MAKING TWISTED FRINGE

One of our readers asked us how to make twisted fringe, which is often used in making fine fans, rattles, or other pieces carried by a dancer.

The twisted fringe is easy to make and gives a very special finished quality to any item. You'll just need to practice a bit. Here are the instructions:

For your practice, take a piece of thin buckskin that is about 10 inches long. Cut a thong about 1/8 inch wide and about 10 inches long. Now cut that thong again splitting it into two strips 1/16 inch wide. But don't cut it all the way. Leave it connected by a piece of uncut thong of about 3/8 inch in length. (Figure A)

Grasp one end of this split thong with your right hand, and the other with your left hand. The uncut tab is now in the center of the length of this thong when you stretch it out. Pull firmly to take the stretch out of the buckskin. (Figure B)

Now, while still holding the right end firmly, lay the left side on your leg thigh. (You need to be sitting down to do this part.) With your left hand, roll the thong along your leg twisting the entire thong evenly. You will need to keep hold of the thong as you twist it, picking it up and placing by your knee, and then rolling it again. Continue to do this until the twist is tight.

As it gets tighter, don't let go of either end or it will quickly untwist again. You also need to be stretching it as the twist gets tighter or it will tend to knot up.

When twisted tightly, grasp both ends firmly in each hand, and lift off your leg. Stretch out firmly in front of you. Now grasp the uncut tab (which should be sticking out of the center of the twisted thong) with your front teeth. Move your hands so that both ends of the thong are straight out in front of you, touching each other.

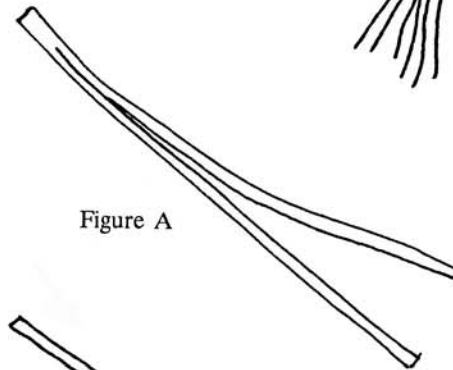


Figure A

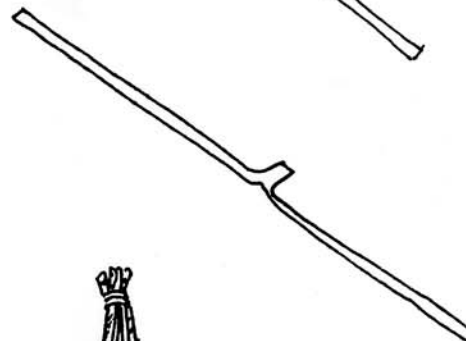
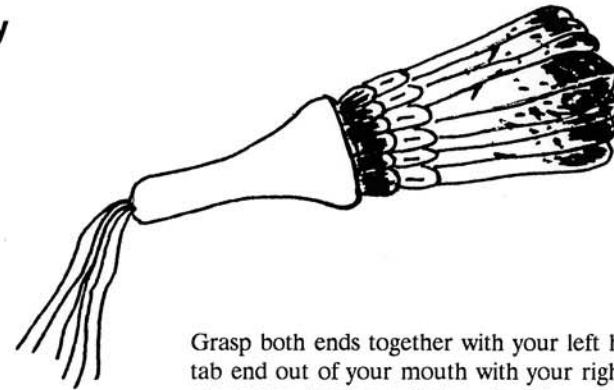


Figure B



Figure C



Grasp both ends together with your left hand. Take the tab end out of your mouth with your right hand. Slowly release the tension and allow the fringe to smoothly twist into a miniature rope.

Smooth out the twist by rolling it some more if necessary. The tab end is always the bottom of the fringe. The top end has to be lashed with thread or somehow attached onto your item so it will not unravel. Contact cement could be used at the very top of this bundle to prevent unraveling. (Figure C)

If the bundle of fringe is to be used on a fan or rattle handle, one method of attaching it would be to drill a hole in the bottom of the handle and insert the bundle into the hole. Glue with either carpenter's cement or contact cement.

Another way would be to space the individual fringe around the bottom end of the handle. Glue with contact cement, then wrap with a heavy thread. Cover the handle and this thread wrapping with leather.

With a little creative thought as to attaching and hiding the ends, there are many places where twisted fringe can be used.

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