

Making a Center Grip Plank foam Shield with a Recessed Grip

Cut out your desired Shield Blank shape out of 2 inch plank foam and make a grip rod:



For the grip rod I like to use Fiberglass sign slats available from road sign supply stores. They are ideal for this purpose. If you can't get any of those you can use almost any type of normal weapon core (PVC, bamboo, kitespar, fiberglass golf shaft) but you will want to tape multiple pieces together so that your handle is as wide as the thickness of the plank foam blank. Doing so gives the grip rod enough surface area to support the twisting and turning you wrist makes in rotating your shield during combat. The slats just make that step easy

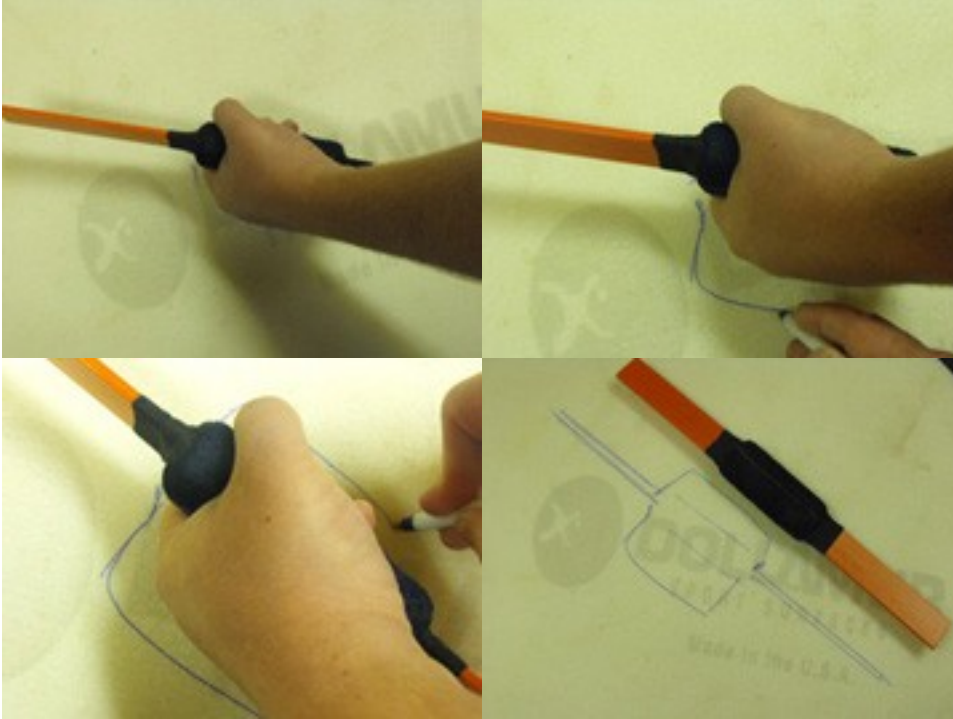
Using leather, or duct tape build up the grip area as desired. I like an oblong, or "directional" grip for maneuverability of the shield. Cover the grip area with your preference of the grip material. I prefer either hockey tape or leather. Remember that you want your grip finished at this point. It's a lot harder to add the nice details or grip tape after you have the grip rod installed inside the shield blank.



Position the grip rod where you would like it, in most cases the grip is in the center of the shield (hence the term "Center Grip").



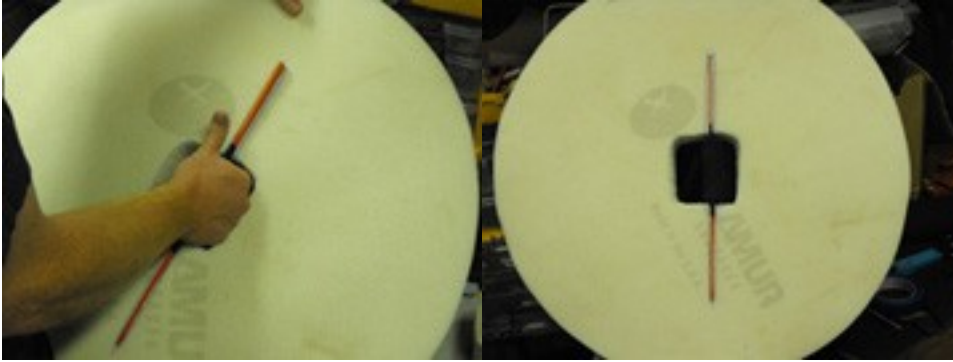
Using a marking pen, trace the outline of the grip rod and add a boxed area around the grip to give your hand room to get in and grip the handle. You'll have more to cut out on the side where the back of your hand resides than the side your finger tips are on unless you want an ambidextrous grip. Don't make this area too big or your center grip will be really easy to knock around, you want it comfortably tight. If you fight with padded gloves make sure to make allowances for that, I make mine so my gloves lock my hand in place when I grab the grip.



