

# NATIVE AMERICAN

HERITAGE MONTH

## Rattle-Making

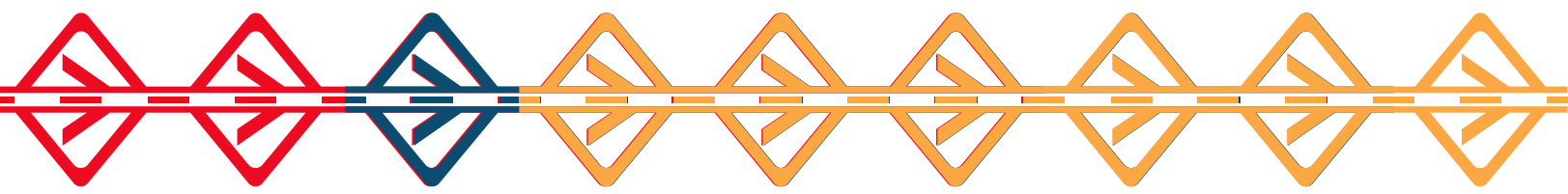
Rattles and shakers are very important to Navajo as well as other Tribal Nations. A rattle may be used as a dance rattle or to accompany drums. They are often used in ceremony.

Different than the Cherokee, the Navajo artists of the southwest have a unique display of patterns and symbols on their rattles which are distinctly Native American. Western tribes such as Apache, Pueblo, Zuni and Hopi can also each be differentiated by their art work and hand crafts. Indigenous art seen in the decorating of Navajo rattles is usually symbolic. The Navajo bear and the Navajo eagle have particular meanings about life. Navajo artifacts of the past are the same Navajo patterns in use today. The rattle is a predominant part of community life, ceremonies and rituals and has become an Indigenous symbol for music, dance and medicine as well as spirituality.

### Materials:

- 1 - 60" (5ft.) Sinew
- 1 - Pair Hole Punched Rawhide
- 1 - 12" x 5/8" Stick with notch at end
- Corn Kernels
- 1 Bag of sand
- 1 - Paper Funnel
- Plastic Needle
- Scissors
- Beads, feathers (optional)

Kits may be purchased at [The Rattle \(ed-digenoustraditions.ca\)](http://ed-digenoustraditions.ca)  
or materials may be sourced elsewhere.



## Instructions:

- Instructions
- Soak Rawhide in container for 3 hrs or more
- Put your rawhide pieces together and line up holes
- Take your needle and lace in your sinew through the needle hole
- Lace in from the one end of the rattle rawhide, pull through till each ends meet to the same length
- Tie 1 knot to hold in place then take your needle with one lace and needle through to the end and repeat with the other lace but lacing in the opposite entrance of the holes
- Tie the laces together with 4 knots for security; prevents slippage
- Take your stick handle and spread the end on your rattle and slide in the stick to spread the inner area
- Spread out your funnel
- Spill your bag of sand into a cup or container and spill into your funnel to fill in the rattle bag
- When half-way filling your bag, grab your stick to pack down the sand and keep packing till it spreads out the bag, then repeat by adding more sand till it's packed tight and your bag is rounded out
- Keep handle in at the end and tie
- Let hang and dry overnight
- Remove the handle from the rattle
- Fill in about 2 inches of water in a cup or small container and soak the open end of the rattle and let stand for about hr
- Take rattle out of container
- Take some of your corn kernels and spill into pouch of your rattle then stick in the handle with the notch end into your rattle about 1 1/2" in
- Let dry and dress up with leather, beads, feathers or other raw materials
- An instructional video may be found at [The Rattle \(ed-digenoustraditions.ca\)](http://TheRattle(ed-digenoustraditions.ca))