

How to Make a Rainstick!



In many cultures, summoning rain often included the use of musical instruments. One well-known example is a rainstick, an instrument that mimics the sound of rain. They are traditionally made from dead cactus tubes with cactus spines hammered to the inside and filled with tiny pebbles.

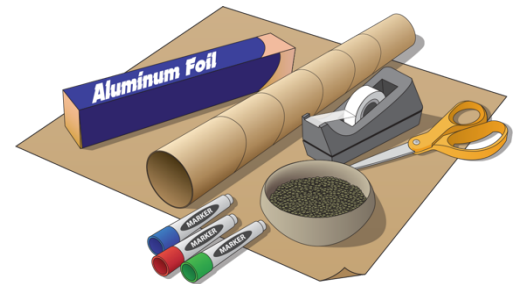
The origin of the rainstick is not fully known, but many people think that it probably came from a group of indigenous people known as the Diaguita from the deserts of northern Chile.

Rainsticks are part of the percussion family. Percussion instruments make sound when they are hit shaken or scraped.

Here you get to build a slightly less traditional rainstick of your own! This one is made from a cardboard tube and aluminum foil.

What you need:

- A long cardboard tube (paper towel or wrapping paperpaper tube). About a two-inch diameter is best.
- Aluminum foil
- Small dried lentils, unpopped popcorn, dry rice, or tiny pasta.
- Tape
- Scissors
- Crayons or markers or paint
- Yarn (optional)



What you do:

1. Trace around the end of your tube onto a piece of brown paper (or construction paper).
2. Draw a circle that is two times bigger than your first circle (around that first circle) and then draw four or so spokes between the two circles.
3. Cut along the spokes.
4. Tape the spokes onto one end of your tube.
5. Cut a few pieces of aluminum foil that are about one and half times the length of your tube and about 6 inches wide.
6. Crunch the aluminum foil pieces into long, thin, snake-like shapes. Then twist each one into a spring shape.
7. Put the aluminum foil springs into your tube.
8. Pour some dry beans, dry rice, or unpopped popcorn into your tube. The tube should only be about 1/10 full. You can experiment to see how different amounts and different types of seeds and beans change the sound.
9. Make another cap from brown paper (the same as the first three steps) and cap your tube.
10. Optional: Decorate the rainstick by first coloring or painting brown paper or construction paper to match the size of the tube. See examples below. You can also add yarn or stickers.



Hand painted rainsticks for sale at the outdoor craft market in Otavalo, Ecuador.



Australian Rainsticks (hand painted)



African Rainsticks