

Student Drop Spindle Directions

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Clicking Needles (<http://home.earthlink.net/~anrfiber/>)

A working copy of these instructions may be printed and copies made for educational purposes.

You may use these instructions to make drop spindles for retail.



This can be either a top whorl or bottom whorl drop spindle. If top whorl, the unsharpened end is slipped through the toy wheel's hole until ~1.5 inches sticks up out of the top, where your eye screw will go. If bottom whorl, the sharpened end is sharpened fully and is slipped through the toy wheel's hole until the top of the sharpened end and the screw eye is screwed into the flattened end. These make really good beginner drop spindles.

Materials:

Drop spindle kit: 2 3/4" wooden toy wheel *, 3/8" dowel (12 inches long), and small eye screw (1/4" to 3/8", twisted).

Acrylic paint – Delta Ceramcoat paint or other tole paint brand.

Half dowel to hold wheel for painting

Acrylic Sealer (FolkArt Plaid makes one, but others are available) – I prefer matte, but this is a personal preference.

Paint brushes

Sandpaper – 100 and 220 grit.

Large holed pencil sharpener

Pliers

* You may use smaller toy wheels (2" or so), but make sure you use dowels the same width as the holes of whatever wheel you choose to use and shorten the length of the dowel as well.

Instructions:

1. Sand the toy wheel smooth with 100 grit sandpaper, then 220 grit.
2. Use the pencil sharpener to sharpen one end of the dowel, this will be the bottom of a top whorl spindle and the top of a bottom whorl spindle. Do not sharpen the end to a point, just round out the edges.
3. Test the fit of the dowel into the wheel's hole. If it fits, just lightly sand the dowel. If it does not fit, use 100 grit sandpaper to sand for a bit, and then test the fit again. Make sure to turn the dowel as you sand! When the fit is close, use 220 grit sandpaper. The nice thing is you only have to do this

on the unsharpened side since about 1.5 inches of this side will be fitted into the wheel's hole. If the dowel is loose, use glue to seal the dowel in, making sure the dowel is centered.

4. Cut the extra dowel down to about 5 inches or so. Sharpen one end of this short dowel, then sand the unsharpened end until you can slide it into the toy wheel and it is a tight fit. You will use this extra dowel as a wheel holder, so you can paint the wheel without getting yourself or your paint job messed up. Stick the dowel into Styrofoam or some other sort of stand while your wheel dries.
5. Paint wheel first, separate from dowel. You can paint either side of the drop spindle as the top. I painted the flat side, but the ridged side works.
6. When you are happy with your whorl, sign it and date it. Let it dry completely.
7. Remove the short dowel from your wheel. There's paint inside the wheel's hole, and you need to remove this. Use your short dowel to force the paint out. You can do this by screwing the short dowel into the painted top side. The bottom should be fine (the side where the shortened dowel was pushed into the wheel's hole). Once you push the dowel in far enough, the extra paint will be cut off the top of your paint job. Once this happens, remove the short dowel and blow out the dried paint.
8. Insert your spindle's dowel into the wheel's hole. Make sure you have it where you want it before painting commences, about 1.5 inches of dowel should be sticking up at the top for a top whorl spindle, and until the sharpened end of the dowel is through the hole completely for a bottom whorl spindle.
9. Paint the dowel, switching between top and bottom or doing one of these sides first, then the other side. It takes about 2-3 coats of paint to cover the dowel.
10. Let the spindle dry overnight.
11. Spray with an acrylic sealer. To do this, insert your drop spindle into some foam to hold it upright and spray the sealer over the spindle. Let each coat dry. Coat the whole drop spindle 3 times. I do the top first, then flip it over and do the bottom.
12. Let the drop spindle dry overnight again.

FOR TOP WHORL SPINDLES ONLY:

13. Using pliers, twist the eye screw as shown in the picture at right.
14. Screw in the eye screw in the center of the dowel and you are set – you might need pliers for this.

