



Re-Sealing the Bore

Re-sealing the bore can spruce up otherwise flat sounding didgeridoos and give some added protection.

Depending on how much a didgeridoo is played and the environment it lives in, it may start to sound flat after a while. By resealing the bore you help prevent moisture affecting the integrity and sound of the didge.

This page and this procedure of sealing the bore of the didgeridoo is almost exactly the same as when sealing the bore for the first time when making a didgeridoo and there is more and different information in the 'How to Make a Wooden Didgeridoo' section 'Sealing the Bore'.

Why Re-Seal?

The reason for sealing and re-sealing is to protect the wood from degradation from exposure to temperature variation and moisture. Wood expands with heat, and like the pores in your skin, will absorb moisture too. The moisture is produced when playing from your breath and saliva in your mouth. Over time this will soften and start to break the cells of the timber down i.e. rot.

Placing a substance such as Danish Oil in the bore helps to protect the wood by assisting in preventing absorption of moisture. It has the benefit of soaking into and becoming part of the wood rather than a separate layer or barrier. Substances such as resin or varnish protect by creating a barrier over the wood, however in my opinion this can cause the sound change as the flow of air changes due to the change in the surface and its texture.



When to Re-Seal

If you play your didgeridoo regularly you will be used to the sound and no doubt will have noticed how the sound changes as you play (dry mouth versus wet mouth). As time goes by you may notice the sound going flat and the didge not as crisp or responsive. This could be due to an air leak (assume its not) then it may likely be the surface of the bore becoming softer.

With the didges I play regularly I have found resealing the bore approximately every 6 months or so about right.

To ensure the bore of the didge is thoroughly dry, any didge that is resealed will stand for at least a week

beforehand, without being played, to ensure it is thoroughly dry.

The stuff you'll need aside from the Danish Oil is a small off-cut of wood slightly larger than the size of the bell of the didge, an old rag to put on the board and cover the end of the bell, plasticine to cover the mouthpiece, measuring jug and some paper towels or kitchen roll.

This is a safe process however please note that Danish Oil left on rags can self-combust if not dealt with appropriately. I've not heard of any instances but always best to follow the instructions on the tin.

Spillages can occur so make sure you have sufficient space, and some white spirit to hand just in case. Danish Oil can be a right pain to get off so do take care.





Taking a small golf ball size piece of plasticine (readily available from many high street shops, especially craft shops - and cheap to boot), I press it into the mouthpiece of the didgeridoo - gently. In summer or when the weather is warm the plasticine will be very soft and malleable and harder when cold. When it is soft take care not to press too hard and go through the plasticine.

Applying reasonable pressure to firm plasticine will create a watertight seal that will not leak. I then turn the didgeridoo upside down and gently tap the plasticine on the board to double check the seal is good. I have had it leak because I was slack, having damn near a pint of oil leak all over the place. So now I am more observant!

Although the mouthpiece has been sealed you do not want to fill the whole didge up with oil as the plasticine would not withstand the pressure. I will use anywhere between half to one pint of oil to start with and expect up to a quarter of a pint to be used (depending on size of didge).

Now I pour the oil into the bore. I will gently rotate the didge in my hand to cover as much of it as possible. While pouring I keep an eye out for any leak that may start at the mouthpiece. Once the oil has been poured I use a rag (ripped up piece of old tea towel) to cover the open bell of the didge, then place the board on top.

Checking everything is in place and as it should be I press down with a fair amount of pressure, squashing the rag against the edge of the bell and creating a temporary seal.

PLEASE make sure you have enough room to do this next bit!

The fun begins... rotate, shake rattle and roll the didge, turn it down side up and the other way. You want the oil to get in all the nooks and crannies in the bore. This is why I prefer this method to just pouring the oil through as I feel it gets to all the bits other oils can't reach, especially in view of the ruts and valleys of termite architecture. You will hear the oil splash inside the didge so you can tell if a particular area has been covered.

If the oil is going to leak this is when it will happen. The first time you do it, take it easy otherwise...



Slowly lowering the didge the excess fluid can be drained off back into the measuring jug. I hold it there until the oil starts to drip rather than a constant flow. Placing the bell of the didgeridoo in a tray or bowl I then deal with the mouth plasticine mouthpiece.

Fingers around the underneath of the plasticine with even pressure applied upwards will normally release it with no bother. If the temperature is warm and the plasticine soft there may be one or two remnants left inside the mouthpiece.

If this is the case then any excess can be cleaned off by using either the rag used to cover the end of the bell, or a piece of kitchen roll dipped in Danish Oil. Run this around the area with the plasticine, the oil will break the plasticine down and it will come off easily. A quick wipe with a clean piece of kitchen roll will prevent any build up of oil.

The plasticine should come off in one piece and be in the shape of the mouthpiece, and will have a layer of oil on the top of it. A piece of kitchen roll rubbed against it will remove the oil making the plasticine totally re-usable with minimal waste.

Let the didgeridoo stand for 5-10 minutes over the tray for the major drips to drain, then wipe any excess from around the bell and stand the didge to dry thoroughly.



Different brands have different recommendations as to drying time. They base this on the assumption the excess oil is wiped off. Obviously the oil in the bore is not wiped off so it will therefore be far thicker than usual and take a longer time to dry properly.

As a rule I aim to leave the didges for at least a day between coats and apply 2-3 coats when resealing, and leave the didgeridoo for at least a week before playing - though sometimes I just can't wait.



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