

Slingshot_Hand_Catapult_2004.txt

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Singshot FAQ aka Hand catapults

Slingshots or hand catapults, are weapons of a compact nature. As simple as a forked stick with cut natural rubber bands or as fancy as the commercial modles with aluminum frames and straight or tapered silicone rubber tubing. The basic principles are the same. You make use of the natural elastic property of rubber to drive a missle at a target.

BandsMost bands today are made of silicone rubber tubing, and some are still available in natural gum rubber. Natural gum rubber(vulcanised) is the ideal material from which bands would be made from, and flat bands are the best shape.

Flat bands of natural rubber have become fairly difficult to obtain nowadays since the primary source of natural rubber bands(inner tubes of red gum rubber) has disapeared. (they were replaced by fairly unelastic butyl rubber and then by tubless tires)

So people wanting a flipper that they used to forage with during the depression turned to more available silicone rubber tubing, which comes close but does not quite match natural rubber in elasticity.

The following taken without permission from the NCA BULLETIN No.107 GUIDE TO CATAPULTRY an organisation that has fallen to the wayside. Commercial flat straps deliver velocities between 250 to 300 fps with moderate drawing force, tubular rubber bands with draw weights between 15 to 45 pounds of drawing force achieve between 220 to 270 fps.

A new design is the tapered band assembly that delivers 350 to 450 fps. The main advantage to tubular rubber bands is that they have a superior life span than flat bands.

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A gentleman by the name of Rodney A. Wolf, the driving force behind the NCA, invented the tapered band assembly, and I believe still holds the patent on the design. Marksman in California is the only commercial manufacturer that provides a tapered band assembly. Rodney experimented with different combinations of rubber bands to create many of his tapered band assemblies.

Rubber bands in the larger sizes are still popular for home made flippers. Either loop knotted #64's with either one set or two sets to each side of a pouch. Two #64 rubber bands make one band and each pouch may have between two and four bands. A tapered band assembly can be made of a #64 and a #84 band looped together with the stouter band next to the stock.

The main problem with rubber is that it is a product that is affected by sunlight, oil, and humidity. And so has a limited lifespan. It is also easily nicked by sharp objects, including the ammo it shoots. The Dennis the Mennis carry is not advisable because it allows the bands to hang loose unprotected. Also you need a certain level of technology to make rubber. So if things fall apart you won't be able to resupply after your stash is used up. If you do find a slingshot you like and decide to store extra bands then keep them in their original wrap and in a cool, not cold, dark place.

Shooting

Most of my shooting is done instinctively. Care must be taken to keep the stock straight and not to twist the stock. Actually it is easier to shoot a bow than a slingshot because the arrow provides a straight plane to prevent twist of the stock in relation to the shooter. There are two ways of holding the sling shot for shooting. One way is to hold the stock straight up so that you are looking over the forks.

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The other way is to hold the slingshot so that the forks are to the side and when you are holding the bands back you are looking over the top prong of the fork and along the upper band. Just as in archery, consistency pays off. Find an anchor point, and use it each time.

Hunting

Sling shots have been popular for small game hunting with steel, lead, or glass balls. By small game I'm talking about rabbit, squirrel, and grouse. Head shots are preferred, actually they are pretty much mandatory.

So if you are going to hunt with a sling shot practice until you can hit 35mm film containers regularly and only shoot at the distance you can hit one of those fairly regularly. Aiming a slingshot is mostly done by instinct, and not by aiming. Still you can aim across the top bands if

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Touch of the Bear

JB