



# Flashback: Retro-Style Running Shoes from Old Tires

By [rachelhobson](#) Posted April 9th, 2012 Category [Craft](#), [Home](#)

## FLASHBACK

When it comes to DIY fashion, shoes cannot be ignored. Handmade shoes are a fun and unique way to craft a personal touch to your wardrobe, and today's Flashback project is a perfect example. Andrew shows us how you can create a pair of retro-style running shoes from old tires and denim scraps.



By [Andrew Salomone](#)

A few years ago a friend of mine brought me to a little town in Mexico to see the Tarahumara race. The Tarahumara are an indigenous people who live in a massive canyon and run incredible distances in sandals, called [huaraches](#), made from old car tires. When I tried to wear a pair of these homemade huaraches, the straps chafed the top of my feet and pulled at my leg hairs as I walked. It was terrible. But I still wanted to wear shoes made from old car tires and other upcycled materials. So I decided to make a homemade running shoe, similar to the type of shoes Bill Bowerman made for Steve Prefontaine — the original Nikes.

### MATERIALS AND TOOLS

Aluminum foil

Old pair of running shoes

Shoe adhesive

Old tire or a flat piece of rubber about 1/4" thick

Old pair of jeans or other durable fabric

Fabric scraps

Grommets

Hammer

Sewing machine

Sewing pins

Thread

