

Victorian Clothes Pegs

You might think that clothes pegs, used to hold washing on a line while it's hung up to dry, had been around for thousands of years. You therefore might be surprised to know that until the early 1800s clothes were usually draped over bushes or drying frames and that the clothes peg has only been around for the last 200 years or so. Originally clothes pegs were made from one piece of wood. In Britain, Gypsies, who travelled around in their brightly painted caravans, were famous for making clothes pegs, which they would sell from door-to-door to make a little money. Sadly, the Gypsy art of clothes peg making died out when mass-produced factory-made pegs became available, so we'll have to make our own historical pegs.

This activity should be carried out under adult supervision

You will need: a length of freshly-cut stick (hazel is best) around 1.5 cm thick and 12cm long, some string, a strong, sharp knife.



Using your knife, very carefully split the stick down the middle, about three quarters of the way from one end. If you do accidentally split it completely in half, it's not the end of the world, we can still make it into a peg.

Remember to make sure you use a chopping board under your knife!



Put a *whipping* on your peg, just above the split to stop it splitting further. Whipping is wrapping string around the end of your stick. You can see how to do it here:

[Common whipping](#)

If you accidentally split your peg all the way in the first stage, you can use the whipping to join the two halves back together.

It's also a good idea to make the end of your peg round with your knife, it will make it easier to use.



Cut a V-shaped opening in the other end of your peg to make it easier to push over your washing and the line.

You can do this with your knife, but you might find it easier to do it with a saw.

Once you have successfully made one peg, you can make more. Then gather all the dirty washing from the floor of your bedroom and put it tidily in the wash-basket ready to be washed. Once it's clean, use your pegs to hang it up to dry.

