

Let's build that Hitting Paddle

As a start, I usually plan on building 2-3 of these tools. Beware... the entire team is going to want to hit with the paddle.

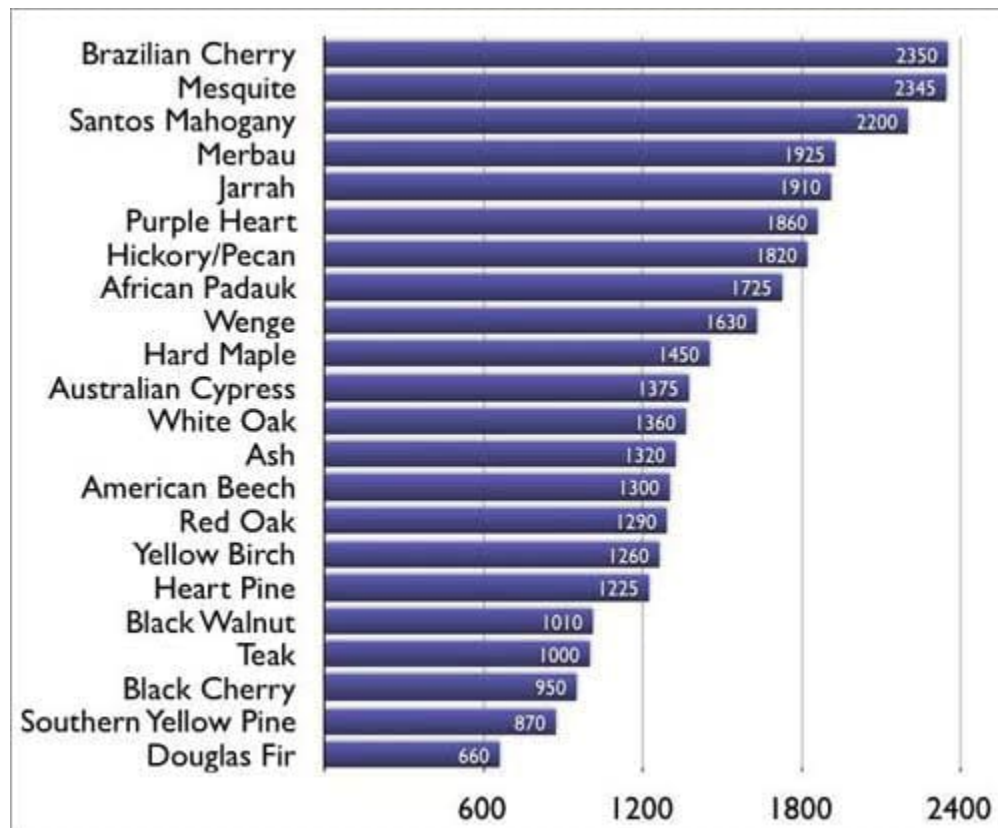
Step 1: Get Lumber - Home Depot or Lowe's.

Selecting the right lumber is important. At your local Home Depot or Lowe's you can find quality lumber that will serve you well. You can also custom order wood if you prefer a higher quality of wood.

What wood should I buy? If you buy a softer wood, you save a few dollars, but the durability of the paddle is less, which could mean a broken paddle. I prefer a hard wood that easily fits in the budget.



First, consider the *Janka Hardness Rating* system for woods, where each type of wood is given a number for hardness.



Your standard wood found at Home Depot will be Pine or Fir. However, they also carry slabs of Oak, Maple, and other woods in the flooring section. Don't shop in the bulk section where you find the typical 2x4's. The harder woods will serve you better than pine.

Be aware though..I there can be “soft” woods in the flooring section. I found some Poplar woods that rate at 540... in the hardwood section. Don’t be fooled!



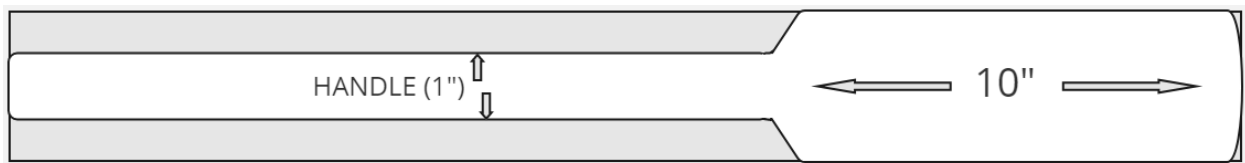
At Home Depot, I picked up a 1” x 4” x10’ slab of White Oak for approximately \$30. This is enough wood for approximately 3 hitting paddles. I decided to make three paddles - a 28” paddle which serves as a general size for youth, and then a 29” and 32” youth for our high school players.



2: Choosing the Correct Size.

The edges of the board become the edge of the paddle. The only variable is how long should the handle be? The Paddle Head can vary between 9" (small handle of 18-20 inches) to 10" for larger paddles in the 30"- 32" range. 28" paddles are good for the small players under 110 lbs, 29" - 30" paddles good for players between 110lbs and 170lbs, and 32" - 33" paddles for larger players.

The paddle does not need to be as big as their normal bat used in a game! *Simply because you don't want the players to be training with space to hit off the 'end' of their normal bat.* You want to be in the *sweet spot*. (If you are not sure where the sweet spot is on their bat, check out the Finding the Sweet Spot Bonus Video!)



Step 3. How to Build The Paddle

Once I have the wood, I start by drawing three paddles on one board, using a sharpie marker.

DRAW: I loosely draw the handle, which is approximately $\frac{3}{4}$ " in from both sides of the board (a 1x3" board is never exactly 3" wide fyi), giving us a handle approximately 1" wide, exactly down the center of the board. As you can see from the pictures below, the drawing does not have to be extremely precise.

I then draw the head of the paddle - which starts approximately 10" from the end of the board, simply by drawing a 45-degree line from that end of the handle to the edge of the board.



CUT: Next, I prepare to cut the paddles out, using the drawings as the guide. I cut the paddles out, using a jig-saw. Candidly, I'm not overly careful about craftsmanship (not worried about 1/16th of an inch), as these paddles are going to go through a beating. You can quickly see the process here: [Jigsaw: Cutting the Paddles](#)

ROUND EDGES: Then I use a router with a 1/4" Roundover Bit to round the edges of the board. You can quickly see the process here: [Router: Rounding the Corners](#)



SMOOTH EDGES: Lastly, I use a hand-sander to smooth them down. You can quickly see the process here: [Sander: Smoothing the Edges](#)

That's it. I use athletic tape to protect the handle, and then we are ready to train.

Appendix:

Be aware, the paddle should not be used to hit real baseballs, heavy balls, etc. The weight of a real baseball is too heavy for the 1" handle, and will destroy the equipment.