Rubber bands

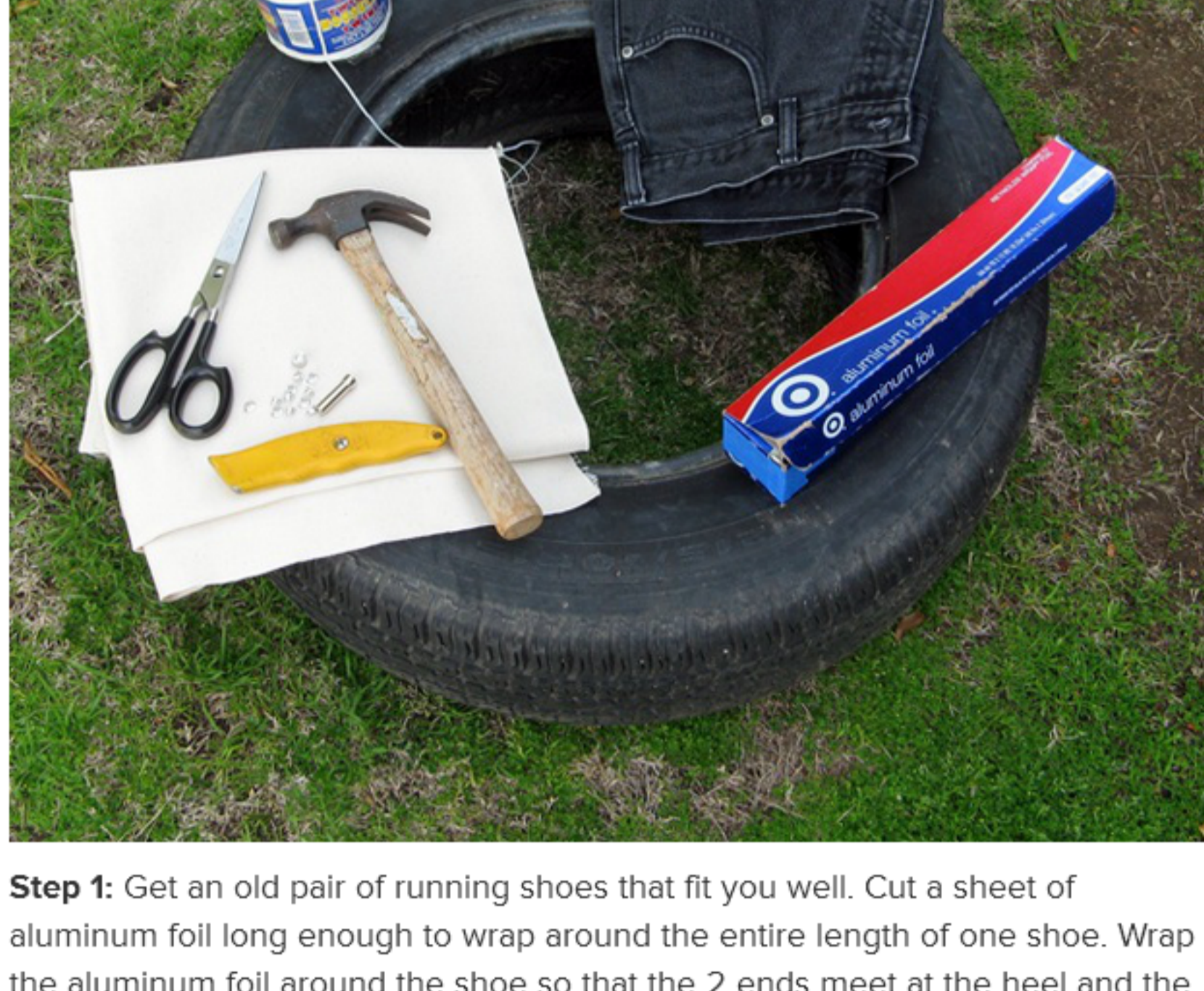
Clothespins

Good pair of large scissors

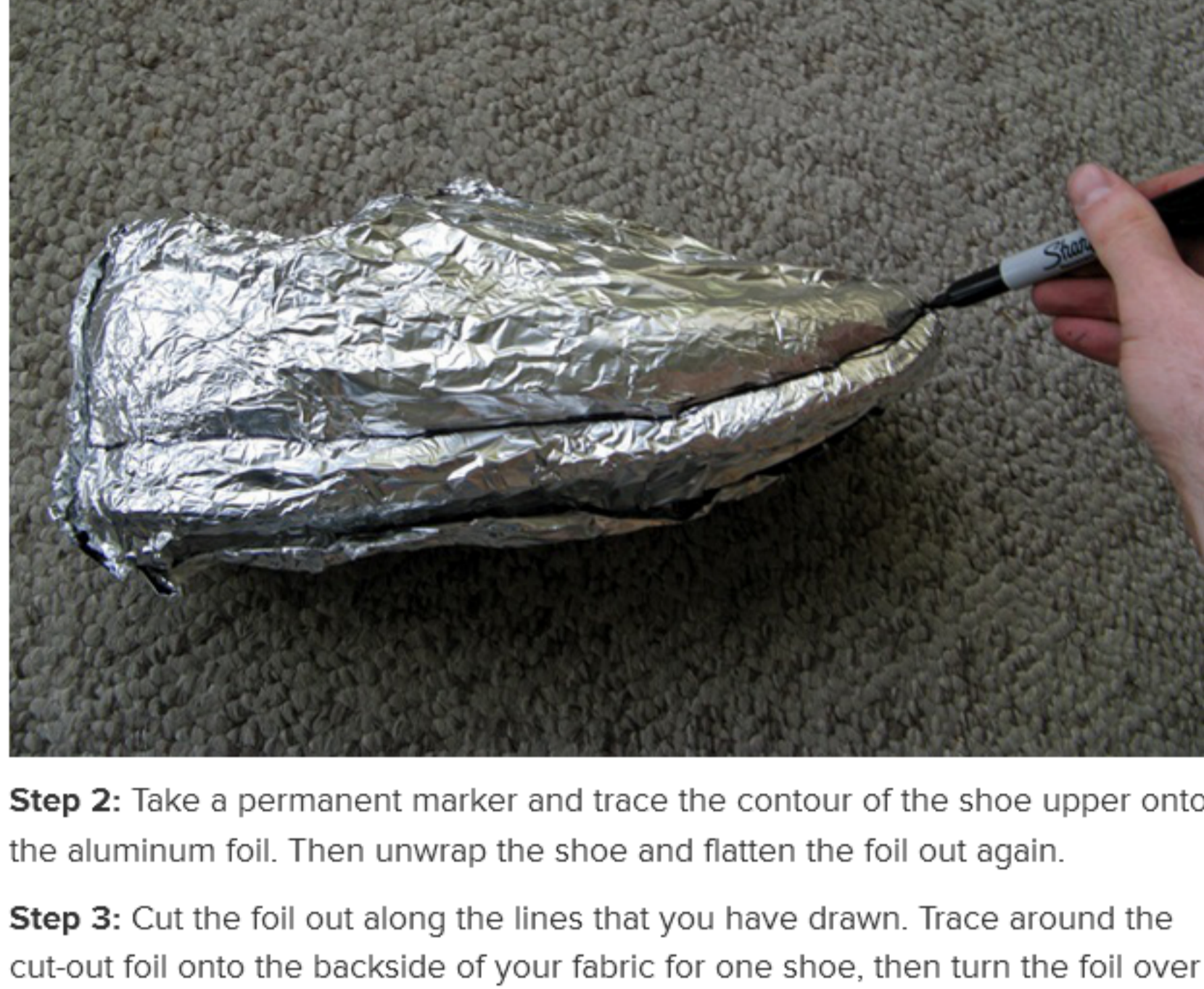
Marker

Shoelaces

Utility knife



**Step 1:** Get an old pair of running shoes that fit you well. Cut a sheet of aluminum foil long enough to wrap around the entire length of one shoe. Wrap the aluminum foil around the shoe so that the 2 ends meet at the heel and the entire shoe is covered.



**Step 2:** Take a permanent marker and trace the contour of the shoe upper onto the aluminum foil. Then unwrap the shoe and flatten the foil out again.

**Step 3:** Cut the foil out along the lines that you have drawn. Trace around the cut-out foil onto the backside of your fabric for one shoe, then turn the foil over and trace around it again for the other shoe.

**Step 4:** Trace the sole of each of your feet onto another piece of fabric. Add at least 1" all the way around the outlines of your feet and then cut out around the outer line.

**Step 5:** You will also need to cut out some fabric for the tongue of the shoe. This should be about 7"x4" at the most, but you can cut it down later when are ready to attach it to the shoe.

**Hint:** You may want to try fitting the pattern around your foot at this point to make sure it's about the right size.

**Step 6:** Sew around the edges of fabric that will be exposed when the shoe is finished, about 1/4" from the edge of the fabric.

**Step 7:** Pin the tongue on the inside of the shoe and adjust it to where you'd like it to be. Stitch around where the holes for the laces will be and across the base of the tongue.

**Step 8:** Using a different colored fabric, cut out shapes for decorating your shoes. Stitch them on, following all the way around the edges of the shapes.



**Step 9:** Measure and cut small slits where you want the holes for your shoelaces to be, then fasten a grommet in each slit.



**Step 10:** Lace up the shoe and tie the laces as you would like them to look when the shoe is finished.

**Step 11:** Turn the shoe inside out and wrap it around your opposite ankle so that it fits properly. Pin the fabric in place and stitch it together.

**Note:** At this point I decided to make the shoe a lower cut than I had originally planned, so I trimmed it down and repeated Steps 5–10.

**Step 12:** Fit the shoe inside out over the opposite foot and pin the upper to the other piece of fabric that you cut out around the sole of your foot.



**Step 13:** Use a marker to trace around where you have pinned the fabrics and then stitch them together along that line. Be sure to leave a little extra room around the toe of the shoe; this will probably tighten up when you glue on the sole.



