

SHIELD CONSTRUCTION

Materials:

½ ” Plywood	
Camping Mat- Size of shield dictates amount (avg. 4 rolls)	
Glue- Contact cement or Spray Adhesive (recommended)	
Scissors	Utility Knife
Magic Marker	Jig Saw
Hole Punch	Drill
Handle- Metal (rec.) or Leather	Flat Headed Bolts & Nuts
Leather Belt- Heavy Duty!	Utility Knife
Grommets	Staple Gun
Wood Chisel (optional)	Duct Tape

Step 1. Cut ½” plywood to desired shape (Fig. 1). Find area on shield where you want your arm to rest. Mark a place above and below the palm of your hand, this is where you will be placing the handle. Mark a line above and below your forearm, this is where the belt will go (Fig. 2). Before moving to step two, make absolutely sure your arm is where you want it!

Step 2. Attach Handle (Fig. 3). I recommend a metal handle but you can use leather. If using metal you will need to cut two plywood spacers that fit under your handle. This is because most handles need the extra height for a comfortable grip. Attach handle using nuts and bolts, inserting bolts through the face of the shield. Make sure the bolts have a flat head so they do not protrude much from the face of the shield. At this stage you may wish to pad the back of the shield where your arm will rest. If so, do this now!

Step 3. Attach Belt (Fig. 3). Find the marks for the belt and place the belt over them. Now mark the width of the belt over both. Cut out slits for the belt. Choose a drill bit the same thickness as the belt and drill a hole at each end of the marks. Use the jig saw to cut the rest of the slit. If you don't have a jig saw I have used the following method: drill holes across the lines as close together as possible and use a wood chisel to clean the slit up. Once the slits are cut insert the belt, feeding it through the back and looping back in from the front. Pull the belt through until there is about 2” left before the buckle hits. It doesn't matter whether the buckle is at the top or bottom, try both ways and see which is best for you. Place your arm on the shield and pull the belt through the buckle until snug. Mark the belt where holes need to be punched. From this point mark for more holes up the belt making it looser (Fig 4), this allows for extra clothing during winter and/or armour. Punch holes and attach grommets- grommets make the belt last MUCH longer!

Step 4. Now you're ready to start padding. Place the shield face down on the camping mat. You will probably need two pieces for the width. Trace the shield and cut out the foam. Repeat (Fig 5). If you have to have a seam, cut the second layer so that the seams cross. Cover any seams with duct tape. Glue and attach foam to shield face.

Step 5. Pad the back of the shield (Fig 6). You don't have to pad the entire back surface, in fact I recommend against it. Instead, cut strips 2”-4” wide and glue around the perimeter of the shield. Cut strips the width of the shield and wrap the side with two layers (Fig. 7). Cover seams with duct tape. Place shield face down on camping mat and trace. Cut, glue and tape seam. Add one final layer around the edge and your ready to cover (Fig 8).

Step 6. Cover the shield. There is no fast rule for covering a shield. Cut out a piece of fabric in your country colors (brown if you're a nomad) larger than your shield. Place the shield face down centered on the fabric. Fold the fabric over the edge of the shield toward the back. Staple the edge all the way around with the staple gun, pulling the fabric tight as you go along.

The entire process usually takes a day to complete. If you want to make a shield in less time, don't! It won't be safe and won't pass inspection. I've used this method to make a number of shields. 3 of them are going on 4 years old and are still in great shape. You can use the same method to make a buckler, but you only need to use ¼” plywood, and the belt doesn't have to be heavy duty. If you have any questions ask me or any other old timer, we'll be glad to help!