

# HAIRPIPE BREASTPLATE

## MATERIALS REQUIRED

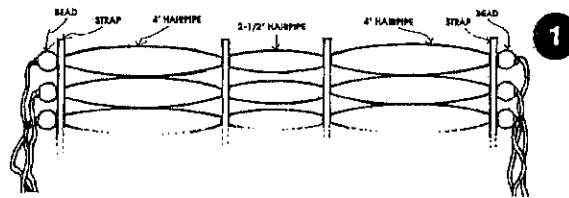
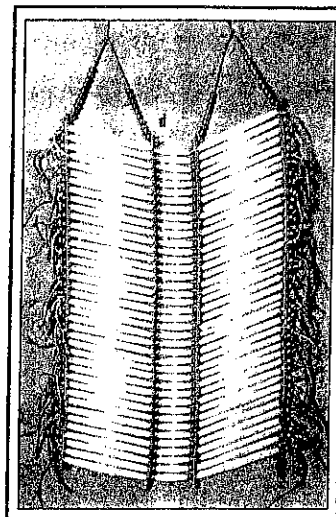
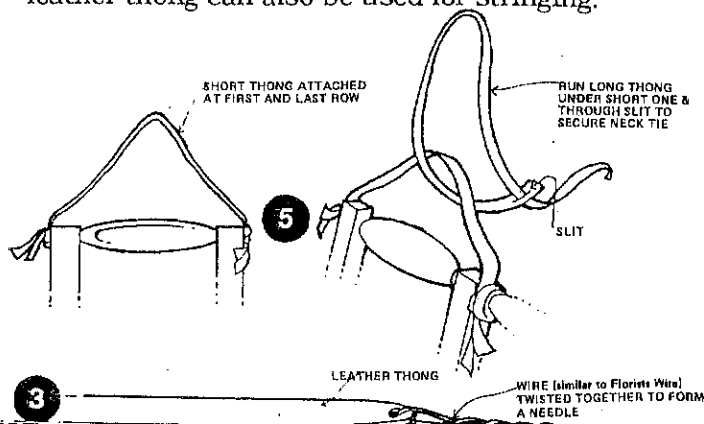
- 80 Imitation or Bone Hairpipe, 4"
- 40 Imitation or Bone Hairpipe, 1-1/2"
- 200 Brass or Crow beads
- 4 Strap leather pieces
- Simulated Sinew for stringing, or 45 thin leather thongs 18" in length

**STEP 1:** The simplest method of construction is to lay out your materials (leather spacers, bones, & beads) exactly as you want them to appear in the finished breastplate. See Figure 1. They can then be rearranged several times until the desired effect is achieved. For instance, you may decide that you prefer beads instead of short bones in the middle section. In this way, you can see how the finished product will look without stringing & restringing.

**STEP 2:** The strap leather for construction should be cut into 4 pieces, each 3/8" wide by 18" long; however, you may wish to alter this size depending upon the look you wish to achieve. Now, cut the strips to the desired length, if necessary.

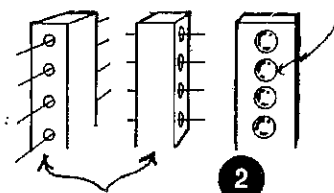
**STEP 3:** Paying close attention to the spacing required by your layout, punch 40 (or more depending on the desired length) evenly spaced holes in the first strap with an awl, leather punch, or electric drill with a small bit. Using this as a pattern, mark and punch or drill the remaining straps. As a variation, these straps can be punched from side to side rather than from front to back, with the smooth side of the leather out, as illustrated in Figure 2. They may now be dyed a dark brown if you like. Any good leather dye, such as Feibings, will work well for this.

**STEP 4:** Cut 40 leather thongs 18" long to string the bones on. Stringing can be made a little easier by punching a tiny hole in the end of each thong, tapering it slightly, & putting a 9" piece of thin wire (such as florists wire) through the hole, then doubling it & twisting the ends tightly together to form a needle. Often breastplates are strung with simulated sinew and fringe added to the outer edges. Greek leather thong can also be used for stringing.



BRASS TACKS ATTACHED TO THE WIDE SIDE

NARROW OR WIDE SIDE TO THE FRONT OF THE BREASTPLATE



**STEP 5:** Knot one end of a thong and thread it through the top hole of the first leather strap. A typical stringing order is as follows: Bead, strap, 4" hairpipe, strap, 1-1/2" hairpipe, strap, 4" hairpipe, strap, bead. Allow even amounts of thong to extend on each side of the outside spacers as fringe, being sure to knot the ends as you finish a row. Repeat until all 40 rows are completed. See Fig. 4.

**STEP 6:** Refer to Figure 5 for the method used to secure the neck ties to the breastplate. Take two short sections of leather thong, approximately 12" long, and tie them into the breastplate at the first sections on either side. Then take another, larger piece of thong (approximately 15" long) and make a cut in one end to within 1/2" of the very end of the thong. Run the longer thong under the short thong, pushing one end through the slit and pulling tight to form the tie needed on one side. Repeat this process to secure the tie on the other side. Make certain all thongs are secured with double knots to prevent the finished piece from coming apart later. Extra decorations can now be added if desired, and go a long way toward making your breastplate authentic and unique!

## VARIATIONS AND FINISHING TOUCHES

Placement, types, and sizes of bones & beads can vary according to personal taste. Conch discs, mirrors, brass tacks, ribbon, hawk bells, mesquite beans, otter fur, buckskin fringe, etc. are often used to dress up breastplates.