

Making Wood Chew Toys

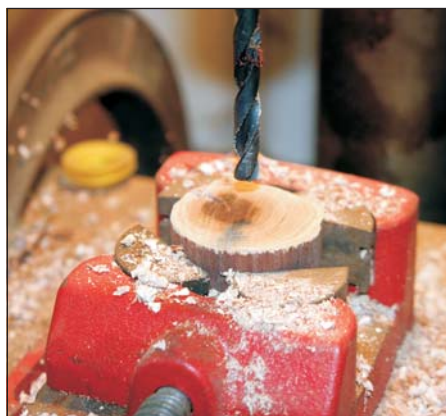
By Karen Robbins; photos ©2013 Karen Robbins

I make these wood chew toys for my rats but they can be adapted for mice (made with less pieces of wood). They are either hung from the lid of an aquarium or top or side of a wire cage.

If you find your rats not using the chew toy after a while, take it out and reintroduce a week or two later so they think it is a “new” toy.

Supplies Needed for Wood Chew Toy

- Chain: #16 single jack chain (comes in 15' packages)
- Needle-nose pliers
- Cut wood pieces of manzanita wood branches (I get my pieces already cut at the local bird store)
- Drill with a $\frac{3}{8}$ " bit to drill hole in wood piece for chain to go through (drill press works great for this; put wood in vise to hold while drilling hole)



Wood piece in vise getting ready to be drilled.



A wood piece after being drilled; it is now ready to use for the Wood Chew toy.



Drill press with $\frac{3}{8}$ " bit and small vise to hold pieces of wood in place while the hole is being drilled.



Once the wood pieces have been drilled, we can then get started on making the Wood Chew Toys. We will need some chain (I had made several toys in the past and just had a small amount of chain left—enough for 1 large toy and 2 small toys), drilled wood pieces, and needle-nose pliers.

Specifications

- Make 8 inches long for most cages; 5 inches for shorter cages or if hanging above a shelf in a wire cage (use less chain and wood pieces for mouse size; just remember mice will like to climb them and will pee all over these toys)

Directions

1. Count out 12 segments on the chain to make an 8" wood chew toy. Use the needle-nose pliers to unbend the link from the rest of the chain for your length of toy
2. Take this bottom link and fold it back onto itself and attach the open link to the link above it. This will make a



First step is to measure out the number of links and separate from the rest of the chain; for this toy we are going with 12 links.



The last link folded back onto itself and hooked through the link above it will make the "knot" at the end so the wood pieces don't come off. Just crimp the link closed to finish (see inset). If you fold it back the wrong way, it will "nest" with the other link and not make a "knot."

"knot" on the bottom of the chain so the wood pieces stay on. If you fold it to the front, it will not make a knot and the wood pieces will slide off.

3. Thread several pieces of wood onto the chain (it will be a little tight so use your needle-nose pliers to pull the chain through the hole); stagger the shapes and sizes

The wood pieces threaded onto the chain. It just needs the top link opened up to be able to hang in the rats' cage. See page 21 for a photo of a rat with a chew toy.



4. Take the top link and open up the loop. This will make the hook to hang the toy from the cage.
5. Place in cage for your rats to enjoy!
6. When the pieces are all chewed up, just replace with new drilled wood pieces.

Next Time: Making wire shelves for rat cages.

If you have a favorite Pet Project, Toy Tip, or your critters love a particular Tasty Treat, please send in the recipe/details so we can share with the readers! Send to the Editor or e-mail editor@afirma.org.



The top link opened up so the toy can be hung in the cage.



The completed Wood Chew Toy ready to hang in the cage for your rats to enjoy.



Two smaller 5" Wood Chew Toys made from the remainder of the chain divided into two pieces (8 links each).



The completed Wood Chew Toy hung on the side wire in this cage. In aquariums, hang from the wire in the lid or from the feeder basket if using wire feeders (WSSF 2011 newsletter www.afirma.org/pp_ratwirefeeder.htm).



The completed Wood Chew Toy hanging inside a wire cage. Inset: One of the smaller Wood Chew Toys hanging above a shelf in a wire cage