



Care of Your New Didgeridoo

Look after your new didge and it will play and play and play.

Wood is an organic material affected by moisture and temperature, causing it to expand and contract. When this happens to often, or becomes to extreme, the wood will complain by splitting and cracking. Treating your new didgeridoo with a little care and respect will help to make it play for many, many years.



Please note the following advice is my personal opinion and relates to the didgeridoo's I make. Opinions of other people and craftsmen may and will differ. The advice below is based on what I have learnt and most crucially the experiences with the didgeridoos I have bought, made and played.

The Didgeridoo

Traditional didgeridoos come from Australia. Termites eat the inside of the timber, creating a bore in the timber, which, when cut down and shaped, creates a didgeridoo.

Outside of Australia different musicians and craftsmen, from many nations have crafted their own didgeridoos.

There are several different techniques for crafting a didgeridoo. The majority of didgeridoos I make, I use the split and hollow technique. This means that the timber is selected for its suitability, left to season, then, when ready, shaped, cut in half, hollowed out, then glued back together. Once glued back together the didgeridoo is tuned by cutting to length, shaping the mouthpiece, and further hollowing inside the bell.



This method is popular among many musicians and craftsmen, due to full control over every aspect of crafting, including the inside of the bore.

Aside from the method as described above, any naturally occurring features such as knots and cracks are dealt with. All knots and features are secured with 2 tonne epoxy resin.



Finishing

The bore of most of my didgeridoos have been treated with several layers of Danish Oil. On many of my didges, the mouthpiece has been coated with two part epoxy resin for strength, hygiene and comfort.

The outside of the didgeridoo is treated according to the wood. Most didges have several layers of Danish Oil, which assists to help protect and preserve the wood, and many have also been coated with epoxy resin - added strength, and protection.

Care

Please read the following on how to care for your new instrument, the notes will help ensure many hours of enjoyable playing.

Timber is a natural material, and can be subject to damage in certain conditions. To help prevent this, the internal bore of the didgeridoo has been coated with Danish Oil. This helps create a barrier between the bore and any moisture. The outside has been coated with Danish Oil to provide hard surface protection for the wood. Both materials allow for movement in the wood. For didges also coated with resin - the resin has excellent flexibility.

The wood is affected by changes in moisture, humidity and heat. There are a number of tips that will help the wood stabilise and significantly reduce the occasions when it may split.

Only play for short lengths of time first. The instrument will be quite dry, so increase the time you play gradually. Sudden and/or substantial moisture can place stresses on the wood and cause cracks or splits to occur. Play for 15 minutes a day for the first week, then build it up a further 10 minutes a day, each week.

Main points to follow:

- Ensure the bore is thoroughly dry between sessions.
- Allow the didgeridoo to adjust to local humidity, or lack of it, in its new home.
- Avoid prolonged playing sessions until the didgeridoo has fully acclimatised.
- Avoid exposure to dry/damp/wet, or hot/cold conditions.
- Do not lace near a source of heat e.g. radiator.
- Do not leave in a car when the sun is out.
- Do not pour liquids unnecessarily down the bore if the instrument.
- Take care when cleaning.
- Treat any splits or cracks as early as possible.
- Try to reduce the amount of saliva produced when playing.
- Do not drop or bang the instrument as this may cause damage (I know its obvious).
- When travelling, put the didge in some form of protection (a fishing rod bag is good!).
- After playing, store vertically (this allows for moisture to escape and air to flow).
- Ensure the ends are free from obstruction. Let the didge calm and cool down.
- As long as the instrument is looked after, you will have many hours of pleasure playing it!



Footnote



I knew none of the above when I bought my first wooden didgeridoo - after one week it started to crack and split. At first I thought I had been sold dodgy goods, and very nearly stopped playing as a result. Shortly after this, I bought my first 'traditional' yidaki from a chap called Matt Bartlett a.k.a The Didgeridoo Place whereupon he gave 'care for your new didgeridoo' advice. Since receiving and following his advice I have not had the problem repeat itself! I have amended the information to reflect the didgeridoo's I make and sell, however, the essential information is pretty much the same as Matt Bartlett gave me and is used with his kind permission - thanks Matt.

[Back to top of page..>>](#)

[Back to Didgeridoo Maintenance Index...>>](#)

