

Doll's swing seat

Swinging is a rhythmical activity enjoyed by all, but particularly by the young child. We all know how soothing rhythmic movements are, whether in stroking and rocking a baby or bouncing and swinging a toddler. The child relaxes into the timeless movement, asking for 'more' each time the bouncing comes to an end.



A HEALING ACTIVITY

Swinging is actually healing for a young child, particularly if you accompany it with singing. Your toddler will love being pushed in a swing at the park, while you sing the simple age-old nonsense rhyme below over and over again, to the tune of 'See-saw Marjory Daw'. To begin with, you can stand in front of the swing and push your child so that she feels no fear, before moving to stand behind her.

*Sing, sing, swing, swing
The cat's gone off with the pudding bag string.
Do, do, what shall I do?
The cat has bitten it quite in two.*

Hints and tips

- Use strong material.
- These instructions will fit a toy about 30 cm (12 in) long, but can be adapted to fit any size of toy.
- Garden cane makes good dowelling.
- Use string or knitting yarn for the hanging cords or twist your own from strong embroidery thread or thin wool.
- Hang the swing from a branch or a broom handle propped across pieces of furniture.

LEARNING FROM EXPERIENCE

With this doll's swing, your child can express her love of swinging in another way – that is, by imitating you and becoming the parent pushing her favourite toy. The swing is really easy to make and can be suspended from a small branch in the garden, or from a broom handle balanced across two chairs when indoors. The doll fits comfortably on the seat, with her arms tucked behind the side strings so that she does not fall. Sing with your toddler as she pushes her doll backwards and forwards, standing in front of or behind the swing. She will soon come to understand the rules of balance and motion from this activity alone – if she goes too high, the doll will fall out!

Should this happen, however, you should react in the same way that you would if your own child had fallen, picking the doll up and comforting her with a little cuddle, before putting her back in the swing. This way, your toddler will learn to respect and care for the doll. She will also learn that you need to attach the swing firmly to the branch or stick, in order to stop it slipping and overbalancing the doll. These are lessons for life, and learning them now from experience (you don't need to explain to her in words) is the best way for her to relate them also to herself.

Making a doll's swing seat

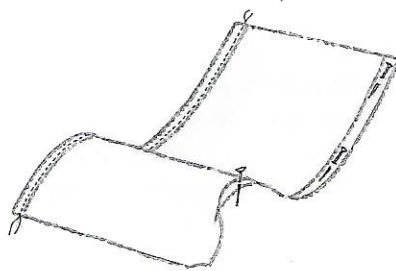
You can easily adapt the design for this swing seat for any toy, large or small. Simply adjust the measurements to fit.

You will need

- Fabric
- Dressmaking scissors
- Pins
- Sewing needle
- Sewing thread
- 5 mm (¼ in) cane dowelling
- Saw
- Sandpaper
- Craft knife
- Hanging cord
- PVA glue

How to do it

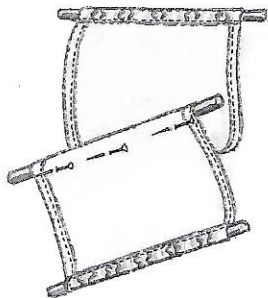
1 Cut a 28 x 16 cm (11 x 6¼ in) piece of fabric and hem the long sides.



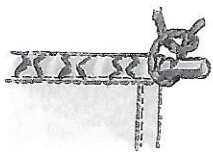
2 Cut three lengths of dowelling, each 3 cm (1¼ in) longer than the short edge of the fabric, and sand the ends smooth. With the fabric lying flat, wrong side up, lay a dowel at each short end, fold the end of the fabric tightly over each and stitch firmly in place.



3 Repeat with the third length of dowelling, stitching it approximately 12 cm (5 in) in from one end. This shorter section forms the seat of the swing.



4 Use a craft knife to score a notch at each end of the top and bottom lengths of dowelling for the hanging cord. Cut two lengths of cord, each about three to four times as long as the swing seat. Tie one end of a cord around a notched end of the top dowel and glue in place.



5 Tie the other end of the cord around the notched end of the bottom dowel and glue in place. Repeat with the other cord.