Next cut out the area you just traced. Important note here, you can angle the trough for the rod or keep it perpendicular to the face of the shield, I like to angle it so that my wrist is comfortably straight while my shield is held in front of me.



Position the grip rod in place. Inset the rod so the handle is flush with the interior face of the shield's surface.



Cut multiple 10-12 inch lengths of 1 inch strapping tape (you'll need a lot of them, best not to do in a windy area).

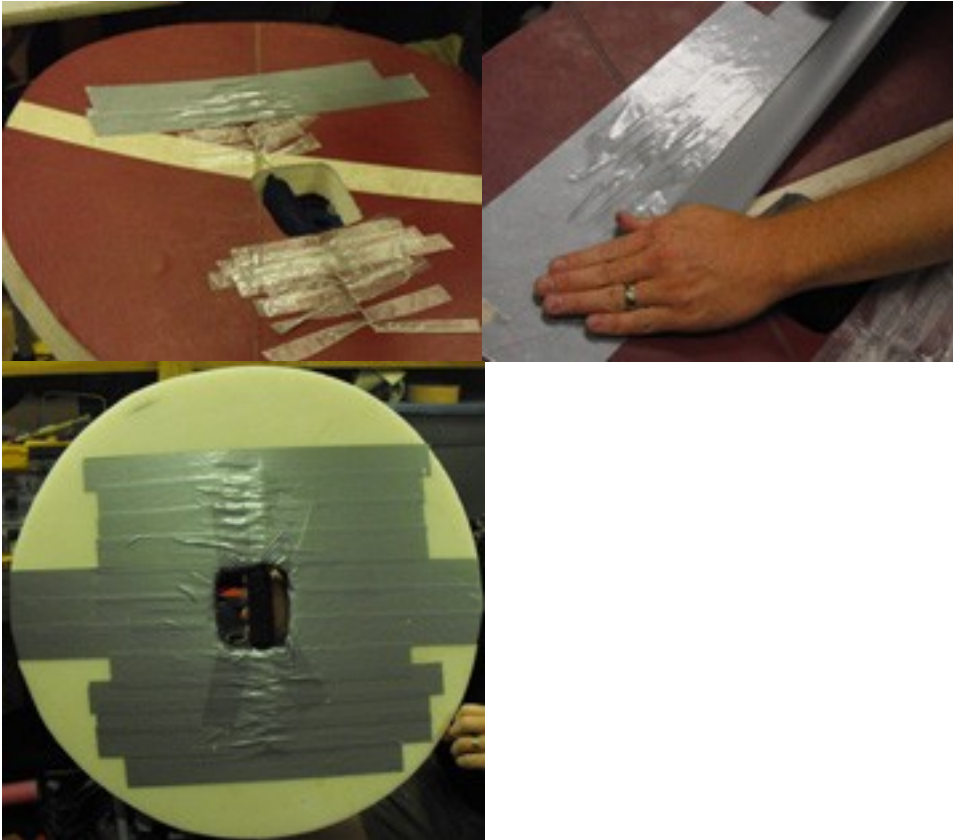
Carefully thread the precut strapping tape through the hole at the center (sticky side of tape facing the grip rod) of the shield while holding the shield as shown between your legs. Holding both sides very tightly and pulling away from each other so as to maintain the tightest tension on the tape, begin to pull the tape up towards you until it gets to the top of the rod.



Lay each piece of the tape you are holding down so it sticks to the foam on each side and then repeat that step but start on the opposite side of the grip rod. Alternate the tape all the way down until you get to the grip. Repeat for the opposite end of the grip rod as shown:



Use long layers of duct tape to anchor the strapping tape as shown on both sides of the shield:



Next, you need to cover the hole left by the handle area on the outer surface of the shield. You can use small pieces of foam, half a Nerf soccer ball (Viking boss style) or my preference is to use a couple layers of blue cap pad or other foam that is the same outer dimensions as the plank foam blank you are using. I normally then just duct tape that to the outer face of the shield.



It's a nice touch to cover the inside face of the shield with a color of duct tape that matches your shield cover. Oh yeah, now you're ready to make a fitted shield cover! On to the next tutorial.....