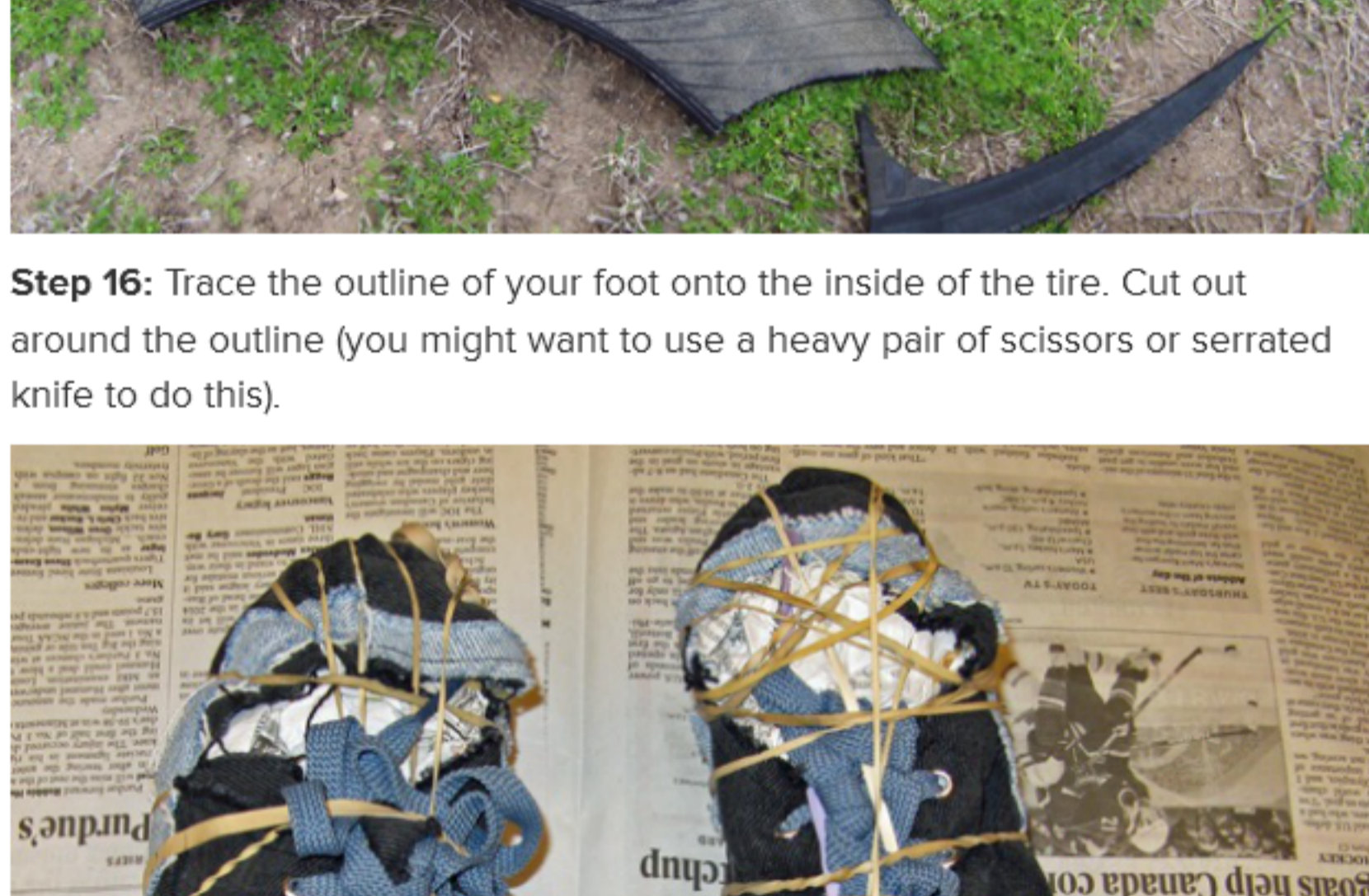
**Step 14:** Turn the shoe right-side out and make sure it fits properly onto the correct foot. Go around the stitching again to reinforce it. You may want to make some adjustments at this point and trim any excess fabric so that the shoe fits comfortably.

**Step 15:** If you are using an old tire, use a utility knife to cut the side of the tire away from the tread and the steel of the tire.

