

Question & Answer

Make Your Own Baseball Bats

Q. I would like to turn a baseball bat for my grandson. Are there any regulations or guidelines for allowable dimensions?

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A. First, choose the right wood. Hickory and white

ash are common woods used to make baseball bats. Both are resilient (they won't be easily dented by baseballs) and can take a lot of bending stress before failure. Of the two, ash is preferred because of its lighter weight. Look for straight-grain wood that's free of defects. If you want the real thing, specially graded white ash bat billets are available from Paxton Lumber (800) 522-3305. The 3-in.

dia. blanks are 38-in. long and sell for \$16. Hillerich and Bradsby, the folks who make Louisville Slugger bats, gave us the dimensions you are looking for (see photo). The handle-thickness regulation for Little League bats ensures a strong handle.

Finish your bat with shellac and be sure to add your own label on the tangential face of the bat (Fig A). Instruct your young batter to hold the bat so the label is facing up. This will result in balls being hit off the radial face of the bat where the porous early layers are on edge and less prone to being crushed when that killer home-run swing meets the ball.

