

How to Make a Trident

By Malinghi



A trident is a three pronged spear, and is a hugely popular icon in mermaid imagery and lore. This tutorial will explain how to make a simple trident out of PVC tubing. PVC tubing is cheap and lightweight, and can be cut, bent, glued, and painted, making it excellent for tridents.



WHAT YOU WILL NEED:

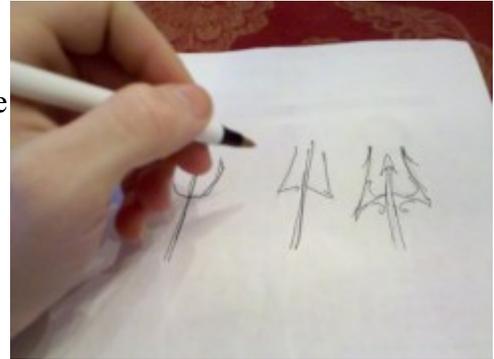
- PVC tubing
- paint
- a saw
- PVC compatible adhesive
- heat gun or blow dryer
- clamp
- sandpaper
- measuring tape
- a marker



STEPS:

1. Design your trident.

Before starting your trident, decide what you want it to look like. For ideas you may wish to search for images of tridents online. Be aware that the more complex the design is the harder it will be to make the two sides symmetrical. For the trident illustrated here, a simple design was made from five straight sections. The single piece used in the central spear is 1 inch diameter PVC tubing, while the four pieces used in the side spears are all made from $\frac{3}{4}$ inch diameter PVC tubing.



2. Cut pieces.

After designing your trident, use the marker to indicate where to cut the PVC, and cut the sections you need. You can use a vertical bandsaw, a tablesaw, a hacksaw, whatever. Use sandpaper to smooth the surface after cutting.

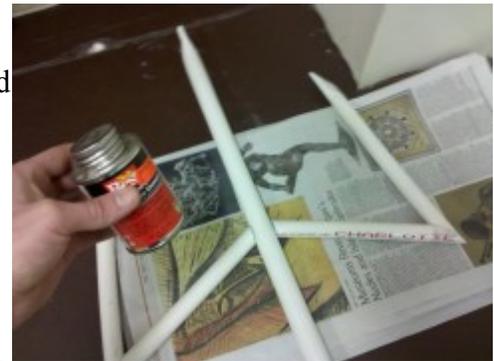


3. Bend pieces.

If you wish to reshape the PVC tubing, you can do this by heating the tubing with a heat gun and slowly bending it. You can also use the heat gun to clamp the ends of the tubes into points. It may be easier to make bends and points before cutting the sections to length.

4. Glue pieces together.

After cutting and shaping the pieces, glue them all together. I had some trouble with this- First I glued the two parts of each of the side spears using PVC cement, and it worked fine. After that, I tried gluing the side spears onto the central shaft with PVC cement but they didn't bond. If you use PVC cement correctly it bonds well, but gluing with PVC cement can be hard. You want as much surface area contacting between the two parts, and the surfaces should be clean and dry. Primer might also help. As a backup I glued the side spears to the central spear with epoxy and it worked well. You can also drill holes the size of the side spears in each side of the shaft and slide the side spears in before gluing, for better attachment.



5. Paint trident.

After letting the adhesives dry I spraypainted the whole thing with silver spraypaint for a metallic look. I haven't tested what paints work best, and I'm not sure if the spraypaint can rub off of the PVC.



That's all there is to it. This guide should give you the basic info for a very simple trident, but there are tons of ways to add to this through painting, adding decorations, using more complex shapes, and even modifying whether it sinks or floats. This design is slightly negatively buoyant, making it good for underwater photoshoots. Alternatively you could add some closed cell foam to make it float or even be neutrally buoyant.



Additional notes:

Tridents are usually depicted as being around the height of the person it belongs to. This might be a good rule of thumb.

Heating and clamping the ends is the easiest method for making the points, but it would probably look nicer if the points were sharper and barbed. To do this it would probably be easier to make the points out of something else and glue them on.

Since the tubes are hollow, be aware that it will fill with water when submerged. You might want to not clamp the ends completely, or drill some inconspicuous holes to make it fill and drain more quickly when you take it in and out of the water.

While you can make curved sections by heating and bending the PVC, I used only straight sections in this trident because its harder to make the side spears symmetrical if they are bent.

Images of King Triton and Aquaman owned by Disney and DC comics, respectively.

To ask questions, or share improvements and alternate trident designs, go to MerNetwork.com.