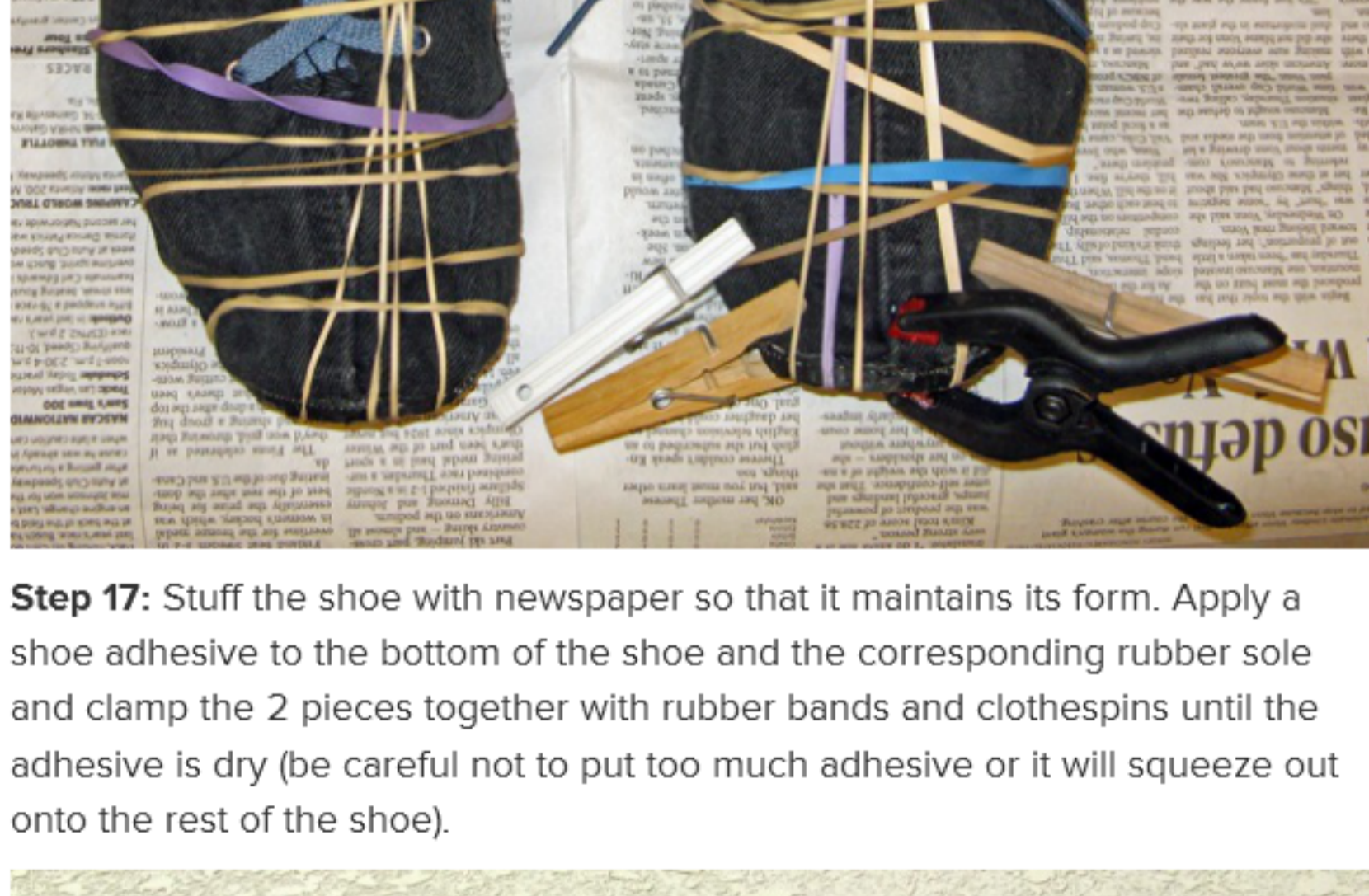
**Note:** Most tires in the United States are steel-belted so you won't be able to use the tread of the tire, but there is no steel in the walls of the tire, which should be just wide enough to accommodate most feet. Plus the curved tire walls provide a little arch support for the shoe when it is finished.



