

# Do-It-Yourself: Picture perfect

Woodworking hobbyist shares picture hanger process

by Brenna Malmberg / Palo Alto Weekly



Rhonda Stieber, a resident of Los Altos, displays her children's artwork on her handmade, rustic picture hanger. She sells her woodworking projects on her Etsy shop, Treetop Woodworks. Photo by Brenna Malmberg.



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A woodworking class at the Palo Alto Adult School turned into a little business for Los Altos resident Rhonda Stieber. Since her introduction to the craft more than five years ago, she has learned woodworking basics, such as reading plans, using tools and staying safe, and has invested in her own miter saw and hand sander.

Then in 2013, she opened her own Etsy shop, [Treetop Woodworks](#). This online platform has allowed her to sell more than 1,200 of her handmade, rustic wares to people around the world.

"This is definitely a hobby," she said. "It has to fit into my nights and weekends."

A high-tech professional by day, Stieber enjoys that her hobby keeps her busy, especially during the holiday season. Custom orders also stretch her creativity and business, such as the dog leash hooks with treat jars.

"I'm inspired by customers," she says. "It's so fun to work with them."

### **MATERIALS NEEDED:**

- piece of wood (length can vary)
- clothespins
- twine
- sander/sandpaper
- wood stain
- cloth/rag
- wood sealer, such as polyurethane
- paint brush
- two screw eye rings
- two D-ring/triangle hangers with screws
- scissors
- hammer (optional)
- nails (optional)

**Step 1:** Cut a piece of wood to the desired length. For example, Stieber offers 24- and 28-inch-long options. The length is determined by the space you have for the picture

hanger and the number of items you wish to hang from it. Stieber says that home improvement store staff can cut pieces to specific lengths. She recommends 1-by-6-inch or 1-by-4-inch pieces cut to the desired length.

**Step 2** Sand the piece of wood, focusing on the edges so that they are smooth. Stieber, who prefers a more rustic look, does extra sanding on the corners. In addition, she distresses the wood with a hammer and nails by beating random holes and cuts into the piece of wood.

**Step 3** Apply a wood stain with a cloth or rag. The color of the stain is up to the do-it-yourselfer. She typically lets the stain sit for three to four minutes before wiping it off the wood. Then, she lets the piece dry for at least 24 hours. Stieber likes a dark walnut stain made by Minwax, and recommends that people test different stains on a scrap piece or the back of the project before staining the entire piece.

**Step 4** Use a paint brush to apply a wood sealer, such as Varathane polyurethane. Stieber uses a fast-drying satin finish and applies two coats (follow directions on product for best results).

**Step 5** Attach the two D-ring/triangle hangers on the back with their screws in the same fashion (same distance from end and at same height). These will allow you to hang the picture hanger on the wall. Twist the screw eye rings into the front of the stained, sealed piece of wood. Each ring should be screwed in the same distance from the end at the same height. These will be used to affix the twine to the piece.

**Step 6** Cut a piece of twine that is about 6 inches longer than the distance between the two screw eye rings. Then, thread the twine through the middle circle on the clothespins so that they can slide back and forth on the twine. Use as many clothespins as needed for your picture hanger.

**Step 7** Tie the twine to the screw eye rings with a knot. Once secured, cut away any excess twine.

**Step 8** Hang up your finished woodworking project, and add photos and artwork for all to enjoy.

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