**[Quartermaster James](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/4887-quartermaster-james/" \o "Go to Quartermaster James's profile)**

* LUNATIC
* 
* 
* Member
* 1,662 posts
* Gender:Male
* Location:Sailing the Islets of Langerhans
* Interests:Interests cannot be left blank, so the machine says.

[Posted November 19, 2009](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/16161-making-fire/&do=findComment&comment=373584) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/16161-making-fire/&do=reportComment&comment=373584)

I thought there was a discussion addressing this, but I cannot find it via the search function. If anyone can point me to it, I would be much obliged.

So, when off boat and out on foot (Morgan and Dampier, for example) how was fire made? Did the buccaneers carry flint & steel? What about ECW soldiers?

[**callenish gunner**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/1944-callenish-gunner/)

* Scourge o' the 7 Seas
* 
* 
* Member
* 2,138 posts
* Gender:Male
* Location:Pennsylvania mountains north of Clarion
* Interests:The Callenish gunner has just hoved into view looking for safe anchorage in these waters... purveyor of bladed and flintlock weaponry also leather accessories ..........painter of portraits and period scenes by avocation I'm getting my armoury business underway and will be doing as many festivals as I can ...right now along the east coast or great lakes

[Posted November 19, 2009](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/16161-making-fire/&do=findComment&comment=373600) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/16161-making-fire/&do=reportComment&comment=373600)

**Yes, yes and by the way yes ....flint and steel was one of the most common ways of fire starting for centuries**

[**Dutchman**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/6150-dutchman/)

* Has anyone seen my cousin?
* 
* 
* Admin
* 1,773 posts
* Gender:Male
* Location:tidewater virginia

[Posted November 19, 2009](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/16161-making-fire/&do=findComment&comment=373601) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/16161-making-fire/&do=reportComment&comment=373601)

glass lenses were also used. There was an art to being able to safely transport embers and keep them live enough to be used at the end of a days travel. I think its Dampier who describes a bamboo tube with a piston in it used by a pacific tribe. a bit of tinder is placed at the bottom of the bamboo tube and the piston is slammed down on top of it. the sudden compression causes a spontaneous combustion of sorts, from how i understand it. I think its pretty slick, but have never seen it done.

[**Quartermaster James**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/4887-quartermaster-james/)

* LUNATIC
* 
* 
* Member
* 1,662 posts
* Gender:Male
* Location:Sailing the Islets of Langerhans
* Interests:Interests cannot be left blank, so the machine says.

[Posted November 19, 2009](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/16161-making-fire/&do=findComment&comment=373605) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/16161-making-fire/&do=reportComment&comment=373605)

Thanks guys! I think I'll add fire making to our pyrate immersion day!

Dampier mentions fire pistons, eh? Intrigomon...just the excuse I need to get one!

[**Captain Jim**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/2317-captain-jim/)

* Captain Jim for Captain!
* 
* 
* Member
* 2,254 posts
* Gender:Male
* Location:Off the coast of Tampa Bay (Unfortunately, inland from the coast)
* Interests:I'm 57, formerly a wildlife ecologist and biologist, now a stay-at-home dad. I grew up on the west coast of Florida, where Anna Maria Sound and Tampa Bay were my playground. My interests include, but are not limited to cannon, black powder arms, history, fishing the flats, sailing, fine wood working, flint gun building, hunting, good gun dogs. Above all, my wife and children.

[Posted November 19, 2009](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/16161-making-fire/&do=findComment&comment=373678) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/16161-making-fire/&do=reportComment&comment=373678)

 On 11/19/2009 at 0:43 PM, bbcddutchman said:

I think its Dampier who describes a bamboo tube with a piston in it used by a pacific tribe. a bit of tinder is placed at the bottom of the bamboo tube and the piston is slammed down on top of it. the sudden compression causes a spontaneous combustion of sorts, from how i understand it. I think its pretty slick, but have never seen it done.

Cruise on over to YouTube and search "fire piston" and you'll get a bunch of hits.

Our prototypical striking-type match wasn't invented until 1826, 100 years out of date, when a John Walker stumbled upon a chemical concoction that produced fire. After stirring together a mixture of chemicals, which did not contain phosphorous, John removed the stick he used, only to find a dried lump at its end. When he scraped the stick against the floor to rid it of the lump, the stick ignited. His mixture of antimony sulfide, potassium chlorate, gum, and starch could produce fire. In his rush to demonstrate his discovery to others, John bypassed the patent office.

In no time, a person at one of John's demonstrations, Samuel Jones, spotted an overlooked, golden opportunity, and patented the invention under his name. Mr. Jones produced matches he named Lucifers, which produced phenomenal sales. The widespread availability of the matches actually led to a significant increase in smoking.([http://www.coolquiz.com/trivia/explain/docs/match.asp](http://www.coolquiz.com/trivia/explain/docs/match.asp%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank))

I haven't used a match to start a fire since I learned how to use flint and steel and to make my own charcloth four years ago. I even use it to start fires in the home fireplace. I use slowmatch (which I also make using potassium nitrate) to light my pipe.

All that having been said, one would look for fire and "borrow" some, say, from a candle, lantern, fireplace or another lit pipe. Striking one's own was a skill used only if fire couldn't be found close at hand. Fire was an integral part of daily life and was everywhere during the period, often saved over from one work fire to the next as a burning candle or banked coals.

[**Mary Diamond**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/4625-mary-diamond/)

* It's My Fault
* 
* 
* Moderator
* 1,050 posts
* Gender:Female
* Location:Illinois
* Interests:Things I Love: Horticulture, Travel, Volleyball, Reading, Sewing, Costuming, Halloween, esp. props!, Halo, Halo2, Halo3, ODST, and, of course, Pyracy.

[Posted November 20, 2009](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/16161-making-fire/&do=findComment&comment=373697) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/16161-making-fire/&do=reportComment&comment=373697)

I recently came across an article describing the transfer of flame via Spills ~ a long curled shaving of wood or paper, though paper was not preferred, due to undesirably fast burn and ash production. Dated back to the 15th century, the spill acted as the match precursor.

[**Coastie04**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/27-coastie04/)

* Dread Pyrate
* 
* 
* Member
* 1,008 posts
* Gender:Male
* Location:Juneau, AK
* Interests:Nautical history, sailing (especially tall ships and my own 'Sanctioned Mistress'), shooting (of all eras and calibers), and homebrewing.

[Posted November 20, 2009](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/16161-making-fire/&do=findComment&comment=373722) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/16161-making-fire/&do=reportComment&comment=373722)

I also recall an old method of preserving fire for journeys. A wooden box was filled with reeds, wool (if I recall correctly on this material), or wood shavings. Then, an ember was put in it, covered with more of the packing material. The lid was closed, and the ember would have insulation to stay warm, just enough oxygen entering the box to keep it burning, and additional fuel surrounding it as well. I think I saw this on a history channel show about the exodus, so it definitely predates GAoP, but I wouldn't be surprised if similar fire boxes were around then.

Coastie

[**William Brand**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/1471-william-brand/)

* Mercury Malefactor
* 
* 
* Admin
* 8,884 posts
* Gender:Male
* Location:Logan, Utah
* Interests:My name is William Pace and I live and work as a graphic designer, illustrator and photographer in Northern Utah. I'm married to the lovely Tracy Pace and we have three children. In addition to all things art, I enjoy traveling and meeting new people from every walk of life. I've always been a fan of history, theology, and of course, Pyracy.

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PSkt-q-HihQ

[Posted November 20, 2009](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/16161-making-fire/&do=findComment&comment=373724) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/16161-making-fire/&do=reportComment&comment=373724)

 On 11/19/2009 at 9:51 PM, Captain Jim said:

I haven't used a match to start a fire since I learned how to use flint and steel and to make my own charcloth four years ago. I even use it to start fires in the home fireplace. I use slowmatch (which I also make using potassium nitrate) to light my pipe.

This is why you should be captain.

[**Captain Jim**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/2317-captain-jim/)

* Captain Jim for Captain!
* 
* 
* Member
* 2,254 posts
* Gender:Male
* Location:Off the coast of Tampa Bay (Unfortunately, inland from the coast)
* Interests:I'm 57, formerly a wildlife ecologist and biologist, now a stay-at-home dad. I grew up on the west coast of Florida, where Anna Maria Sound and Tampa Bay were my playground. My interests include, but are not limited to cannon, black powder arms, history, fishing the flats, sailing, fine wood working, flint gun building, hunting, good gun dogs. Above all, my wife and children.

[Posted November 22, 2009](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/16161-making-fire/&do=findComment&comment=373846) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/16161-making-fire/&do=reportComment&comment=373846)

Now, now, we all agreed: No captain. I will gladly command during engagements, though. Besides, since we have such a stellar Quartermaster, a captain is rather superfluous anyway...er, I mean, some ruddy bilge rat of a captain would be extra baggage, Mate.

[**William Brand**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/1471-william-brand/)

* Mercury Malefactor
* 
* 
* Admin
* 8,884 posts
* Gender:Male
* Location:Logan, Utah
* Interests:My name is William Pace and I live and work as a graphic designer, illustrator and photographer in Northern Utah. I'm married to the lovely Tracy Pace and we have three children. In addition to all things art, I enjoy traveling and meeting new people from every walk of life. I've always been a fan of history, theology, and of course, Pyracy.