**Step 16:** Trace the outline of your foot onto the inside of the tire. Cut out around the outline (you might want to use a heavy pair of scissors or serrated knife to do this).



**Step 17:** Stuff the shoe with newspaper so that it maintains its form. Apply a shoe adhesive to the bottom of the shoe and the corresponding rubber sole and clamp the 2 pieces together with rubber bands and clothespins until the adhesive is dry (be careful not to put too much adhesive or it will squeeze out onto the rest of the shoe).



**Step 18:** Exercise fashionably.



### About the author:

[Andrew Salomone](#) makes artwork that the absurd ways that ideas are communicated through popular culture.

Share this: [Submit](#) [Like](#) [6](#) [Tweets](#) [Like](#) [0](#) [Print](#) [More](#)

Like this: [Like](#)

Be the first to like this.

**IN THE MAKER SHED**

Make Subscription

BeagleBoard BeagleBone Black

Makey Makey Standard Kit

Make: Getting Started with Soldering Kit

5 RESPONSES TO FLASHBACK: RETRO-STYLE RUNNING SHOES FROM OLD TIRES

Enoch on [April 9th, 2012 at 5:05 pm](#) said:

This is a wonderful idea! Of course, I'm not a fan of the shoe design, but I like the effort you put into making your own shoes! I'm trying to make a pair of TOM's clones myself...but I wanted to use leather as a sole. Tire? Sounds awesome. 😊

[Reply](#)

kat on [April 10th, 2012 at 8:13 am](#) said:

Great idea for the sole. I want to knit a pair of boots but wasn't sure what to do for the sole. I was wondering how well a glued sole hold up. Does it handle water well? How do you clean it? What kind of shoe adhesive did you use? Thanks!

[Reply](#)

kat on [April 10th, 2012 at 8:14 am](#) said:

Great idea for the sole. I want to knit a pair of boots but wasn't sure what to do for the sole. I was wondering how well a glued sole hold up. Does it handle water well? How do you clean it? What kind of shoe adhesive did you use? Thanks!

[Reply](#)

Hey on [April 12th, 2012 at 8:13 pm](#) said:

You can buy a shittier pair of shoes from the Gap...just sayin

[Reply](#)

flintalf on [April 25th, 2012 at 5:35 am](#) said:

Resources such as the 1 you mentioned here will be extremely useful to myself! I will publish a hyperlink to this web page on my personal blog. I am certain my site website visitors will locate that fairly effective.

[Reply](#)

### LEAVE A REPLY

Enter your comment here...

Join the **Make: Forum**  
Where the Makers Meet

Trending Shared Commented

**// WHAT'S TRENDING**

**Raspberry Pi Design**  
Contest  
By: Nick Normal  
Hits: 10003

**Seventeen Sneaky Secret Hides**  
By: Sean Michael Ragan  
Hits: 3900

**Teardrop Camper Trailer**  
By: Werner  
Hits: 6200

**10 Things to Connect to Your Raspberry Pi**  
By: Alasdair Allan  
Hits: 2337

**Mike Ross' Big Rig Jig**  
By: Goli Mohammadi  
Hits: 6250

**I Have a (Puzzling) Dream**  
By: Gareth Branwyn  
Hits: 1750

**DIY 3D Laser Scanner Using Arduino**  
By: Ken Denmead  
Hits: 1262

**Lost PLA Casting from 3D Prints**  
By: Eric Weinhoff  
Hits: 1354

**MAKER SHED:**  
DEAL OF THE WEEK

**MAKER FAIRE SPECIAL**

**MAKERSHIELDS**  
\$18.95 **ONLY \$10!\***  
\*WHILE SUPPLIES LAST