

Back Yard Obstacle Course

MATERIAL IDEAS

(USE WHAT YOU HAVE!)

- ☐ Pool Noodles
- ☐ Hula Hoops
- ☐ Sponges
- ☐ Kiddie pool or sprinkler
- ☐ Sidewalk chalk
- ☐ Tires
- ☐ Rope or string
- ☐ Buckets
- ☐ Balls



INSTRUCTIONS

Use a variety of household items to design an obstacle course in your backyard. The possibilities are endless, but take a look at the photos to get some ideas. Time yourself, friends, and family members as they go through the course. Who can do it the fastest?



Nighttime Scavenger Hunt

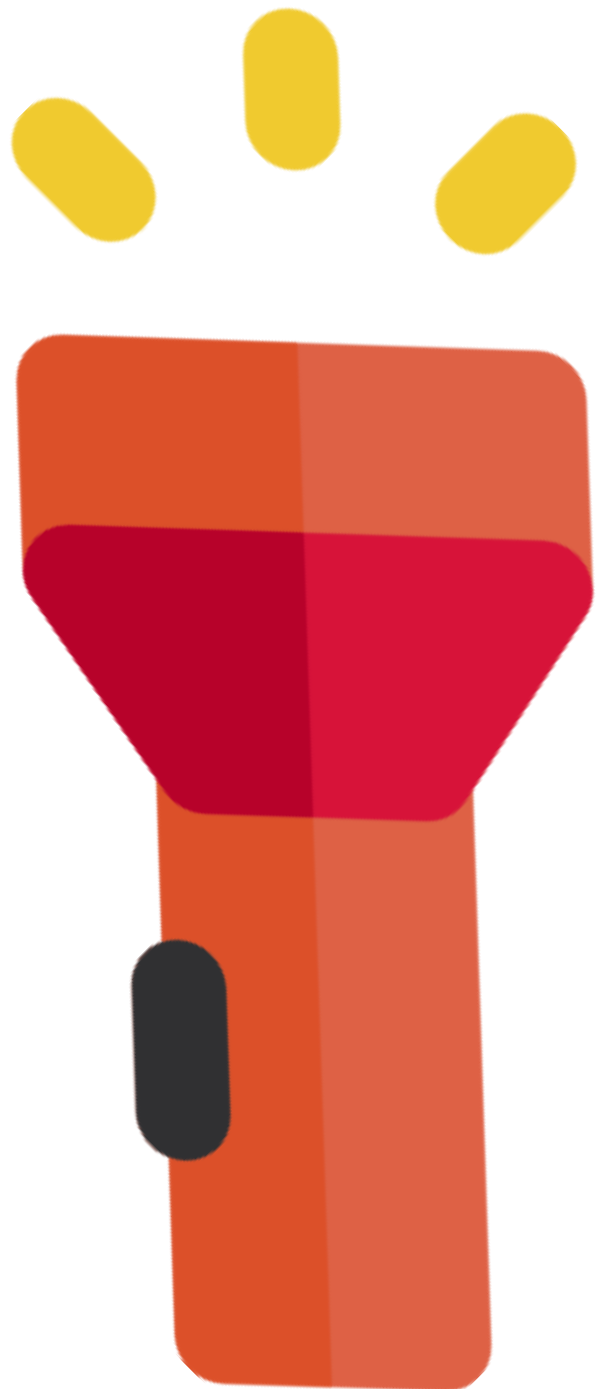
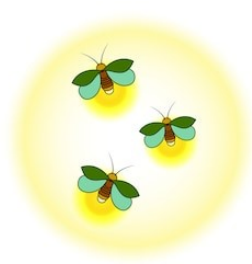
MATERIALS NEEDED

- ☐ Flashlight
- ☐ List of items to find

INSTRUCTIONS

After it grows dark outside, grab a flashlight and go outside. **Look** and **listen** for the following items (or, create your own list):

- ☐ Shooting star
- ☐ Brake lights on a car or truck
- ☐ Lightening bug
- ☐ Big dipper constellation
- ☐ Frog
- ☐ Spider web
- ☐ Crickets
- ☐ Pinecone
- ☐ Slug
- ☐ Mosquito
- ☐ Owl
- ☐ Howling
- ☐ Shadow
- ☐ Dandelion
- ☐ Water
- ☐ Something that glows in the dark



Build a Mini Pond

MATERIALS NEEDED

- ☐ Plastic bucket or basin (preferably in a dark color to blend in with the ground)
- ☐ Garden shovel
- ☐ Rocks
- ☐ Soil
- ☐ Optional: water plants (see below)

INSTRUCTIONS

1. With the help of an adult, look for an ideal spot for your mini pond. Shade is ideal because it will lessen the chance of algae growth over time and will keep the water cooler in the summer.
2. Dig a hole that will fit your bucket or basin so that the top is even with the ground.
3. Once the hole is big enough, wedge your bucket or basin into it.
4. Take your large rocks and stack them like a staircase on one side of your bucket or basin. Make sure it's as stable as possible. This is important, especially if you're using a deep bucket. The stone staircase will help any animals who may find your pond get in and out safely.
5. Throw a few handfuls of soil in the bottom of your bucket or basin. This will encourage tiny creatures to take up residence there, since it will contain microscopic life and bacteria - the first link in the food chain.
6. Spread dirt around the rim of your pond and add any other rocks or stones around it to create a little "beach" for your pond.
7. Fill your pond with rain water. Set out a bucket during a rainstorm to collect the water. It's best to use rain water because it's not chemically treated.
8. Keep an eye on your mini pond throughout the summer and see if you get any visitors, like insects, beetles, or frogs.