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PSkt-q-HihQ

[Posted November 22, 2009](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/16161-making-fire/&do=findComment&comment=373861) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/16161-making-fire/&do=reportComment&comment=373861)

Am I persistant? Aye.

Am I silly? Aye.

Am I wrong...?

No. I'm having bumper stickers made up.

[**Capt. Bo of the WTF co.**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/2748-capt-bo-of-the-wtf-co/)

* Scourge o' the 7 Seas
* 
* 
* Member
* 2,339 posts
* Gender:Male
* Location:Spanish Louisiana - on the river Osage
* Interests:Many and varied.

[Posted November 25, 2009](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/16161-making-fire/&do=findComment&comment=374031) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/16161-making-fire/&do=reportComment&comment=374031)

One of my most popular demonstrations. Here's a good article on the subject, also check out the companion article on tips for fast fire striking:

<http://www.northwestjournal.ca/I1.htm>

Bo

[**MarkG**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/10527-markg/)

* Pyrate Captain
* 
* 
* Member
* 587 posts
* Location:Ohio

[Posted November 26, 2009](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/16161-making-fire/&do=findComment&comment=374061) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/16161-making-fire/&do=reportComment&comment=374061)

 On 11/25/2009 at 10:20 AM, Capt. Bo of the WTF co. said:

One of my most popular demonstrations. Here's a good article on the subject, also check out the companion article on tips for fast fire striking:

<http://www.northwestjournal.ca/I1.htm>

Bo

If you want to be cruel, you hand flint, steel, and charcloth to visitors and tell them to start a fire.

Mark

[**Capt. Bo of the WTF co.**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/2748-capt-bo-of-the-wtf-co/)

* Scourge o' the 7 Seas
* 
* 
* Member
* 2,339 posts
* Gender:Male
* Location:Spanish Louisiana - on the river Osage
* Interests:Many and varied.

[Posted November 26, 2009](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/16161-making-fire/&do=findComment&comment=374066) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/16161-making-fire/&do=reportComment&comment=374066)

I make strikers as well, and sometimes there is one or two in the crowd that show real interest, so I send them home with a set to play with in hopes of sparking some interst (pun intended). I use the burning lens too, when the sun is shining. For the winter solstice, you need a larger lens, around three inches works best. The small size lenses (under two inches) work well in the summer solstice.

I also do a ball-casting demo that people love to watch. I have found a source for lead-free solder to use in place of lead in public demos. This makes everybody happy and I give the finished bullets to kids whopse parents don't mind. After seven years of this, I have had not one complaint or refusal from attendees.

I am working on making semi-professional-like teaching blocks (guides) out of these demos, and one on the hide trade in hopes to provide them to any willing to teach them.

Bo

[**Captain Jim**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/2317-captain-jim/)

* Captain Jim for Captain!
* 
* 
* Member
* 2,254 posts
* Gender:Male
* Location:Off the coast of Tampa Bay (Unfortunately, inland from the coast)
* Interests:I'm 57, formerly a wildlife ecologist and biologist, now a stay-at-home dad. I grew up on the west coast of Florida, where Anna Maria Sound and Tampa Bay were my playground. My interests include, but are not limited to cannon, black powder arms, history, fishing the flats, sailing, fine wood working, flint gun building, hunting, good gun dogs. Above all, my wife and children.

[Posted November 26, 2009](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/16161-making-fire/&do=findComment&comment=374093) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/16161-making-fire/&do=reportComment&comment=374093)

 On 11/22/2009 at 11:24 PM, William Red Wake said:

Am I persistant? Aye.

Am I silly? Aye.

Am I wrong...?

No. I'm having bumper stickers made up.

And what will these bumper stickers say? "Follow me! I'm persistent, silly and sometimes right!"

[**William Brand**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/1471-william-brand/)

* Mercury Malefactor
* 
* 
* Admin
* 8,884 posts
* Gender:Male
* Location:Logan, Utah
* Interests:My name is William Pace and I live and work as a graphic designer, illustrator and photographer in Northern Utah. I'm married to the lovely Tracy Pace and we have three children. In addition to all things art, I enjoy traveling and meeting new people from every walk of life. I've always been a fan of history, theology, and of course, Pyracy.

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PSkt-q-HihQ

[Posted November 27, 2009](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/16161-making-fire/&do=findComment&comment=374099) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/16161-making-fire/&do=reportComment&comment=374099)

 On 11/26/2009 at 6:18 PM, Captain Jim said:

And what will these bumper stickers say? "Follow me! I'm persistent, silly and sometimes right!"

No. Jim Warren for Captain.

[**Jack Roberts**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/2837-jack-roberts/)

* Dread Pyrate
* 
* 
* Member
* 1,063 posts
* Gender:Male
* Location:Orlando, FL

[Posted November 27, 2009](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/16161-making-fire/&do=findComment&comment=374132) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/16161-making-fire/&do=reportComment&comment=374132)

I'll slap it on my car. Without hesitation.

[**Captain Jim**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/2317-captain-jim/)

* Captain Jim for Captain!
* 
* 
* Member
* 2,254 posts
* Gender:Male
* Location:Off the coast of Tampa Bay (Unfortunately, inland from the coast)
* Interests:I'm 57, formerly a wildlife ecologist and biologist, now a stay-at-home dad. I grew up on the west coast of Florida, where Anna Maria Sound and Tampa Bay were my playground. My interests include, but are not limited to cannon, black powder arms, history, fishing the flats, sailing, fine wood working, flint gun building, hunting, good gun dogs. Above all, my wife and children.

[Posted November 28, 2009](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/16161-making-fire/&do=findComment&comment=374148) (edited) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/16161-making-fire/&do=reportComment&comment=374148)

Does that mean that you want me to depose Captain Sterling, you traitorous pyrate hunter? Or is it that you want to be an honest pyrate again? Wait till Sterling finds out about this...you'll be hearing from the Captain of Marines, no doubt!

Thanks for the vote, though. We'll make a good pyrate out of you again; you'll see!

**Edited November 28, 2009 by Captain Jim**

[**M.A.d'Dogge**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/4373-maddogge/)

* Second to None
* 
* 
* Member
* 1,534 posts
* Gender:Male
* Location:the Port of the Great Inland Sea, Detroit originally from the great inland corn seas of Illinois
* Interests:pyratin, story-tellin, historyin, suba divin, drynkin, skirt chassin, eatin, campin, photographin, cavin, rockclimbin, ghost huntin, talkin, sword fightin, canonin, black powder pistolin, travelin and pretty much anythin that could be included in ADVENTURIN!!!

[Posted November 29, 2009](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/16161-making-fire/&do=findComment&comment=374180) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/16161-making-fire/&do=reportComment&comment=374180)

wot are ya talkin about man.....Pyrate Hunters are Pyrates...they just eat better... 

[**Captain Jim**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/2317-captain-jim/)

* Captain Jim for Captain!
* 
* 
* Member
* 2,254 posts
* Gender:Male
* Location:Off the coast of Tampa Bay (Unfortunately, inland from the coast)
* Interests:I'm 57, formerly a wildlife ecologist and biologist, now a stay-at-home dad. I grew up on the west coast of Florida, where Anna Maria Sound and Tampa Bay were my playground. My interests include, but are not limited to cannon, black powder arms, history, fishing the flats, sailing, fine wood working, flint gun building, hunting, good gun dogs. Above all, my wife and children.

[Posted December 1, 2009](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/16161-making-fire/&do=findComment&comment=374237) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/16161-making-fire/&do=reportComment&comment=374237)

What were we talking about? Another thread pyrated!

[**Dutchman**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/6150-dutchman/)

* Has anyone seen my cousin?
* 
* 
* Admin
* 1,773 posts
* Gender:Male
* Location:tidewater virginia

[Posted December 11, 2009](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/16161-making-fire/&do=findComment&comment=375044) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/16161-making-fire/&do=reportComment&comment=375044)

so i picked up a fire piston at pip and it works like a charm. no rum charlies pop was showing one off at the fudge stand and i happened to catch it. he had an extra he was gracious enough to sell. it takes a bit to figure out the right ammount of compression, but once you do a glowing ember comes out each time. amazing!

[**Jack Roberts**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/2837-jack-roberts/)

* Dread Pyrate
* 
* 
* Member
* 1,063 posts
* Gender:Male
* Location:Orlando, FL

[Posted December 12, 2009](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/16161-making-fire/&do=findComment&comment=375064) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/16161-making-fire/&do=reportComment&comment=375064)

So you finally got it down eh Dutchie?

[**Patrick Hand**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/1049-patrick-hand/)

* The sailor's sailor
* 
* 
* Moderator
* 6,100 posts
* Gender:Male
* Location:TH' Mountains of Central California
* Interests:I like wierdness... Klingon, Pyrate..... and even..... gasp.... Renn Faires...... (Baseball and tractor pulls I'd have to think about.... could be wierd or Not,,,,)

[Posted December 12, 2009](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/16161-making-fire/&do=findComment&comment=375081) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/16161-making-fire/&do=reportComment&comment=375081)

I definitely have to make another "New Mexican Tinder Tube"....

