

# Pamela's Rainstick

## Materials:

- Strong, flexible clay (suggested brands: Premo, Kato or Fimo).
- Head pins
- Wire cutters
- Dowel rod
- Aluminum foil
- Toothpick or needle tool
- Pasta machine (Helpful)
- "Rain pellets" (such as tiny pebbles, glass seed beads, etc)

**NOTE:** Depending on what you use for "rain pellets" you might want to do a bake test to make certain the pellets don't melt at 275 degrees. You wouldn't want to complete your rainstick only to find that the pellets fused together during baking!

**Step 1.** Wrap a dowel rod with several thickness of aluminum foil. You can use any size dowel rod — the diameter depends upon how large you want the inside of the rainstick to be. Just make sure it's not too long to fit into your oven!

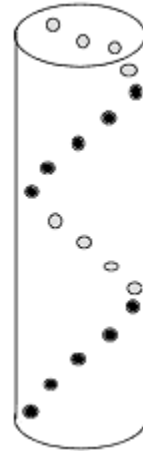
**Step 2.** Using waste (or a base color) clay, roll an adequate amount of clay to #5 on your Atlas pasta machine and wrap it around the foil-covered dowel rod, making certain you seal the seam completely by smoothing it with your fingers until the seam disappears. Fig. 1 (right) shows how your rainstick should look at this point.



**Fig. 1-** Base clay on Aluminum covered dowel rod.

**Note:** if you are using a larger dowel rod (about 3/4" in diameter or greater), I would use a thicker setting on the pasta machine—this will make your rainstick sturdier.

**Step 3.** Using a toothpick, poke holes into the cylinder in a spiral pattern, as shown in Fig. 2 (the gray dots represent the back of the cylinder and the black dots the front). I generally put about 1/4" between holes, but it depends on the size of the rainstick and the size of the "rain pellets." There's no need to worry about fingerprints or small imperfections at this point, because you'll cover this with another layer of clay.



**Fig. 2**  
**Spiral Pattern**

**Step 4.** Bake the rainstick base (dowel rod and all) for about 15 minutes at 275 degrees.

**Step 5.** While the rainstick is still warm (but not TOO warm!), remove the foil and rainstick from the dowel rod by gently tugging on one end of the foil while holding onto the other end of the dowel rod. This pulls the rainstick and foil off the rod. Next, carefully remove the foil from the inside of the rainstick.

**Step 6.** Using a needle tool, make sure all the holes you poked earlier are completely open.

**Step 7.** Cut the appropriate number of headpins to the proper length (which depends upon the diameter of the dowel rod). The headpin needs to be long enough to accommodate the thickness of one wall of clay, the inside diameter of the cylinder of clay—and be exactly flush with the opposite wall of clay. Fig. 3 shows a headpin cut to the proper length for my rainstick.



**Fig. 3 - Wire cutters and Head pins**

**Step 8.** Insert a headpin into each hole in the rainstick, making certain the head of the headpin is flush with the outer wall of the cylinder. At this point your rainstick should look like Fig. 4. Fig. 5 shows a view looking down into the rainstick.



**Fig. 4**



**Fig. 5**

**Step 9.** At this point, you may want to hold a finger over one end of the rainstick and fill the rainstick with your “rain pellets.” Then hold both ends of the rainstick closed with your fingers and turn it over to let the “rain” fall. This will let you decide if the rainstick “sounds” right. You can remove some headpins if you think it doesn’t work right, or add more “rain” if the sound doesn’t last long enough to please you. Don’t fill the rainstick too full or the rain won’t have enough distance to fall.

**Step 10.** Remove the rain pellets and cover the rainstick with clay canes or whatever you like—except for one end. Add your rain pellets and seal the end with clay.

**Step 11.** Bake, sand, buff/glaze and enjoy. Fig. 6 shows my finished rainstick.



**Fig. 6 - Finished Rainstick!**

**Pamela Hall**  
©2003

*We'd like to thank Pamela for sharing this unique lesson with PCC. If you have a lesson or tutorial or project that you would like to share with PCC, just email [Leigh](#) or [Stephen](#) and we will help you prepare your project for the PCC Website.*