

Ball-in-Cage Chain



Carve a modern take on a classic whittling project

By Frank Egholm

This is a great project for relaxing at home, but it's also perfect for taking along if you find yourself somewhere with a bit of time on your hands. Experienced carvers can make it as shown, but if you are relatively new to whittling balls in cages, I would recommend increasing the pattern and blank sizes to make a larger project. (It makes a good baby rattle.)

Getting Started

You can make this from almost any carvable wood. I carved my chain from a piece of boxwood, which is a hardwood with short fibers that doesn't crack easily. I use yew for baby rattles.

CARVING THE CHAIN

Step 1: Draw the pattern onto the wood. Then, drill $\frac{1}{8}$ " (3mm) to $\frac{5}{32}$ " (4mm)-diameter holes where indicated on the pattern.

Step 2: Carve the two cages and free the balls. Use the holes to make it easier to remove the excess wood around the balls. Add a decorative spiral or a little ball at the end if desired.

Step 3: Carve the small ring. Carefully remove the excess wood. Then, free the cage link.

Step 4: Carve the chain links. Remove the excess wood and carefully free the links. Shape the wood so the angular shapes become round.

Step 5: Finish the project. Sand the ring and one of the balls. Leave the other ball with the tool marks on the surface. Apply an oil finish if desired.

materials & tools

MATERIALS:

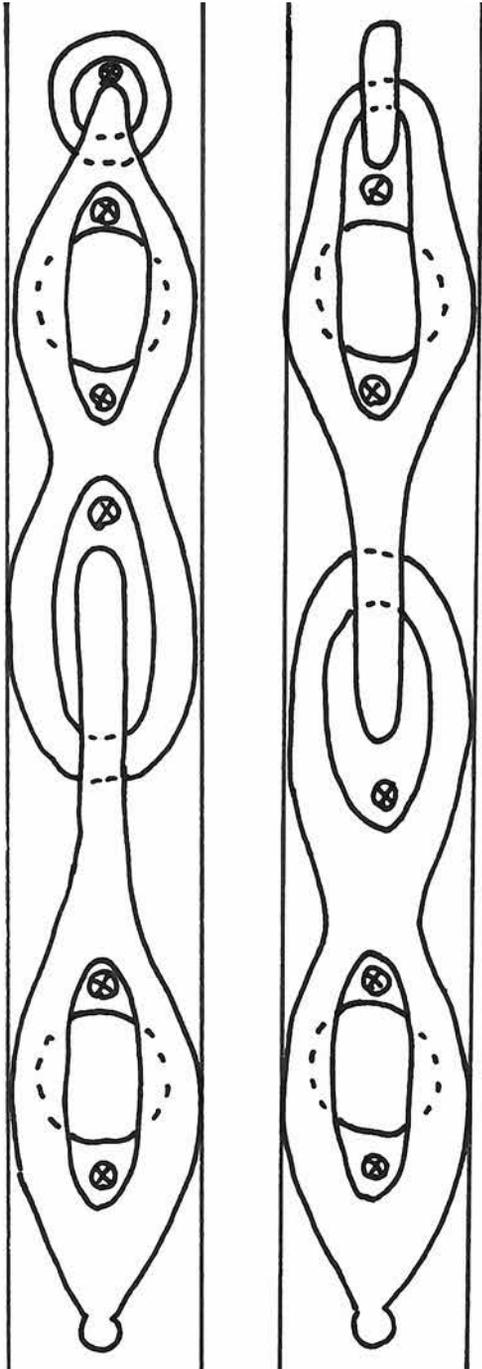
- Boxwood or yew, 1" (2.5cm) square: 7½" (19.1cm) long
- Sandpaper
- Oil finish (optional)

The author used these products for the project. Substitute your choice of brands, tools, and materials as desired.

TOOLS:

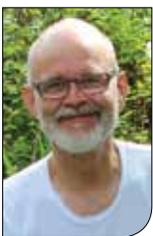
- Knife
- Drill with bits: $\frac{1}{8}$ " (3mm) to $\frac{5}{32}$ " (4mm) dia.

Oval ball-in-cage patterns



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AD SPACE



Frank Egholm lives in Denmark, where he taught woodworking in a school for several years. He's the author of *Snitte: The Danish Art of Whittling: Make Beautiful Wooden Birds and The Danish Art of Whittling: Simple Projects for the Home*. He's also organizing an annual "Snittefest" whittling festival in Denmark. Visit his website at www.snittesiden.dk.