After loosing my lighter Saturday night at PiP, I could either bum a light, or use my flint and steel (tink...tink....tink...) to light my smokes.....

A few people tried to "show" me how I was "doing it backwards"... but with a tinder tube, I want the sparks to fall where they were falling..... (It's just what I am use to...)

A New Mexican Tinder Tube, is cotton covered with cotton cloth (sewn over it)into a long wick.(I haven't made one using linen or wool, but that might work also...) and then inserted into a copper or brass tube... They are called New Mexican Tinder Tubes because that is where some have been found, but I've seen a picture of one made from cane...

I can't say if they are period or not, but if someone found the remains of one, they probably wouldn't be able to identify it anyway....

[**Dutchman**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/6150-dutchman/)

* Has anyone seen my cousin?
* 
* 
* Admin
* 1,773 posts
* Gender:Male
* Location:tidewater virginia

[Posted December 12, 2009](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/16161-making-fire/&do=findComment&comment=375082) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/16161-making-fire/&do=reportComment&comment=375082)

from ember to tinder to sustainable flame in thirty seconds!

[**Silkie McDonough**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/2754-silkie-mcdonough/)

* Proprietress of the Sealkies Hide
* 
* 
* Moderator
* 5,695 posts
* Gender:Female
* Location:I have been a Virginian for 2 months now. LOVING it.
* Interests:Music, vocalizing, Irish balads. I love to draw, I do pencile portraits/detail drawings for barter and sale. The link in in my signature. Ireland, its history and culture. Sewing garb, mostly for myself. The arm of a strong gentleman round my waist.

Unfortunately, I don't do nearly enough of any of a these.

[Posted December 12, 2009](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/16161-making-fire/&do=findComment&comment=375107) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/16161-making-fire/&do=reportComment&comment=375107)

So lighter fluid and a bick are not historically accurate? This is why I am NOT the cook ...can't get the fire going ...not to mention that cooking for one doesn't translate to feeding a crew.

[**Mary Diamond**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/4625-mary-diamond/)

* It's My Fault
* 
* 
* Moderator
* 1,050 posts
* Gender:Female
* Location:Illinois
* Interests:Things I Love: Horticulture, Travel, Volleyball, Reading, Sewing, Costuming, Halloween, esp. props!, Halo, Halo2, Halo3, ODST, and, of course, Pyracy.

[Posted December 12, 2009](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/16161-making-fire/&do=findComment&comment=375108) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/16161-making-fire/&do=reportComment&comment=375108)

I bought Mark a Swedish steel for his backpacking Christmas present before we left ~ and at PiP bought flint and steel for myself from Greg... Now to practice ~ Is char cloth period? Having luck with the spark, but getting it to catch is another matter entirely.

[**Quartermaster James**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/4887-quartermaster-james/)

* LUNATIC
* 
* 
* Member
* 1,662 posts
* Gender:Male
* Location:Sailing the Islets of Langerhans
* Interests:Interests cannot be left blank, so the machine says.

[Posted December 12, 2009](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/16161-making-fire/&do=findComment&comment=375111) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/16161-making-fire/&do=reportComment&comment=375111)

 On 12/12/2009 at 11:46 AM, Patrick Hand said:

I can't say if they are period or not, but if someone found the remains of one, they probably wouldn't be able to identify it anyway....

Tinder tubes are period. They were used in Europe as early as the 16th century.

They were fancy items though, not common. They don't really get popular until the 1800's and the fur trade.

Then you see a lot of them in the southwest. Which sounds like just about where you picked up the trail.

Over at the fabric store you can find crude cotton cord (it's used for drapery or upholstery, or both) that works fine in a tinder tube.

[**callenish gunner**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/1944-callenish-gunner/)

* Scourge o' the 7 Seas
* 
* 
* Member
* 2,138 posts
* Gender:Male
* Location:Pennsylvania mountains north of Clarion
* Interests:The Callenish gunner has just hoved into view looking for safe anchorage in these waters... purveyor of bladed and flintlock weaponry also leather accessories ..........painter of portraits and period scenes by avocation I'm getting my armoury business underway and will be doing as many festivals as I can ...right now along the east coast or great lakes

[Posted December 13, 2009](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/16161-making-fire/&do=findComment&comment=375185) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/16161-making-fire/&do=reportComment&comment=375185)

**I've used a fire piston for years but i wasn't sure that they were early enough for our period but I think Dampier refers to them in his book**

[**Captain Jim**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/2317-captain-jim/)

* Captain Jim for Captain!
* 
* 
* Member
* 2,254 posts
* Gender:Male
* Location:Off the coast of Tampa Bay (Unfortunately, inland from the coast)
* Interests:I'm 57, formerly a wildlife ecologist and biologist, now a stay-at-home dad. I grew up on the west coast of Florida, where Anna Maria Sound and Tampa Bay were my playground. My interests include, but are not limited to cannon, black powder arms, history, fishing the flats, sailing, fine wood working, flint gun building, hunting, good gun dogs. Above all, my wife and children.

[Posted December 14, 2009](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/16161-making-fire/&do=findComment&comment=375212) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/16161-making-fire/&do=reportComment&comment=375212)

Is there enough spark in a fire piston to light a pipe? I just may have to get one, if so.

[**silas thatcher**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/10423-silas-thatcher/)

* Notorious Pyrate
* 
* 
* Member
* 774 posts
* Location:st. louis, mo.
* Interests:probably too many interests :) old vw's, sailing, photography, home improvements, and lots more ;)

[Posted December 14, 2009](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/16161-making-fire/&do=findComment&comment=375279) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/16161-making-fire/&do=reportComment&comment=375279)

 On 12/12/2009 at 4:02 PM, Mary Diamond said:

I bought Mark a Swedish steel for his backpacking Christmas present before we left ~ and at PiP bought flint and steel for myself from Greg... Now to practice ~ Is char cloth period? Having luck with the spark, but getting it to catch is another matter entirely.

mary, did you "cook" the charcloth correctly ?? it is period as far as i know... i bought a set, and am able to get the charcloth to get an ember on one or two swipes of the flint...

a little practice and i had it down... but capt. jim seems to be the authority on this one :)

[**Dutchman**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/6150-dutchman/)

* Has anyone seen my cousin?
* 
* 
* Admin
* 1,773 posts
* Gender:Male
* Location:tidewater virginia

[Posted December 14, 2009](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/16161-making-fire/&do=findComment&comment=375284) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/16161-making-fire/&do=reportComment&comment=375284)

maybe.. I don't know how much is needed. you end up with an ember about the size of a worn #2 pencil tip that last for around ten seconds with some blowing. of course it depends on the ammount of tinder loaded into the tip of the piston. an interesting note here- too much tinder will not combust- a little dab will do ya.

[**Capt. Bo of the WTF co.**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/2748-capt-bo-of-the-wtf-co/)

* Scourge o' the 7 Seas
* 
* 
* Member
* 2,339 posts
* Gender:Male
* Location:Spanish Louisiana - on the river Osage
* Interests:Many and varied.

[Posted December 14, 2009](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/16161-making-fire/&do=findComment&comment=375285) (edited) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/16161-making-fire/&do=reportComment&comment=375285)

 On 12/12/2009 at 4:02 PM, Mary Diamond said:

I bought Mark a Swedish steel for his backpacking Christmas present before we left ~ and at PiP bought flint and steel for myself from Greg... Now to practice ~ Is char cloth period? Having luck with the spark, but getting it to catch is another matter entirely.

Yes linen is PC, but also remember that linen rags were a valuable commodity as they made print-stock from them,(why magazines and journals are still referred to as "rags"), so other forms of tinder should be considered as well. Read the article I provided as to proper charring technique. I use dried aromatic cedar bark as it is in endless supply here. Dried and "fluffed" and mixed within the jute twine I use for ignition tinder it works well, though not as fast as linen char. You can also char the punk-wood the same way as the linen. This works well if you keep it from humidity and damp conditions.

Jim, do you have a burning lens that you could keep on a thong around yer neck? I could send you a pair of brass tongs made especially for plucking a small coal from the fire to light yer pipe too. Just a couple of period alternatives to using up all your tinder/char on pipe-lighting.

Bo

**Edited December 14, 2009 by Capt. Bo of the WTF co.**

[**Mary Diamond**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/4625-mary-diamond/)

* It's My Fault
* 
* 
* Moderator
* 1,050 posts
* Gender:Female
* Location:Illinois
* Interests:Things I Love: Horticulture, Travel, Volleyball, Reading, Sewing, Costuming, Halloween, esp. props!, Halo, Halo2, Halo3, ODST, and, of course, Pyracy.

[Posted December 14, 2009](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/16161-making-fire/&do=findComment&comment=375298) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/16161-making-fire/&do=reportComment&comment=375298)

 On 12/14/2009 at 5:17 PM, silas thatcher said:

 On 12/12/2009 at 4:02 PM, Mary Diamond said:

I bought Mark a Swedish steel for his backpacking Christmas present before we left ~ and at PiP bought flint and steel for myself from Greg... Now to practice ~ Is char cloth period? Having luck with the spark, but getting it to catch is another matter entirely.

mary, did you "cook" the charcloth correctly ?? it is period as far as i know... i bought a set, and am able to get the charcloth to get an ember on one or two swipes of the flint...

a little practice and i had it down... but capt. jim seems to be the authority on this one :)

Hi Silas! No, we haven't had/made/tried char yet ~ was trying it straight on dry grasses and fluff. Great sparks, but none caught. Granted, we only tried for about 20 minutes ~ not enough time pre-PiP!

