

eHow to Make a Taiko Drum [by Elaine Fong](#)

Taiko is the Japanese word for "big drum," and it is deeply rooted in the daily cultural and spiritual life of Japan. Although taiko in Japan is a centuries-old tradition, taiko in the United States is a relatively new art form. A taiko drum with a head diameter of 20 inches would cost approximately \$5,000 to \$10,000, but for about \$10, you can make a tire taiko out of simple household supplies in less than an hour.

Steps:

1. Gather the items in the shopping list.
2. Run rope around the outer circumference, or treads of the tire, as if you were tracing its shape. Create small loops at the 4 o'clock and 8 o'clock positions of the tire to form handles a few inches long. Use handles to tie the tire to a metal folding chair through the seat hinges.
3. Secure the rope on the circumference of the tire with duct tape to hold it firmly in place. Do not duct tape the handles. The duct tape should cover the rim of the tire.
4. Use the packing tape to create the first layer of your tire taiko. Lay down four strips of packing tape, crisscrossing in the center of the tire, like spokes of a wheel. The packing tape should be pulled very tight, because this will become the "sweet spot" for you to drum on. Make sure the packing tape reaches well over to the far side of the rim of the tire. Your tape should divide the tire taiko into eight equal pie sections.
5. Lay clear plastic tape tightly over the spokes of the drum in radial fashion, making sure the plastic tape overlaps by about 1/2 inch and that the tape reaches well over the rim of the tire. You will notice that the tire taiko has many crisscrosses, which form a star pattern with a thick center spot. Tap it to sample the sound.
6. Create a second layer of tape. Starting from the center, lay plastic tape in parallel overlapping strips in rows out to the edge of the tire, making sure the tape reaches well over the rim of the tire.
7. Rotate your tire taiko 90 degrees and repeat the process outlined in step 6, making sure the tape reaches well over the rim of the tire. This layer will be at a 90-degree angle from the second layer. The additional layers deepen the sound and add strength to the head.
8. Reinforce the rim (edge) of your tire taiko. With duct tape, seal down the tape ends along the rim with one or two wraps around the drum. Remember not to tape down the handles.
9. Position the tire at about a 45-degree angle on a metal folding chair, and tie your tire taiko to the chair with rope through the seat hinges.
10. Select a rhythm or make one up. Make bachi (drumsticks - see tips section) and your tire taiko drum is ready to play.

Tips:

- Ask a garage or gas station to give you an old tire - the worse shape it is in, the better.
- Make bachi (drumsticks) from dowels, which you can buy at a hardware store. A 1-inch diameter is best. Cut them to 16-inch length. Use fine sandpaper to round the edges of the dowels.
- Hold the drumsticks as though you are shaking hands with someone. Your thumb should be wrapped around the drumsticks, not on top of the drumsticks.
- Learn how taiko should sound by going to Taiko.com, listed under Related Sites.