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The ugly stick is a percussive musical instrument from Newfoundland, Canada. Made from recycled household materials, such as mops, brooms, bottle caps, and tin cans, the ugly stick has a boot as its base and a “head” on top. It is played by striking the boot on the ground and beating rhythms on the stick. Used in traditional Newfoundland folk music, the ugly stick often accompanies accordions and fiddles. It is seen and heard at social gatherings, mummery events (short traveling plays), and kitchen concerts. Enjoy playing your ugly stick to some of your favorite folk songs!

MAKE**Materials**

- One rain boot
- Two paint stirrers
- 1½ in. x ½ in. x 3 ft. piece of wood
- Hammer and nails
- Thin wire
- Metal washers and bells in a variety of sizes
- Yarn
- Plastic cup
- Permanent markers
- Drill
- Newspaper
- Glue (optional)

Instructions

1. Attach one paint stirrer (or a portion of one) to the end of the 1½ in. x ½ in. x 3 ft. piece of wood with a drill and glue.
2. Drill four holes on the stick and put the piece of wire through the holes.
3. String the metal washers and bells on the wire and secure loosely.
4. Decorate a plastic cup as a head using markers and yarn.
5. Attach the head to the stick using the drill and glue.
6. Put the stick inside the boot and stuff the boot with newspapers to secure.
7. Play your ugly stick by bouncing the boot on the ground and striking the stick with your second paint stirrer.

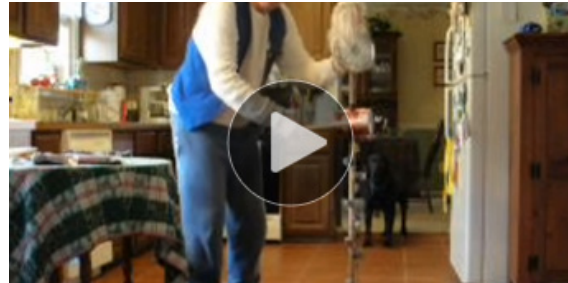
**SEE**

Visit MIM's United States / Canada Gallery and see a Newfoundland ugly stick.

LISTEN



Watch some Newfoundlanders and Labradorians talk about the ugly stick [here](#).



[Here's](#) Mike Madigan from Sharecropper's Trio giving an ugly stick lesson.

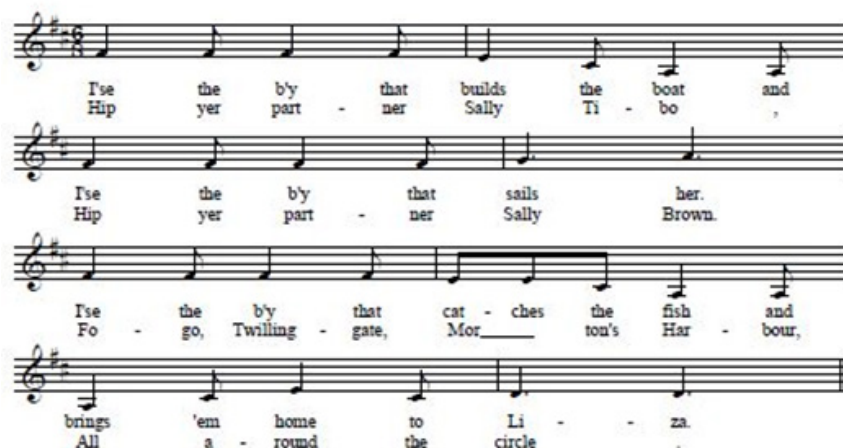
PLAY ALONG

"I'se the B'y" — [Here's](#) a version by the Canadian folk-rock band Great Big Sea. Try beating a quick 1-2-3, 1-2-3 pattern by hitting the boot on the ground on "1" and striking the stick on "2" and "3."

I'se the b'y that builds the boat
And I'se the b'y that sails her
I'se the b'y that catches the fish
And brings 'em home to Liza

Hip yer partner Sally Tibbo
Hip yer partner Sally Brown
Fogo, Twillingate, Morton's Harbour
All around the circle

I'se The B'y



I'se the b'y that builds the boat and
Hip yer partner Sally Tibbo

I'se the b'y that sails her
Hip yer partner Sally Brown

I'se the b'y that catches the fish and
Fogo, Twillingate, Morton's Harbour

brings 'em home to Liza
All around the circle

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