 On 12/14/2009 at 6:34 PM, Capt. Bo of the WTF co. said:

Yes linen is PC, but also remember that linen rags were a valuable commodity as they made print-stock from them,(why magazines and journals are still referred to as "rags"), so other forms of tinder should be considered as well. Read the article I provided as to proper charring technique. I use dried aromatic cedar bark as it is in endless supply here. Dried and "fluffed" and mixed within the jute twine I use for ignition tinder it works well, though not as fast as linen char. You can also char the punk-wood the same way as the linen. This works well if you keep it from humidity and damp conditions.

Bo

Thank you, Bo ~ I found the articles Very interesting ~ just haven't had time to put them into practice. Not as much aromatic cedar here, though at work we do sell bark mulch... maybe I will try some of that. Thanks for the great ideas!

[**silas thatcher**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/10423-silas-thatcher/)

* Notorious Pyrate
* 
* 
* Member
* 774 posts
* Location:st. louis, mo.
* Interests:probably too many interests :) old vw's, sailing, photography, home improvements, and lots more ;)

[Posted December 14, 2009](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/16161-making-fire/&do=findComment&comment=375309) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/16161-making-fire/&do=reportComment&comment=375309)

if i figgered all this out correctly, one uses the flint and steel to get the char, or char cloth smoldering with an ember at which point one uses the ember from the char cloth to ignite something flammable ... twigs, grass and the like....

[**Capt. Bo of the WTF co.**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/2748-capt-bo-of-the-wtf-co/)

* Scourge o' the 7 Seas
* 
* 
* Member
* 2,339 posts
* Gender:Male
* Location:Spanish Louisiana - on the river Osage
* Interests:Many and varied.

[Posted December 14, 2009](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/16161-making-fire/&do=findComment&comment=375310) (edited) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/16161-making-fire/&do=reportComment&comment=375310)

Yeah, that's pretty much it. Sounds easy huh? (evil smirk here) You neeed one of my super-duper atomic spark-throwin wonder steels don't ya? Seein as how yer from Mizzourah and all, i suppose i oughta let ya have one. Watch the mailbox, still have yer addy.

Bo

**Edited December 14, 2009 by Capt. Bo of the WTF co.**

[**Captain Jim**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/2317-captain-jim/)

* Captain Jim for Captain!
* 
* 
* Member
* 2,254 posts
* Gender:Male
* Location:Off the coast of Tampa Bay (Unfortunately, inland from the coast)
* Interests:I'm 57, formerly a wildlife ecologist and biologist, now a stay-at-home dad. I grew up on the west coast of Florida, where Anna Maria Sound and Tampa Bay were my playground. My interests include, but are not limited to cannon, black powder arms, history, fishing the flats, sailing, fine wood working, flint gun building, hunting, good gun dogs. Above all, my wife and children.

[Posted December 14, 2009](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/16161-making-fire/&do=findComment&comment=375313) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/16161-making-fire/&do=reportComment&comment=375313)

 On 12/14/2009 at 6:34 PM, Capt. Bo of the WTF co. said:

Jim, do you have a burning lens that you could keep on a thong around yer neck? I could send you a pair of brass tongs made especially for plucking a small coal from the fire to light yer pipe too. Just a couple of period alternatives to using up all your tinder/char on pipe-lighting.

Bo

I have one of those brass boxes with the lens built into the lid. I have used it occasionaly to light the slowmatch (takes about a second) and then use the match to light the pipe.

Where did you find the tongs, or did you make them? I've seen several antiques but the prices are outlandish.

[**Capt. Bo of the WTF co.**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/2748-capt-bo-of-the-wtf-co/)

* Scourge o' the 7 Seas
* 
* 
* Member
* 2,339 posts
* Gender:Male
* Location:Spanish Louisiana - on the river Osage
* Interests:Many and varied.

[Posted December 15, 2009](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/16161-making-fire/&do=findComment&comment=375332) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/16161-making-fire/&do=reportComment&comment=375332)

I make them from brazing rod. It takes about three minutes on a good day, maybe five if I'm in a funk. A grumpy ol' german blacksmith taught me how, documented too, just cannot remember from where, but he knew his stuff.

Those little burning lenses in the HB type boxes don't work well up here at this latitude in winter solstice. I carry a 2 1/2" dia. with a thick convex curve up here year round. I don't smoke, but ya never know when you may need to create a diversion to make your escape. Besides, it's always a hoot when someone asks for a lighter and I hand them my lens!

You wanna try makin those tongs or do ya want me to whip out a pair and send 'em down?

Bo

[**Captain Jim**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/2317-captain-jim/)

* Captain Jim for Captain!
* 
* 
* Member
* 2,254 posts
* Gender:Male
* Location:Off the coast of Tampa Bay (Unfortunately, inland from the coast)
* Interests:I'm 57, formerly a wildlife ecologist and biologist, now a stay-at-home dad. I grew up on the west coast of Florida, where Anna Maria Sound and Tampa Bay were my playground. My interests include, but are not limited to cannon, black powder arms, history, fishing the flats, sailing, fine wood working, flint gun building, hunting, good gun dogs. Above all, my wife and children.

[Posted December 15, 2009](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/16161-making-fire/&do=findComment&comment=375333) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/16161-making-fire/&do=reportComment&comment=375333)

 On 12/15/2009 at 9:39 AM, Capt. Bo of the WTF co. said:

I make them from brazing rod. It takes about three minutes on a good day, maybe five if I'm in a funk. A grumpy ol' German blacksmith taught me how, documented too, just cannot remember from where, but he knew his stuff.

Those little burning lenses in the HB type boxes don't work well up here at this latitude in winter solstice. I carry a 2 1/2" dia. with a thick convex curve up here year round. I don't smoke, but ya never know when you may need to create a diversion to make your escape. Besides, it's always a hoot when someone asks for a lighter and I hand them my lens!

You wanna try makin those tongs or do ya want me to whip out a pair and send 'em down?

Bo

Whip me up a pair, good sir, set me a price and send 'em on down. I'll definitely have some fun with them at late-night (after the kids are in bed, rules you know) cub scout camping trips. I don't smoke except at reenactments and occasionally while camping.

The idea of a separate burning lens is definitely growing on me. In FL if the sun is shining at all the small lens works, but a big one would work even better.

Jim

[**M.A.d'Dogge**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/4373-maddogge/)

* Second to None
* 
* 
* Member
* 1,534 posts
* Gender:Male
* Location:the Port of the Great Inland Sea, Detroit originally from the great inland corn seas of Illinois
* Interests:pyratin, story-tellin, historyin, suba divin, drynkin, skirt chassin, eatin, campin, photographin, cavin, rockclimbin, ghost huntin, talkin, sword fightin, canonin, black powder pistolin, travelin and pretty much anythin that could be included in ADVENTURIN!!!

[Posted December 17, 2009](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/16161-making-fire/&do=findComment&comment=375536) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/16161-making-fire/&do=reportComment&comment=375536)

for lighting my pipe....i have used the char clothe and striker with success...tho did break a pipe this way(was still in my mouth while i was striking)...and usually have on hand my small magnify glass...form jas towsend...and will...re-light my pipe...allready charred you see...quite quickly(just not so good at night tho) 

[**callenish gunner**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/1944-callenish-gunner/)

* Scourge o' the 7 Seas
* 
* 
* Member
* 2,138 posts
* Gender:Male
* Location:Pennsylvania mountains north of Clarion
* Interests:The Callenish gunner has just hoved into view looking for safe anchorage in these waters... purveyor of bladed and flintlock weaponry also leather accessories ..........painter of portraits and period scenes by avocation I'm getting my armoury business underway and will be doing as many festivals as I can ...right now along the east coast or great lakes

[Posted December 17, 2009](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/16161-making-fire/&do=findComment&comment=375542) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/16161-making-fire/&do=reportComment&comment=375542)

Bo, I'd like to see about several pairs of those tongs you make. We had a bitch of a time lighting our pipes at PIP and at Lockhouse.

[**Capt. Bo of the WTF co.**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/2748-capt-bo-of-the-wtf-co/)

* Scourge o' the 7 Seas
* 
* 
* Member
* 2,339 posts
* Gender:Male
* Location:Spanish Louisiana - on the river Osage
* Interests:Many and varied.

[Posted December 17, 2009](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/16161-making-fire/&do=findComment&comment=375543) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/16161-making-fire/&do=reportComment&comment=375543)

I'll be sending this out to Jim tomorrow, and perhaps he will give a product review. I used the last piece of 1/8" brazing rod I had, If these are acceptable and there is a need for more, I will go to the welding shop and get some more stock. My camera quit or I'd just show a picture and you could all see how simple they are to make. These are not the scissors type, but a spring-clamp type. Think of the coil end of a safety pin, with the ends crossed over and forming loops at the end of each tyne, and meeting flush with each-other. That's the best description I can muster. I also use them to light candles with matches when the wicks are far down inside a globe/jar. Saves a lot of burnt fingertips.

