

With a little bit of practice, you can try catching the returning stick by clapping it between your hands

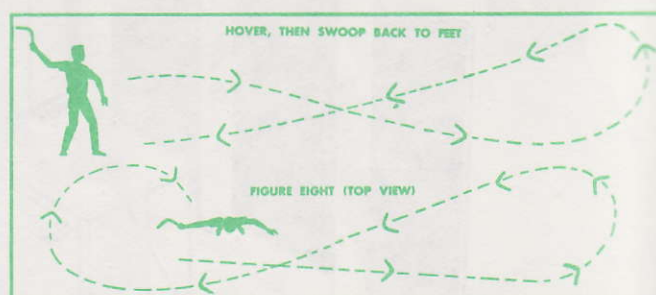
## Build a boomerang

BY DALE RUDOLPH

■ IF THE SPACE AGE began when man first tried to duplicate the flight of birds, it's not very new. And it didn't start when Dedalus stuck feathers to his arms with wax. It goes far back into the cavern of pre-history, to the heart of the world's bleakest continent, and starts with a stick.

Perhaps the Space Age dates from that day an Australian aborigine first whittled the crotch of an acacia tree into a flat, sickle-shaped blade, for use as a hunting weapon. (One can imagine his surprise when he flung his stick at some scampering animal only to find the thing arcing around through the air to come spinning *back* at him!)

At any rate, these nomadic people—who through the centuries have made virtually no



When you're an expert at regular return tosses, you may want to try the stunts that an Australian aborigine uses to test his skill as shown above

other contribution to civilization—have developed their skills with the flying stick into an art that makes most of our model flying look pale and fussy. The primitive Australian can throw his boomerang in the most erratic, yet precise patterns. He can make it fly like a runaway saw blade at a forward speed in excess of 50 m.p.h. for over 100 yards, then loop around, lift 150 ft. in the air, circle up to five times and finally knife into the ground at his feet; or he can make the stick scribe a broad figure eight in the sky and then return docilely to his waiting hands; he can even cause it to dive to the earth and bounce up again with enough spin to return as if there'd been no interruption.

This skill comes from a great deal of practice, and the aborigine boy starts his training as soon as he learns to walk. Upon reaching manhood, he graduates from a toy stick to a deadly curved

booster, FM tuner: see tuners, FM



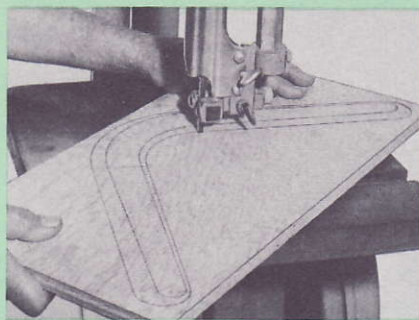




## boomerangs



Final shaping is done with a wood rasp, to convert the flat bevel into the smoothly rounded half-teardrop cross section sketched on the previous page



A jigsaw is the fastest way to cut the outline after laying out the pattern on a piece of 1/2-in. exterior-grade plywood. Sand to the exact pattern after cutting



Rough shaping consists of cutting away corners of upper face to remove the shaded area in the sketch on the preceding page. Use a blockplane or a spokeshave



Brush on a coat of sealer and two coats of a good lacquer. Rub down the entire boomerang with steel wool and apply a coat or two of wax. Rewax as often as necessary

### build a boomerang, continued

missile which he makes from a tree he must select and cut down for himself.

There are three main types of boomerangs: the returning stick, the hunting stick and the war stick. All three are curved (in shapes from a shallow V to a deep U), but the latter two don't return. Largest and most lethal is the war boomerang. Up to 5 ft. long, this giant is thrown with both hands, wickedly maiming anything in its path. The hunting boomerang is middle-sized, with a maximum range of over 200 yards. It's capable of disabling a full-grown kangaroo.

But the popular returning stick, one type of which is detailed here, is strictly for fun. It can be 18 to 36 in. long, with a 90 to 120-degree spread between its V-shaped arms.

The plans provided are only a suggestion. After experimentation, you can vary the angle and length of the arms. The vital thing is the shaping of the airfoils. Theoretically, the greater the height of the camber, the greater the lift. And remember that the pattern given is for a right-hand boomerang. For left hand, the bevels are reversed.

Leave the bottom face flat, with only a slight rounding of the edges. Then sand and finish all surfaces as smooth as possible.

To throw, hold the stick vertical, the beveled face toward you. Grasp either arm, and throw overhand with a quick snap of the wrists. All it takes is patient experimentation.

**See also:** archery; baseball; marksmanship; targets.