

# LARP Weapons

LARP weapons are made from PVC pipe with a layer of padding. It is essential that the weapon be sturdy and free from damage or defects that could cause someone to be injured by it.

## Color Codes

For our LARP, colors used for weapons represent different materials:

- **silver** duct represents metal, such as for a blade.
- **brown** duct tape represents wood, such as for a fighting staff<sup>1)</sup> or the handle of an axe or halberd.
- **black** duct tape is reserved for magic wands or magical staves.
- **red** duct tape indicates a body weapon (such as a claw). Note that weapon-related abilities and spells, such as *disarm* or *shatter* are ineffective against body weapons.
- **brightly colored stripes** of duct tape (e.g., fluorescent pink) on a weapon or armor are used to denote magical abilities.

## Weapon Check

Before any game/session, you must check any weapon that you might be hit with and people you might hit must check your weapon!

1. Pommel and shaft (except for grip) must have pipe insulation that extends at least 1" beyond PVC.
2. Must have a thrusting tip on thrusting end. (And on pommel if used for waylaying.)
3. Squeeze pipe insulation and make sure you can't feel the PVC anywhere (especially at the ends).
4. Check for visible damage (rips, tears, major dents in the foam, missing sections of duct tape).
5. Make sure thrusting tip rebounds immediately (less than 1 second).
6. For long weapons (> 4 feet long), swing and change direction abruptly. It shouldn't feel like it's wobbling or whipping back and forth more than a tiny amount.

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## Building a LARP Weapon

All weapons are based on a basic "boffer sword" or "foam bat". As you design and build your weapon, keep in mind the weapons check above and make sure your weapon is designed and built so it will pass.

### Materials needed:

- 1/2" PVC pipe

- Foam pipe insulation that is at least 5/8" thick. (The extra thickness is important.) Can [buy from Hamilton Marine](#).
- 2" thick upholstery foam (for seat cushions) or other durable but compressible open-cell foam (can buy from Zimmans).
- 2 nickels (US or Canadian 5-cent coins)
- 1" wide strapping Tape
- 2" wide (or wider) duct tape—silver to represent metal and brown to represent wood.
- Athletic tape (or "hockey tape" or bicycle handlebar tape)
- Roughly 5" diameter circle of thin plastic, such as from a plastic grocery bag.

### **Additional Materials for wide blades, such as a battle axe or halberd:**

- 1/2" thick rubber, e.g., for a floor mat (can [buy from WeSellMats.com](#)).
- Contact cement and a brush to apply it

## **Assembly Instructions**

1. Cut the PVC pipe, pipe insulation and upholstery foam to the desired sizes:
  1. Cut a piece of 1/2" PVC pipe to the desired length.
  2. Figure out where you will grip the weapon. Every part of the weapon except for the grip needs to be padded (including the pommel), and the thrusting end of the weapon needs to have highly compressible foam on its end. (If you intend to use the pommel of your weapon to waylay people, you will also need a thrusting tip on that end.)
  3. Cut two pieces of pipe insulation:
    - One piece needs to extend from the top of the grip to about 1" beyond the "thrusting" end of the PVC.
    - One piece needs to extend from the bottom of the grip to 1" beyond the bottom end of the PVC. This piece must cover at least 1 1/2" to 2" of the PVC pipe so it won't slide off, as well as extending 1" beyond the end.
  4. Cut a piece of upholstery foam that is about 2" x 1 1/2" and trim it so it is roughly a cylinder that is about the size of the pipe insulation and 1 1/2" long. (If you intend to use the pommel of your weapon to waylay people, you will need two of these, one for each end.)
  5. If you will be making a cross guard or other decorative/functional piece near the grip, cut a length of pipe insulation of an appropriate length. This means the PVC for the "business end" of the weapon will be slightly shorter to allow room for the cross guard.
2. Assemble the weapon:
  1. Tape a nickel (US 5-cent coin) to each end of the PVC pipe using strapping tape. (This is to cover the sharp edge of the PVC to make it less likely to cut through the pipe insulation.) Wrap a piece of strapping tape circumferentially around the tape that holds the nickels to keep it from peeling up.
  2. Tape the seam of both pieces of pipe insulation with duct tape before sliding them onto the PVC pipe. This will hold the seam together tightly to keep it from opening.
  3. Wet the inside of the pipe insulation to make it easier to slide onto the PVC. Use only water, because it will evaporate. (Do not use soap, because it will remain inside the pipe insulation and cause the it to slide around over the PVC.)
  4. Slide the larger piece of pipe insulation over the end of the PVC, leaving about 1" extending beyond the end of the PVC.

5. Wrap the piece of plastic bag around the compressible foam and stuff the ends of the plastic into the open end of the pipe insulation. This will be your thrusting tip.
6. Duct tape the compressible foam to the end of the pipe insulation. You will probably need three pieces of duct tape in three directions, to make sure there are no gaps. Each piece of duct tape should extend over about 3" onto the pipe insulation.
7. Where each piece of duct tape goes over the thrusting tip, make a small slit in each corner, stick the sides to the side of the thrusting tip, and then stick the top over the sides. This will prevent sharp corners on the end of your thrusting tip.
8. Attach long strips of duct tape lengthwise along the pipe insulation. These strips should overlap the duct tape that holds the thrusting tip on one end, and should extend about 1½" to 2" beyond the bottom of the pipe insulation.
  - When attaching the duct tape to the grip area, slit it lengthwise several times to make thin strips. Fold each strip so that it goes over the bottom of the pipe insulation, makes a nice corner, and then extends onto the grip area. The neater you do this, the more comfortable the grip area will be.
9. Use a pin (a push pin works well) to poke a lot of holes in the thrusting tip. This is to allow air to easily pass through the duct tape so the thrusting tip can spring back quickly when it is compressed. If the thrusting tip takes longer than about 1/2 second to spring back, poke more holes.
10. Slide the short piece of pipe insulation over the pommel area of the weapon. If you will be using the pommel to waylay people, follow the steps above to add a thrusting tip to this end.
11. Wrap the pommel end with duct tape as you did over the thrusting tip of the weapon, again making slits in the duct tape to avoid sharp corners and again slitting the duct tape where it extends onto the grip so that it makes a nice corner.
12. Wrap the grip area of the weapon with athletic tape.

### **Additional Instructions for Wide Bladed Weapons (Battle Axe, Halberd, //etc.//)**

1. Make a base for the blade out of a piece of thick rubber (such as that used for floor mats). The rubber should wrap completely around the pipe insulation.
  - For a double-edged blade such as a battle axe, use two pieces of rubber, one on each side of the shaft.
  - For a single edged blade on only one side of the weapon, use one double-width piece of rubber and wrap it around the shaft and attach it to itself. You may need to score the rubber part-way through to get it to wrap nicely around the shaft.
2. Cut the rubber to the desired shape for the blade.
3. Use contact cement to stick the pieces of rubber to each other and to the shaft of the weapon. (Note that contact cement will need a few hours to semi-dry between when you apply it to the rubber and when you stick the pieces together.)
4. Cover the striking edge(s) of the blade with upholstery foam. (You may want to apply a plastic grocery bag as with a thrusting tip, in order to protect the upholstery foam when you need to repair the duct tape on the blade.)
5. Cover the entire blade in duct tape, making sure to go around the upholstery foam the same way you did for the thrusting tip.

6. Poke holes in any duct tape that covers the upholstery foam so that it springs back quickly, as you did for the thrusting tip.

<sup>1)</sup>

There are two types of staff. A fighting staff is a long wooden pole. A magical staff is like a wand, but longer. A magical staff cannot be used for physical combat.

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