Bo

[**callenish gunner**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/1944-callenish-gunner/)

* Scourge o' the 7 Seas
* 
* 
* Member
* 2,138 posts
* Gender:Male
* Location:Pennsylvania mountains north of Clarion
* Interests:The Callenish gunner has just hoved into view looking for safe anchorage in these waters... purveyor of bladed and flintlock weaponry also leather accessories ..........painter of portraits and period scenes by avocation I'm getting my armoury business underway and will be doing as many festivals as I can ...right now along the east coast or great lakes

[Posted December 17, 2009](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/16161-making-fire/&do=findComment&comment=375545) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/16161-making-fire/&do=reportComment&comment=375545)

**About how long are they?**

[**Capt. Bo of the WTF co.**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/2748-capt-bo-of-the-wtf-co/)

* Scourge o' the 7 Seas
* 
* 
* Member
* 2,339 posts
* Gender:Male
* Location:Spanish Louisiana - on the river Osage
* Interests:Many and varied.

[Posted December 17, 2009](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/16161-making-fire/&do=findComment&comment=375547) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/16161-making-fire/&do=reportComment&comment=375547)

Usually around 6", but they can be made a little bit longer. That is basically half of a brazing rod, I can get two pair from one rod if I don't screw-up. I tend to make things compact anyhow. With these, you just rake some coals far enough away from the fire that you don't get burned reaching in for the coal you want, or if you have a small camp shovel, scoop some up with that, then just pluck one up with the tongs and smoke-away.

Bo

[**michaelsbagley**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/3724-michaelsbagley/)

* Smells Like Wet Sheep
* 
* 
* Moderator
* 2,548 posts
* Gender:Male
* Location:Columbus, Ohio
* Interests:Mostly into GAoP, but starting to develop more Buccaneer era stuff for re-enacting as well. Generally I do re-enact both piratical/nautical and other impressions from the period. I am focusing on more "common" impressions from the period (i.e. average sailor/pirate, rank and file Red Coat, early Colonial huntsman, etc.)

[Posted December 17, 2009](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/16161-making-fire/&do=findComment&comment=375548) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/16161-making-fire/&do=reportComment&comment=375548)

I have a set of these types of clamps that were gifted to me back in October. I think the gent that made them told me he made them from a coat hanger, or perhaps some thick unshielded copper wiring from the hardware store. My set are about 6 inches long (give or take). Bo, the guy that gave me that is Jean Phillipe from Frontier Folk if you know him at all.

Callenish, I had those at the Lockhouse back in November, did you see them? I used them to light my pipe when we were sitting around the fire Saturday night. They're likely still packed, but I will try and have a look for them and post a pic or two in the next few days if I can find them.

[**Captain Jim**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/2317-captain-jim/)

* Captain Jim for Captain!
* 
* 
* Member
* 2,254 posts
* Gender:Male
* Location:Off the coast of Tampa Bay (Unfortunately, inland from the coast)
* Interests:I'm 57, formerly a wildlife ecologist and biologist, now a stay-at-home dad. I grew up on the west coast of Florida, where Anna Maria Sound and Tampa Bay were my playground. My interests include, but are not limited to cannon, black powder arms, history, fishing the flats, sailing, fine wood working, flint gun building, hunting, good gun dogs. Above all, my wife and children.

[Posted December 17, 2009](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/16161-making-fire/&do=findComment&comment=375550) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/16161-making-fire/&do=reportComment&comment=375550)

Thanks, Bo, I'll take pictures as soon as it arrives.

[**Capt. Bo of the WTF co.**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/2748-capt-bo-of-the-wtf-co/)

* Scourge o' the 7 Seas
* 
* 
* Member
* 2,339 posts
* Gender:Male
* Location:Spanish Louisiana - on the river Osage
* Interests:Many and varied.

[Posted December 17, 2009](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/16161-making-fire/&do=findComment&comment=375562) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/16161-making-fire/&do=reportComment&comment=375562)

 On 12/17/2009 at 4:27 PM, michaelsbagley said:

I have a set of these types of clamps that were gifted to me back in October. I think the gent that made them told me he made them from a coat hanger, or perhaps some thick unshielded copper wiring from the hardware store. My set are about 6 inches long (give or take). Bo, the guy that gave me that is Jean Phillipe from Frontier Folk if you know him at all.

Callenish, I had those at the Lockhouse back in November, did you see them? I used them to light my pipe when we were sitting around the fire Saturday night. They're likely still packed, but I will try and have a look for them and post a pic or two in the next few days if I can find them.

The late Mike Amelling showed me how to make them, but I know Jean only thru the FF forum. Likely he learned from Mike as well at one of those events up north. The trick is to not get them too springy (too much pressure), or they'll bust the coals all down yer front. The advantage over the scissors type is you don't have to worry about keeping pressure on them yourself, and having one get loose and fall down yer front. 

Bo

[**silas thatcher**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/10423-silas-thatcher/)

* Notorious Pyrate
* 
* 
* Member
* 774 posts
* Location:st. louis, mo.
* Interests:probably too many interests :) old vw's, sailing, photography, home improvements, and lots more ;)

[Posted December 17, 2009](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/16161-making-fire/&do=findComment&comment=375586) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/16161-making-fire/&do=reportComment&comment=375586)

 On 12/14/2009 at 10:25 PM, Capt. Bo of the WTF co. said:

Yeah, that's pretty much it. Sounds easy huh? (evil smirk here) You neeed one of my super-duper atomic spark-throwin wonder steels don't ya? Seein as how yer from Mizzourah and all, i suppose i oughta let ya have one. Watch the mailbox, still have yer addy.

Bo

bo, i'll be looking forward to it !! thank you !!

[**Wayland**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/6370-wayland/)

* Deck Swabber
* 
* 
* Member
* 30 posts
* Gender:Male
* Location:Landlocked in t' North o' Blighty
* Interests:Living History, Photography, Bushcraft, Reading and makin' stuff. I run a living history education service for schools and museums called Lore and Saga

[Posted December 18, 2009](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/16161-making-fire/&do=findComment&comment=375610) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/16161-making-fire/&do=reportComment&comment=375610)

I use flint and steel very regularly as part of my school talks and demonstrations.

My method is [here](http://www.lore-and-saga.co.uk/html/firelighting_with_flint_and_st.html) and you can also find a video someone shot of me doing it

.

Of course that is all based on how the Vikings did it but there is not much difference until the invention of the match.

Linen tow is often used for caulking and good dry oakum would probably do the trick too.

For lighting a candle I usually use a spill of resinous wood, shaved to a fine point at the end and dipped in molten sulphur. These can be stored in your tinderbox and when the sulphur is touched to your charcloth ember, it ignites and if you wait a moment the burning sulphur will then ignite the spill. This method goes back at least to the middle ages.

[**M.A.d'Dogge**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/4373-maddogge/)

* Second to None
* 
* 
* Member
* 1,534 posts
* Gender:Male
* Location:the Port of the Great Inland Sea, Detroit originally from the great inland corn seas of Illinois
* Interests:pyratin, story-tellin, historyin, suba divin, drynkin, skirt chassin, eatin, campin, photographin, cavin, rockclimbin, ghost huntin, talkin, sword fightin, canonin, black powder pistolin, travelin and pretty much anythin that could be included in ADVENTURIN!!!

[Posted December 18, 2009](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/16161-making-fire/&do=findComment&comment=375614) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/16161-making-fire/&do=reportComment&comment=375614)

 On 12/18/2009 at 4:36 AM, Wayland said:

I use flint and steel very regularly as part of my school talks and demonstrations.

My method is [here](http://www.lore-and-saga.co.uk/html/firelighting_with_flint_and_st.html) and you can also find a video someone shot of me doing it

.

Of course that is all based on how the Vikings did it but there is not much difference until the invention of the match.

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For lighting a candle I usually use a spill of resinous wood, shaved to a fine point at the end and dipped in molten sulphur. These can be stored in your tinderbox and when the sulphur is touched to your charcloth ember, it ignites and if you wait a moment the burning sulphur will then ignite the spill. This method goes back at least to the middle ages.

wonderful pics..what the hell kinda of fish is that?....obviously no skinny dippin there!!

[**Wayland**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/6370-wayland/)

* Deck Swabber
* 
* 
* Member
* 30 posts
* Gender:Male
* Location:Landlocked in t' North o' Blighty
* Interests:Living History, Photography, Bushcraft, Reading and makin' stuff. I run a living history education service for schools and museums called Lore and Saga

[Posted December 18, 2009](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/16161-making-fire/&do=findComment&comment=375623) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/16161-making-fire/&do=reportComment&comment=375623)



This one?

I think it's an Angler fish. Deep sea fella.

The locals up there think they are lucky I as far as I can tell.

[**Mary Diamond**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/4625-mary-diamond/)

* It's My Fault
* 
* 
* Moderator
* 1,050 posts
* Gender:Female
* Location:Illinois
* Interests:Things I Love: Horticulture, Travel, Volleyball, Reading, Sewing, Costuming, Halloween, esp. props!, Halo, Halo2, Halo3, ODST, and, of course, Pyracy.

