

DIY Shooting Sticks



After attending Errol Masons Hunt Smart training course in July 2015, I decided that I needed to add a few items to my deer hunting kit. One of those was a set of shooting sticks.

One of the excellent types that Errol showed me was the Crooked Horn Outfitters Carbon Fibre shooting sticks which unfortunately are no longer available. On inspections I noticed the simple construction technique and the similarities to my tent poles. This got me thinking and after doing some research on the internet, and making some mock ups with the poles, I had on hand at home, I set about to build my own set of shooting sticks.

Only a few things required.

First off I needed some O-rings for the pivot point; internet research revealed that castration bands are best for DIY shooting sticks so off to the agricultural supply shop and \$5 bought my 100 rings. Next was the camping store, now I like to support the local shops but at \$9 a section for tent poles, I just had to buy these on line. \$18 got me 11 sections of 9.5mm diameter tent poles plus shock cord and end tips. The local rubber store supplied rubber end caps and hose to protect the rifle finish.



Castrator Rings \$5/100

Rubber Hose clear PVC is lighter, fuel hose is softer \$2/M

Rubber end caps 8mm x2 \$0.20/ea

Replacement tent pole kit \$18 (11 section of 9.5mm diameter fibreglass polls with metal ferrules, shock cord and 2 metal tips)

Next I determined my required overall length and my folded length.

With 11 x 53cm sections available the options were many. But had already decided that the Crooked Horn shooting sticks I examined were about right for me, so I settled on 3 x 36cm sections per leg.

I tried cutting the poles with a hacksaw but they splintered badly so I resorted to grinding then through on the edge off sanding disk, rotating the pole as it cut. This made quick work of my 8 sections and left nice smooth ends. Another method is wrap the poles tightly with tape and work the saw around the section through the tape scoring the rods all the way around then slice through. This will keep the fibreglass from splintering. Remove the tape after cutting.



Six poles cut to 36 cm, with original pole for comparison.

Slipping the shock cord up through 3 sections of the pole and tying it off in a double knot, I then pulled tension to the other end and tied it off, repeating the process for the other pole.

With 2 separate, 3 section poles shock corded together, I install the end tips on the lower ends. I pushed them on over the loose end of the tied off shock cord, sandwiching it between the metal tip and the fiberglass pole ensuring the knot would not come undone and the cap would be unlikely to fall off. I might use glue here later just to be sure will never fall off. Rubber end caps can be substituted for the metal tips if you intend to do your shooting from on hard ground or rock.

Next I slipped a two castrator rings around one leg only. Then 4 rings over the end of the two sticks held together. Now with these bands near the end I pulled the 2 single bands back up over the end of the one pole. This captures them around the other 4 bands and gives the legs room to pivot. I then slid all the bands down the poles 13-14 cm.

Now I needed something to cushion my rifle from the fiberglass sticks. Most internet articles suggested clear PVS tube. This hose can be fitted over the fiberglass poles using dish washing soap inside the hose to help make it slide on. The soap will dry and the hose will never move again. It is a very tight fit, I was able to buy 9mm ID hose. The more common 8mm is too tight, 10mm too loose. In the end I decided I would prefer a softer hose so I changes to black rubber fuel hose 9.5mm ID and a perfect fit. Two 8 mm rubber end caps completed the project. As with the metal tips on the bottom end, I pushed the rubber caps on over the loose end of the tide off shock cord.



Shooting stick ready to go, at 313 gms. or just under 12 oz. they are nearly three time the weight of carbon fibre sticks but cheap at \$10-\$12 worth of parts used to make a set.