

How to Make a Lateral Support Splint



YOUR SUPPLIES

- 12-14 Gauge wire (stainless steel is best)
- A steel ring mandrel
- A nylon, rubber, or leather mallet
- Heavy duty wire cutters
- Round nose and flat brass nose pliers
- A diamond coated needle file
- A sharpie

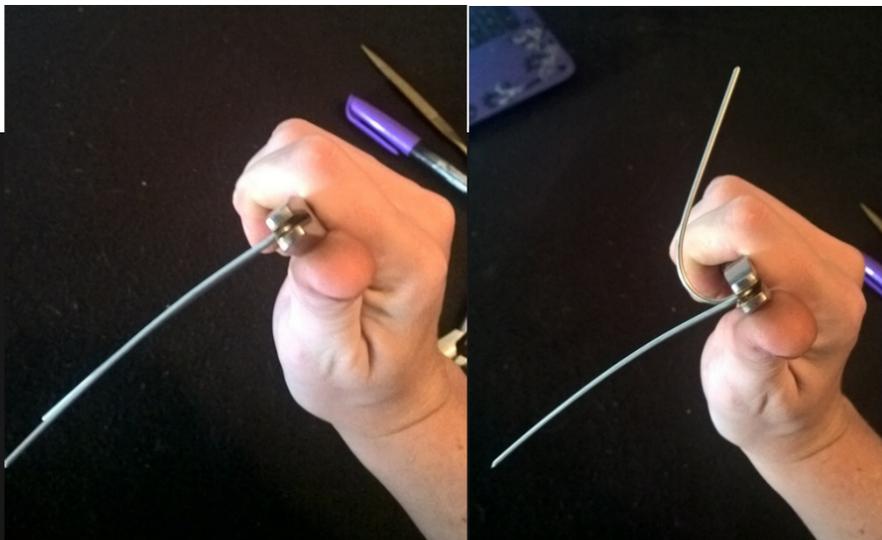
Step 1

Using your heavy duty wire cutters, cut a 6" to 10" length of wire, depending on the size of the splint your making. I'm making a size 5 and cut around 6", but as you'll see later on I was cutting it a little close.

Step 2

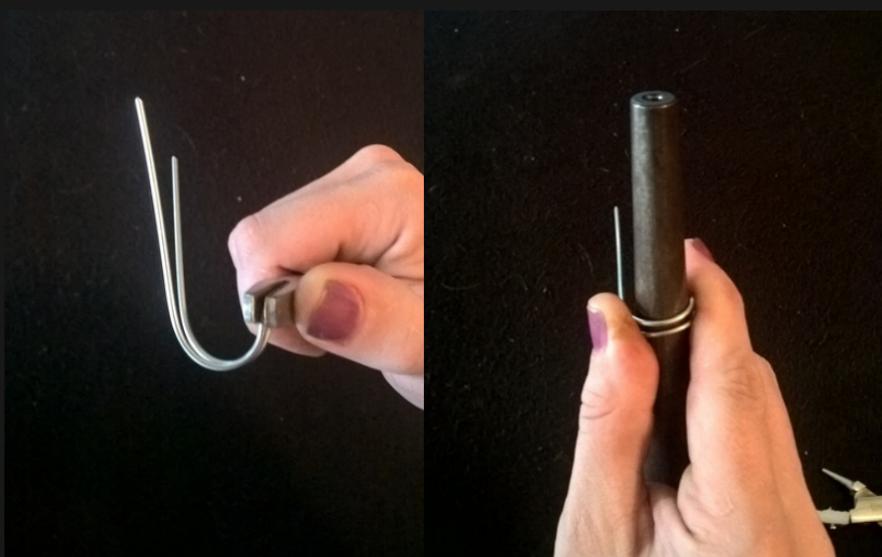
With your round nose pliers, fold your length of wire in half to form a little loop on top. (Sorry I didn't really show this step, was kinda hard to get a decent pic of)





Step 3

Using your flat brass nose pliers, grip the very end of the loop and gently curve the wire to form a semi-circle, starting with the lower wire and repeating with the top wire.



Step 4

Once you have both wires bent into a half circle, place your ring on the mandrel about two sizes smaller than you want the finished splint to be. This is because the metal has some spring back, so will open back up to a larger size once wrapped. Gripping the ring very tightly as shown, wrap both wire ends completely around the mandrel to form full circles.

I personally find it easiest to wrap the wire from above my hand, so I'll wrap the top wire first, then take the ring off and flip it over so that the other wire is on top to be wrapped.



Step 5

Using your mallet, hammer the ring on the mandrel to form it into an even round shape and bring it up to the desired finished size.



Step 6

Check sizing on your splint. If it feels too small, you can open it up by pushing it down the mandrel. If it feels a bit too large, you'll need to gently close the rings down by hand and check for size again. Once the size feels good, make markings on the underside of the ring, mid finger, where you'll be cutting the wire ends. As previously mentioned, I cut mine a little close. End was exactly where it needed to be. Luck!



Step 7

Use your needle nose file to file down the rough ends of the wire until they are smooth and rounded. (I only did one because this is a tutorial and, well, lazy...)



Step 8

Now to begin shaping your ring. First, smush down the wire ends that were pulled up to cut and file. They don't have to be perfectly level, just as flat as you can get them. Then turn the ring with the lateral support facing you and using your index fingers to press inward where the wire ends are, use your thumbs in the middle of the two rings to pull them apart as shown. Once the splint has been spread apart properly, it takes a little tweaking to get the rings parallel to each other and the fit just right. Usually I end up having to use the brass jaws to bend the support inward a bit.



It just takes some practice and fiddling around to get the hang of it :) I like to buy my stainless wire from wire-jumping-depot on eBay, and my sterling silver from RioGrande.com. Most of the tools you can find in local craft stores, but I would generally avoid craft store wire as it tends to be too soft, often made of aluminum or copper

Thanks guys! Remember, you can always message me with questions and I'm happy to help!

And for your splinting needs:
www.zebrasplints.org