[Posted December 20, 2009](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/16161-making-fire/&do=findComment&comment=375789) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/16161-making-fire/&do=reportComment&comment=375789)

 On 12/18/2009 at 4:36 AM, Wayland said:

For lighting a candle I usually use a spill of resinous wood, shaved to a fine point at the end and dipped in molten sulphur. These can be stored in your tinderbox and when the sulphur is touched to your charcloth ember, it ignites and if you wait a moment the burning sulphur will then ignite the spill. This method goes back at least to the middle ages.

Fantastic! Do you make the spills yourself? I would be most interested in seeing the plane you use ~ I am quite intrigued by spills and their practical use.

[**Wayland**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/6370-wayland/)

* Deck Swabber
* 
* 
* Member
* 30 posts
* Gender:Male
* Location:Landlocked in t' North o' Blighty
* Interests:Living History, Photography, Bushcraft, Reading and makin' stuff. I run a living history education service for schools and museums called Lore and Saga

[Posted December 21, 2009](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/16161-making-fire/&do=findComment&comment=375816) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/16161-making-fire/&do=reportComment&comment=375816)

I just cut them with a knife.

Think of a sliver of wood about the thickness of a match stick. Shave the end to a fine point and then dip the point into some melted sulphur. Allow to dry and store in your tinderbox.

I usually shave and dip both ends so I get two lights from each stick.

I don't think I've got a picture of any at the moment and it's snowing outside so I don't really want to go out and take one cos I'm a wuss.

[**Captain Jim**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/2317-captain-jim/)

* Captain Jim for Captain!
* 
* 
* Member
* 2,254 posts
* Gender:Male
* Location:Off the coast of Tampa Bay (Unfortunately, inland from the coast)
* Interests:I'm 57, formerly a wildlife ecologist and biologist, now a stay-at-home dad. I grew up on the west coast of Florida, where Anna Maria Sound and Tampa Bay were my playground. My interests include, but are not limited to cannon, black powder arms, history, fishing the flats, sailing, fine wood working, flint gun building, hunting, good gun dogs. Above all, my wife and children.

[Posted December 21, 2009](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/16161-making-fire/&do=findComment&comment=375821) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/16161-making-fire/&do=reportComment&comment=375821)

Cool, something else to add to my tinderbox. Now if I had known about this when I was employed at VHB I coutd have picked up all the sulphur I could use on the side of the road near one of our monitoring sites in Brandon. Seems chunks of the stuff fell off the trucks coming from the refinery. Pure, too.

[**Wayland**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/6370-wayland/)

* Deck Swabber
* 
* 
* Member
* 30 posts
* Gender:Male
* Location:Landlocked in t' North o' Blighty
* Interests:Living History, Photography, Bushcraft, Reading and makin' stuff. I run a living history education service for schools and museums called Lore and Saga

[Posted December 21, 2009](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/16161-making-fire/&do=findComment&comment=375826) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/16161-making-fire/&do=reportComment&comment=375826)

I should just add a word of caution.

You don't want to go breathing in the fumes from the burning sulphur, they can do nasty things, especially if you're a bit asthmatic.

Wait for the violet flame to disappear and the yellow flame of the burning wood to take over before you go lighting your pipe with one.

[**Mary Diamond**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/4625-mary-diamond/)

* It's My Fault
* 
* 
* Moderator
* 1,050 posts
* Gender:Female
* Location:Illinois
* Interests:Things I Love: Horticulture, Travel, Volleyball, Reading, Sewing, Costuming, Halloween, esp. props!, Halo, Halo2, Halo3, ODST, and, of course, Pyracy.

[Posted December 21, 2009](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/16161-making-fire/&do=findComment&comment=375871) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/16161-making-fire/&do=reportComment&comment=375871)

 On 12/21/2009 at 6:26 AM, Wayland said:

I just cut them with a knife.

Think of a sliver of wood about the thickness of a match stick. Shave the end to a fine point and then dip the point into some melted sulphur. Allow to dry and store in your tinderbox.

I usually shave and dip both ends so I get two lights from each stick.

I don't think I've got a picture of any at the moment and it's snowing outside so I don't really want to go out and take one cos I'm a wuss.

Interesting ~ I suppose the spill plane is therefore a later period innovation? The plane turns out long cylindrical curls of thin overlapping wood, as opposed to the sliver style which you make ~ I would think the planed thinness would make them burn faster, but I have no practical experience with them, and a modern spill plane is a $50 investment (I haven't been that good ).

[**Quartermaster James**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/4887-quartermaster-james/)

* LUNATIC
* 
* 
* Member
* 1,662 posts
* Gender:Male
* Location:Sailing the Islets of Langerhans
* Interests:Interests cannot be left blank, so the machine says.

[Posted December 22, 2009](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/16161-making-fire/&do=findComment&comment=375884) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/16161-making-fire/&do=reportComment&comment=375884)

Just a short side note here:

It is not uncommon to use cedar spills to light cigars.

Usually these are made by breaking the thin sheets of cedar used to line cigar boxes into strips; no sulphur.

Never heard of a spill plane before. Thanks for the info Mary.

[**Captain Jim**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/2317-captain-jim/)

* Captain Jim for Captain!
* 
* 
* Member
* 2,254 posts
* Gender:Male
* Location:Off the coast of Tampa Bay (Unfortunately, inland from the coast)
* Interests:I'm 57, formerly a wildlife ecologist and biologist, now a stay-at-home dad. I grew up on the west coast of Florida, where Anna Maria Sound and Tampa Bay were my playground. My interests include, but are not limited to cannon, black powder arms, history, fishing the flats, sailing, fine wood working, flint gun building, hunting, good gun dogs. Above all, my wife and children.

[Posted December 22, 2009](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/16161-making-fire/&do=findComment&comment=375885) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/16161-making-fire/&do=reportComment&comment=375885)

Now this is why I love this place. For your edification, and mine, the spill plane: [Lee Valley Tools.](http://www.leevalley.com/wood/page.aspx?c=2&p=64338&cat=1,41182)

[**Wayland**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/6370-wayland/)

* Deck Swabber
* 
* 
* Member
* 30 posts
* Gender:Male
* Location:Landlocked in t' North o' Blighty
* Interests:Living History, Photography, Bushcraft, Reading and makin' stuff. I run a living history education service for schools and museums called Lore and Saga

[Posted December 22, 2009](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/16161-making-fire/&do=findComment&comment=375889) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/16161-making-fire/&do=reportComment&comment=375889)

 On 12/22/2009 at 8:53 AM, Quartermaster James said:

Just a short side note here:

It is not uncommon to use cedar spills to light cigars.

Usually these are made by breaking the thin sheets of cedar used to line cigar boxes into strips; no sulphur.

Never heard of a spill plane before. Thanks for the info Mary.

That would certainly work better for borrowing a light from a fire or some such, but the sulphur is used to take a light from just the ember on your charcloth.

[**Quartermaster James**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/4887-quartermaster-james/)

* LUNATIC
* 
* 
* Member
* 1,662 posts
* Gender:Male
* Location:Sailing the Islets of Langerhans
* Interests:Interests cannot be left blank, so the machine says.

[Posted December 22, 2009](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/16161-making-fire/&do=findComment&comment=375893) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/16161-making-fire/&do=reportComment&comment=375893)

 On 12/22/2009 at 9:35 AM, Wayland said:

That would certainly work better for borrowing a light from a fire or some such, but the sulphur is used to take a light from just the ember on your charcloth.

Understood.

 On 12/22/2009 at 9:03 AM, Captain Jim said:

Now this is why I love this place. For your edification, and mine, the spill plane: [Lee Valley Tools.](http://www.leevalley.com/wood/page.aspx?c=2&p=64338&cat=1,41182)

Nice! Here are a couple more interesting sites:

[Spill Planes](http://www.craftsofnj.org/toolshed/articles/Spill%20Planes%20by%20Herb%20Kean/Spill%20Planes.htm)

[Making a Spill Plane](http://www.wkfinetools.com/tMaking/art/spill_Plane/Spill_Plane1.asp)

[**Captain Jim**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/2317-captain-jim/)

* Captain Jim for Captain!
* 
* 
* Member
* 2,254 posts
* Gender:Male
* Location:Off the coast of Tampa Bay (Unfortunately, inland from the coast)
* Interests:I'm 57, formerly a wildlife ecologist and biologist, now a stay-at-home dad. I grew up on the west coast of Florida, where Anna Maria Sound and Tampa Bay were my playground. My interests include, but are not limited to cannon, black powder arms, history, fishing the flats, sailing, fine wood working, flint gun building, hunting, good gun dogs. Above all, my wife and children.

[Posted December 23, 2009](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/16161-making-fire/&do=findComment&comment=375970) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/16161-making-fire/&do=reportComment&comment=375970)

Damn, now I've got to make one of those, too. Curse you, Quartermaster James, Curse you!

[**michaelsbagley**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/3724-michaelsbagley/)

* Smells Like Wet Sheep
* 
* 
* Moderator
* 2,548 posts
* Gender:Male
* Location:Columbus, Ohio
* Interests:Mostly into GAoP, but starting to develop more Buccaneer era stuff for re-enacting as well. Generally I do re-enact both piratical/nautical and other impressions from the period. I am focusing on more "common" impressions from the period (i.e. average sailor/pirate, rank and file Red Coat, early Colonial huntsman, etc.)

