

Making a Stone Age Sling by storm

I have made a few of slings over the years and had become moderately proficient with this device while living in the dense temperate rainforests of Washington. About 60% of the time I could land a stone within a basketball-sized target area within 30 feet. On more than a few occasions, I tried my hand at procuring Douglas squirrels, but, there being no basketball-sized individuals of that species in the area, I never got to sample the flesh of that critter.

I recently discovered the www.slinging.org website, which contains articles, videos, and even a discussion forum devoted to the art of delivering a projectile to a target via a corded pouch. That site has inspired me to illustrate how easily one can craft a sling in a Stone Age manner.

Here are the tools I use to construct a sling: buckskin, a broken javelina tooth that I found in southern Arizona, unidentified thin bones I collected from a deer carcass, and a wooden mallet.



That javelina tooth cuts through buckskin, even the thicker skin around the deer's neck, very quickly. It definitely rivals the proficiency of an obsidian flake (although the tooth required some sharpening on a piece of sandstone after this project was finished). Here I am cutting out the sling's pouch.



The shape of the pouch can vary amongst users. You can visit the slinging website mentioned above to view different styles.

Here is a pouch I had cut and pierced earlier in the day.



Piercing the buckskin, in order to attach the cords, can be challenging. A sharp, strong implement is required. I use a small bone and a wooden mallet. If you know the name or placement of this deer bone, please let me know (storm@stoneageskills.com). I collected three of them from a mostly-intact, totally clean deer carcass.



There are many ways to attach the pouch to the cords. I chose a three-point method in order to draw the edges of the pouch together and secure the projectile within the buckskin. The next sling I make will sport a simpler one-point attachment so that I can test the potential differences.

It is said that the cords should be as long as the distance between your hand and heart when your slinging hand is extended to your side. Being a beginner, I have made the cords slightly shorter. This ought to give me more control and accuracy over shorter distances.



After having attached one cord to each end of the pouch, I knotted one end and made a loop on the other.



Holding the knot and loop as one would when operating the sling.



Aim, sling, and devour your kill!

