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# Light Weight Hatchet

Steve

- Gear reviews and tests - Edged tools - Axes and hatchets -



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## **Description :**

The author expertly built a very nice tomahawk, by modifying inexpensive existing parts.

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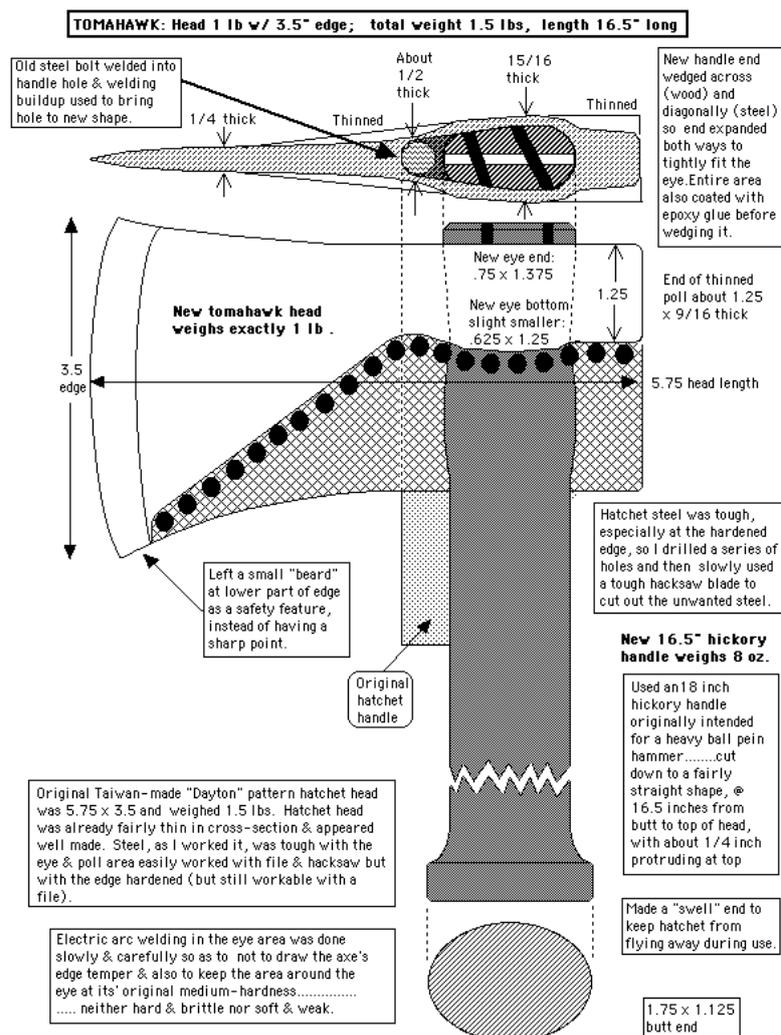
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# Light Weight Hatchet

The two attached files show a light hatchet I made from a heavier utility hatchet. I had always wanted a small belt hatchet which I could easily carry around, but I could never find one I liked.

Most of the so-called "tomahawks" you see for sale are not well designed or are of inferior wrapped iron or cast steel. So I made one. Some of the modern Chinese-made hatchets, of drop-forged steel, are apparently made of fairly decent material, but too heavy & bulky to carry around or else have handles which are too short. I found a utility hatchet for \$6 at a hardware store, removed the original handle, and cut the head down to size.

*The plan:*

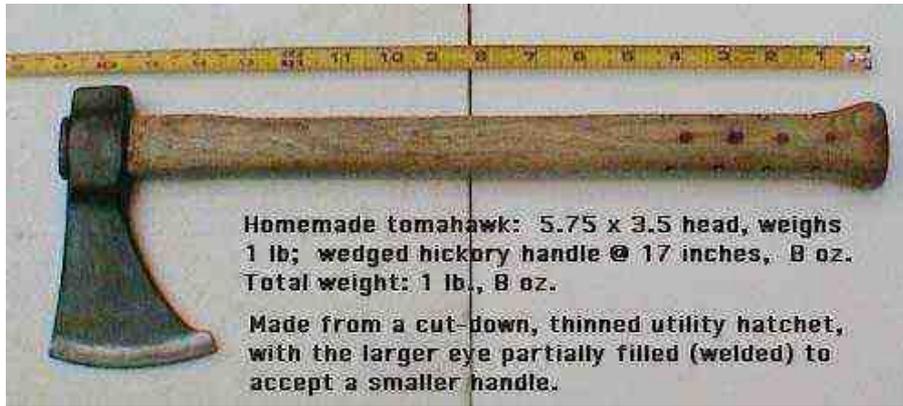


See the attached "plan" for details. The photo shows the finished product.

*The finished tomahawk:*

## Light Weight Hatchet

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It has a 16.5 inch long handle so you can use it either one-handed or two-handed. The steel in this hatchet takes a good sharp edge. I would not want to cut down a large trees on a regular basis with such a light hatchet, but it works well on the small stuff. Best of all, it is light enough so you don't hesitate to throw it in your pack or to carry it with you in a belt sheath. Incidentally, I view this as a tool, not a toy, so I do not throw my hatchet at things.

I used a mix of commonly-available power tools & hand tools from my woodshop: bench grinder, rotary hand grinder, drill press, belt sander, small electric arc welder, and assorted files & a hacksaw. As you cut & thin the head, especially when welding, you have to take your time and quench the head in cool water frequently to prevent drawing the edge temper. In reshaping the eye, I let the welded steel cool a bit so that when quenched at that temperature, the eye area retained the medium-hardness it had to start with, without getting too hard.

The edge on the finished hatchet still has the original hardness which allows it to retain an edge. I do not like the tapered handles you see on most "tomahawks". They are too easily flung away as you work with sweaty, dirty hands. That's why I used a wedged-eye handle with a swell-end for the hand grip area.

If you carefully saw your wedge slots and use both a wooden wedge and steel cross wedges, you can force the end of the handle to expand both ways at the top of the eye, locking the handle in place, I also like to coat the wedged area well in epoxy resin so that the expanded wood really gets "fixed" in place inside the eye.

Last thing I did on mine was to "blue" the head using a bottle of cold gun bluing. That plus a coating of hard wax protects the steel well.

*Ed: Steve just added this image:*

## Light Weight Hatchet



*Post-scriptum :Nb: Slightly edited by JM for presentation. You can comment this article below. To contact Steve, please email the administrator, which will forward.*