[Posted December 23, 2009](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/16161-making-fire/&do=findComment&comment=375972) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/16161-making-fire/&do=reportComment&comment=375972)

 On 12/17/2009 at 4:27 PM, michaelsbagley said:

I have a set of these types of clamps that were gifted to me back in October. I think the gent that made them told me he made them from a coat hanger, or perhaps some thick unshielded copper wiring from the hardware store. My set are about 6 inches long (give or take). Bo, the guy that gave me that is Jean Phillipe from Frontier Folk if you know him at all.

Callenish, I had those at the Lockhouse back in November, did you see them? I used them to light my pipe when we were sitting around the fire Saturday night. They're likely still packed, but I will try and have a look for them and post a pic or two in the next few days if I can find them.

Okay, here is the picture of my coal tongs... I am squeezing them in this picture, their natural state is closed. And after looking at them again, I am fairly certain they are not made from an old coat hanger, the copper wire is too thick for that, so it is likely they were made from thick wire from the hardware store.



[**Dutchman**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/6150-dutchman/)

* Has anyone seen my cousin?
* 
* 
* Admin
* 1,773 posts
* Gender:Male
* Location:tidewater virginia

[Posted December 23, 2009](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/16161-making-fire/&do=findComment&comment=375977) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/16161-making-fire/&do=reportComment&comment=375977)

@#%^%$%% coal tongs and cedar spills. back to the shop i go thanks mickey. who'da thought all those cedar shaving from the boat would surface here. I've got a barrel of spills waiting to go to the burn pit. guess i'll pull em out now.

[**Capt. Bo of the WTF co.**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/2748-capt-bo-of-the-wtf-co/)

* Scourge o' the 7 Seas
* 
* 
* Member
* 2,339 posts
* Gender:Male
* Location:Spanish Louisiana - on the river Osage
* Interests:Many and varied.

[Posted December 23, 2009](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/16161-making-fire/&do=findComment&comment=375982) (edited) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/16161-making-fire/&do=reportComment&comment=375982)

Thanks for putting up the picture Michael, now you can all see how simple it is. I use 1/8" brazing rod. It is stiff enough that it does not need heated to make the curl, but you do need to heat the ends before you make the loops or they'll break. I have a piece of 1" round bar I use to make the curl by winding the rod around the bar. The copper ones look good! I believe you have to heat treat them to make them stiff though. Copper wire as-is is very flexible/soft. Michaels look to be either a #8 or #6 bare copper ground wire. If you make them from copper they will be easy to work into shape, then you can treat them in your oven @400f for about an hour, or just use a propane torch to heat the copper til it gets a dull brown look consistently, let it cool slowly, and polish.

Jim, did yours arrive yet?

Bo

**Edited December 23, 2009 by Capt. Bo of the WTF co.**

[**Captain Jim**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/2317-captain-jim/)

* Captain Jim for Captain!
* 
* 
* Member
* 2,254 posts
* Gender:Male
* Location:Off the coast of Tampa Bay (Unfortunately, inland from the coast)
* Interests:I'm 57, formerly a wildlife ecologist and biologist, now a stay-at-home dad. I grew up on the west coast of Florida, where Anna Maria Sound and Tampa Bay were my playground. My interests include, but are not limited to cannon, black powder arms, history, fishing the flats, sailing, fine wood working, flint gun building, hunting, good gun dogs. Above all, my wife and children.

[Posted December 23, 2009](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/16161-making-fire/&do=findComment&comment=376006) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/16161-making-fire/&do=reportComment&comment=376006)

Arrived yesterday. I'll try to post pictures tonight. Haven't tried em out yet.

[**Wayland**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/6370-wayland/)

* Deck Swabber
* 
* 
* Member
* 30 posts
* Gender:Male
* Location:Landlocked in t' North o' Blighty
* Interests:Living History, Photography, Bushcraft, Reading and makin' stuff. I run a living history education service for schools and museums called Lore and Saga

[Posted December 30, 2009](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/16161-making-fire/&do=findComment&comment=376310) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/16161-making-fire/&do=reportComment&comment=376310)

Not sure how useful this info is, but I've just found out that the sulphur dipped spills were actually called "Spunks" pre 1900.

Now I can see why that name has dropped out of use on this side of the pond, but I don't know if it has the same unfortunate connotations over there in the colonies. 

[**Dutchman**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/6150-dutchman/)

* Has anyone seen my cousin?
* 
* 
* Admin
* 1,773 posts
* Gender:Male
* Location:tidewater virginia

[Posted December 30, 2009](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/16161-making-fire/&do=findComment&comment=376316) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/16161-making-fire/&do=reportComment&comment=376316)

it does :) great, yet another word to add to my dictionary of period words that make mothers cringe.

[**Matty Bottles**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/949-matty-bottles/)

* Notorious Pyrate
* 
* 
* Member
* 891 posts
* Gender:Male
* Location:Milwaukee, WI
* Interests:Writing, Art, Spending exorbinant amounts of money on action figures, rum, murder.

[Posted December 30, 2009](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/16161-making-fire/&do=findComment&comment=376329) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/16161-making-fire/&do=reportComment&comment=376329)

Are you going to light a faggot with your spunk?

GUYS IT IS PC DEFINITIONS DON'T GET SO MAD!

Okay, that WAS pretty childish. Sorry.

[**Wayland**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/6370-wayland/)

* Deck Swabber
* 
* 
* Member
* 30 posts
* Gender:Male
* Location:Landlocked in t' North o' Blighty
* Interests:Living History, Photography, Bushcraft, Reading and makin' stuff. I run a living history education service for schools and museums called Lore and Saga

[Posted December 30, 2009](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/16161-making-fire/&do=findComment&comment=376352) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/16161-making-fire/&do=reportComment&comment=376352)

Oh dear.....What have I started.......

[**Dutchman**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/6150-dutchman/)

* Has anyone seen my cousin?
* 
* 
* Admin
* 1,773 posts
* Gender:Male
* Location:tidewater virginia

[Posted December 30, 2009](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/16161-making-fire/&do=findComment&comment=376354) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/16161-making-fire/&do=reportComment&comment=376354)

who's gettin upset. i love saying things like that just to rile little ole gray hairs.

[**callenish gunner**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/1944-callenish-gunner/)

* Scourge o' the 7 Seas
* 
* 
* Member
* 2,138 posts
* Gender:Male
* Location:Pennsylvania mountains north of Clarion
* Interests:The Callenish gunner has just hoved into view looking for safe anchorage in these waters... purveyor of bladed and flintlock weaponry also leather accessories ..........painter of portraits and period scenes by avocation I'm getting my armoury business underway and will be doing as many festivals as I can ...right now along the east coast or great lakes

[Posted December 30, 2009](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/16161-making-fire/&do=findComment&comment=376359) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/16161-making-fire/&do=reportComment&comment=376359)

**There it is!!! I've been reading this thread for all these past 68 posts just to have you toss in the old GREY HAIR bit! Age Discrimination!!!** 

[**Mary Diamond**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/4625-mary-diamond/)

* It's My Fault
* 
* 
* Moderator
* 1,050 posts
* Gender:Female
* Location:Illinois
* Interests:Things I Love: Horticulture, Travel, Volleyball, Reading, Sewing, Costuming, Halloween, esp. props!, Halo, Halo2, Halo3, ODST, and, of course, Pyracy.

[Posted January 5, 2010](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/16161-making-fire/&do=findComment&comment=376725) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/16161-making-fire/&do=reportComment&comment=376725)

Yep, spill planes have fascinated me since I saw the one on my Lee Valley catalog. Just try to find a plane dating back to the 1700s, though ~ I have contacted antique dealers, living history folks ~ nothing concrete as of yet, but I will continue. I was hoping to incorporate it into my camp kit as a practical item ~ I don't usually need a whole fire, but usually need to light my lanterns ~ this is something I can easily chat with the smaller impressionable folk about, and even share spills with the audience.

[**Dutchman**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/6150-dutchman/)

* Has anyone seen my cousin?
* 
* 
* Admin
* 1,773 posts
* Gender:Male
* Location:tidewater virginia

[Posted January 5, 2010](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/16161-making-fire/&do=findComment&comment=376729) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/16161-making-fire/&do=reportComment&comment=376729)

this has been a great thread. i've added a few things to the box o fire and still figuring out how to effectively use a couple of them. i'm still having a hard time getting the flint to land where i want it in the tinder.

mary- looking at the spill plane- it wouldnt be hard to do. the body can be made of wood and any blade would work. it's the angle of set and pitch in the throat that is needed. if we can figure that part out, I'd put the shipwright on it for you. He would probably have it done in ten minutes. talented bugger.......

[**Mission**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/1929-mission/)

* Goat Specialist
* 
* 
* Admin
* 5,081 posts
* Gender:Male
* Location:Monroe, MI
* Interests:Scholarly piracy, designing and creating haunted house rooms and props, movies, abstract thinking, abstruse thinking, obstructive thinking, ideating, random thinking, movies, cartoons, movies, movies scores, cycling, world peace and small furry dogs, movies, writing, drawing, personal skills training, gremlins and, of course, lest I forget, movies.

[Posted September 21, 2011](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/16161-making-fire/&do=findComment&comment=403070) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/16161-making-fire/&do=reportComment&comment=403070)

The book *The Voyages and Travels of Captain Nathaniel Uring* (1927 reprint, first published in 1726) is full of all sorts of interesting side comments that I'm going to be posting. He doesn't describe what he's talking about here, but I find the comment worth mention. Here, Uring is talking about Luke Haughton, who offered him food and shelter when he was shipwrecked in Honduras. Haughton wound up establishing a home in Honduras after escaping from the Spanish, who were transporting him to Spain after capturing him in Vera Cruz. This is an account from just after Haughton's escape.

"He got safe to the Island; but when he found himself there, he was in a bad Condition; for his Fireworks which he had fastned with his Frock to the Nape of his Neck, were either lost or render'd useless; so that he could get nor Fire. At his first landing, he lived on Conckes and other Shell Fish, till seeing great Numbers of large Snakes, which

\_\_

they call Oulers, that are not venomous, he killed several of them; and having flead them, he split them in Pieces, dipped them in salt Water, and dried them upon the Rocks in the Sun, and found this Food much more agreeable to him than his Shell Fish, there being no fresh Water on the Island but what lodged in the Holes of the Rocks when it rained, always finding enough to satisfy his Thirst. In this manner he lived without Fire for near Six Months..." (p. 150-1)

[**Graye Fox**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/11503-graye-fox/)

* Deck Swabber
* 
* 
* Member
* 34 posts

[Posted October 14, 2011](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/16161-making-fire/&do=findComment&comment=403617) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/16161-making-fire/&do=reportComment&comment=403617)

If I may be permitted to add my own anecdote about fire starting: I have a glass magnifying lens that I use to light my pipe with (tricky, when you can't hold the pipe in your mouth and see inside the bowl for the correct distance and angle for the lens). While at an encampment a few years ago I decided to experiment to see how well gunpowder could start a cooking fire, and I chose my lens to see if I could ignite the powder with it. I had to lay my carronade ball shaped body down close to the fire pit to be able to get the lens in close enough. So here are the results:

Does it work?

YES IT DOES.

How long does it take for the lens to ignite the gunpowder?

EXACTLY 3 SECONDS.

What was the result?

Well there was a great whoosh and eruption and smoke and such much like an old time camera flash in a wild west movie. I can now say I have much in common with Wile E Coyote, for I am now both a super-genius and my face was covered in the inevitable cartoonish black soot like some Acme powered anti-road runner death machine exploding on ol' Mr Coyote. Fortunately I was wearing my spectacles at the time, so no permanent damage done and also no need to shave for the rest of the weekend.

Recreate experiment at your own peril.

[**Capt. Bo of the WTF co.**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/2748-capt-bo-of-the-wtf-co/)

* Scourge o' the 7 Seas
* 
* 
* Member
* 2,339 posts
* Gender:Male
* Location:Spanish Louisiana - on the river Osage
* Interests:Many and varied.

[Posted October 15, 2011](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/16161-making-fire/&do=findComment&comment=403633) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/16161-making-fire/&do=reportComment&comment=403633)

If you have your flintlock gunne with you, you have a flint-and-steel that works "automatically" for igniting fires. Place your charr in the pan, close the frizzen/battery and set the hammer, squeeze the trigger and your char is ready to place in the tinder. Of course you want to be sure the gunne is not loaded and always pointed in a safe direction regardless.

Bo.

[**Mission**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/1929-mission/)

* Goat Specialist
* 
* 
* Admin
* 5,081 posts
* Gender:Male
* Location:Monroe, MI
* Interests:Scholarly piracy, designing and creating haunted house rooms and props, movies, abstract thinking, abstruse thinking, obstructive thinking, ideating, random thinking, movies, cartoons, movies, movies scores, cycling, world peace and small furry dogs, movies, writing, drawing, personal skills training, gremlins and, of course, lest I forget, movies.

[Posted October 15, 2011](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/16161-making-fire/&do=findComment&comment=403634) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/16161-making-fire/&do=reportComment&comment=403634)

 On 10/15/2011 at 11:51 AM, Capt. Bo of the WTF co. said:

If you have your flintlock gunne with you, you have a flint-and-steel that works "automatically" for igniting fires. Place your charr in the pan, close the frizzen/battery and set the hammer, squeeze the trigger and your char is ready to place in the tinder. Of course you want to be sure the gunne is not loaded and always pointed in a safe direction regardless.

I actually have a period reference for doing this somewhere, so it is correct. (I sort of doubt magnifying glasses were used for such, but who knows?)

[**jendobyns**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/11262-jendobyns/)

* Pyrate Captain
* 
* 
* Member
* 562 posts
* Gender:Female
* Location:Baltimore
* Interests:too numerous to mention, really. Period foodways, baroque dance, material culture, etc., etc.

[Posted October 20, 2011](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/16161-making-fire/&do=findComment&comment=403739) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/16161-making-fire/&do=reportComment&comment=403739)

 On 10/14/2011 at 11:19 PM, Graye Fox said:

If I may be permitted to add my own anecdote about fire starting: I have a glass magnifying lens that I use to light my pipe with (tricky, when you can't hold the pipe in your mouth and see inside the bowl for the correct distance and angle for the lens). While at an encampment a few years ago I decided to experiment to see how well gunpowder could start a cooking fire, and I chose my lens to see if I could ignite the powder with it. I had to lay my carronade ball shaped body down close to the fire pit to be able to get the lens in close enough. So here are the results:

Does it work?

YES IT DOES.

How long does it take for the lens to ignite the gunpowder?

EXACTLY 3 SECONDS.

What was the result?

Well there was a great whoosh and eruption and smoke and such much like an old time camera flash in a wild west movie. I can now say I have much in common with Wile E Coyote, for I am now both a super-genius and my face was covered in the inevitable cartoonish black soot like some Acme powered anti-road runner death machine exploding on ol' Mr Coyote. Fortunately I was wearing my spectacles at the time, so no permanent damage done and also no need to shave for the rest of the weekend.

Recreate experiment at your own peril.

Oh, goodness, but you were lucky! I can recall at least two incidents where starting a fire with the aid of gunpowder ended badly.

[**willie wobble**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/2325-willie-wobble/)

* Plunderer
* 
* 
* Member
* 336 posts
* Gender:Male
* Location:ROCKVEGAS, FLORIDA
* Interests:CANNONS , BLACKPOWDER,Wood carving and Knotwork

[Posted October 21, 2011](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/16161-making-fire/&do=findComment&comment=403752) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/16161-making-fire/&do=reportComment&comment=403752)

How do you light a PIG on fire in Key West??

[**adam cyphers**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/11273-adam-cyphers/)

* Plunderer
* 
* 
* Member
* 428 posts
* Gender:Male
* Location:hampton,va
* Interests:blacksmithing,tattoos,art in general,crafting things with my own two hands,many others...

[Posted October 21, 2011](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/16161-making-fire/&do=findComment&comment=403762) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/16161-making-fire/&do=reportComment&comment=403762)

oh oh i know....rummmmmmm :)

[**Dutchman**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/6150-dutchman/)

* Has anyone seen my cousin?
* 
* 
* Admin
* 1,773 posts
* Gender:Male
* Location:tidewater virginia

[Posted October 21, 2011](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/16161-making-fire/&do=findComment&comment=403767) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/16161-making-fire/&do=reportComment&comment=403767)

and a blunderbuss......

snicker- graye fox's gunpowder incident got me thinking about one of our folks. Seems he had dropped a few rolled charge ends in his shirt pocket rather than litter the ground- nice environmental sort he is- well he was headed home pulled out the cigarettes and lighter that were in the same pocket and hit the lighter flint- burned his eyebrows off.

[**Mission**](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/profile/1929-mission/)

* Goat Specialist
* 
* 
* Admin
* 5,081 posts
* Gender:Male
* Location:Monroe, MI
* Interests:Scholarly piracy, designing and creating haunted house rooms and props, movies, abstract thinking, abstruse thinking, obstructive thinking, ideating, random thinking, movies, cartoons, movies, movies scores, cycling, world peace and small furry dogs, movies, writing, drawing, personal skills training, gremlins and, of course, lest I forget, movies.

[Posted November 28, 2012](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/16161-making-fire/&do=findComment&comment=412271) · [Report post](http://pyracy.com/index.php?/topic/16161-making-fire/&do=reportComment&comment=412271)

Nothing new or shocking here, but I thought it worth sharing. It's from *The four years voyages of capt. George Roberts* when he shipwrecked on St. Johns in 1721 or 22:

"[The natives] asked, Whether we could not make a Fire? they said, They had nothing to strike a Fire with, neither had they any Fewel to make it with; one said, He had Steel, Tinder, and Cotton, and some of the other asked me, If the Wood of the Wreck would not burn? I told them yes, very well; at which, an elderly Man bid some of the young Men swim off, and bring some of the smallest and lightest pieces of Boards which were swimming about in the Water, which they did..." (Roberts, p. 178)

The wood didn't burn very well, as you can imagine. (They don't mention if they tried it again when it was dry.)