If you'd like to invest more time and money into your pond, think about adding water plants, like Marsh Marigold or a Yellow Flag Iris.

Water Balloon Games

MATERIALS NEEDED

- ☐ Water balloons
- ☐ Colander
- ☐ Shaving cream
- ☐ Kiddie pool
- ☐ Baseball bat or tennis racket

COLANDER HEAD

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Find a partner and decide who is going to be the “colander head” first. That person will hold the colander on top of their head and face their partner who should be standing a distance away.
2. Their partner will then begin tossing water balloons into the colander. You get one point for each water balloon that doesn’t pop. Good luck!



WATER BALLOON LITTLE LEAGUE

INSTRUCTIONS

1. The set up is exactly the same as a baseball game, only instead of a ball, the pitcher will be tossing water balloons . . . and you probably won’t need any outfielders.
2. Each “slugger” will get three swings at bat. If they hit the balloon they get to run the bases. Most likely the balloon will pop, so the runner is out if they get tagged by any of the infielders.



HIDE-N-SEEK

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Fill half your balloons with water and the other half with shaving cream.
2. Place all the balloons in a kiddie pool.
3. Each contestant will kneel next to the kiddie pool, blindfolded. They have 1 minute to pop as many balloons as they can.
4. Every shaving cream filled balloon is worth 1 point.

Pounding Leaf Prints

MATERIALS NEEDED

- ☐ Leaves and flowers
- ☐ White paper (watercolor paper works best)
- ☐ Hammer or mallet
- ☐ Paper towels

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Go on a walk around your neighborhood, your yard, or a local park. Gather leaves and flowers in a range of different colors and textures. Make sure not to pick flowers or leaves from plants that don't belong to you, but anything that's fallen on the ground is fair game!
2. Once home, arrange your piece of paper on the sidewalk, driveway, or any hard surface.
3. Take a look at your leaves and flowers and get rid of any chunky or unnecessary bits. This will better help them lay flat on your paper.
4. Arrange the leaves and flowers on your paper. If you have a lot of items and are worried they might move around, go ahead and tape them down. Just note that any spot where the tape meets the paper will not leave an imprint from your natural elements.
5. Place 2 - 3 layers of paper towels over your design.
6. Grab your hammer and begin pounding your design! Start off with smooth soft blows just to squish your plant in place. Then you can pound a bit harder. Be patient and make sure you're covering every bit of your plants with hard, even swings.
7. Once you feel like you've gotten every bit of your design, peel back part of the towels and check your progress. Continue pounding if you need to.
8. Remove the paper towels and slowly start to peel off your leaves and flowers. If they're sticking, give them some time to dry out and you can simply brush them away.
9. You'll notice that some flowers and leaves look better than others. It all depends on your hammering technique and the amount of pigmentation and liquid in your plant.
10. You may be finished, or you may decide to do another layer with fresh leaves and flowers to create more depth to your picture.



Bubble Foam

MATERIALS NEEDED

- ☐ Water
- ☐ Bubble bath
- ☐ Food coloring (optional)
- ☐ Hand mixer

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Depending on how much foam you'd like to make, mix 2 parts water to 1 part bubble bath.
2. Add food coloring, if you like.
3. Mix the mixture with your hand mixer until frothy peaks form.
4. Continue making in batches to fill a kiddie pool, tubs, or add to a slip-n-slide. Just be careful it doesn't get into your eyes.



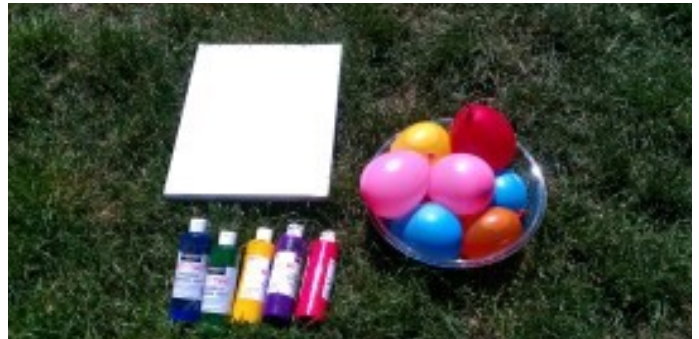
Water Balloon Painting

MATERIALS NEEDED

- ☐ Water balloons
- ☐ Large canvas
- ☐ Washable paint
- ☐ Funnel

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Fill the balloons with water and take them outside.
2. Place your canvas on the grass and drip paint onto the middle of the canvas. Don't cover the entire canvas, but be generous with your pools of paint.
3. Toss the balloons at the canvas and watch your masterpiece take shape!
4. The water will help the paint drip and run over your canvas. Add more paint as needed,



Forest Bathing

This Japanese practice is a process of relaxation; known in Japan as *shinrin yoku*. The simple method of being calm and quiet amongst the trees, observing nature around you whilst breathing deeply can help both adults and children de-stress and boost health and wellbeing in a natural way.

MATERIALS NEEDED

- A forest or a quiet place with trees

INSTRUCTIONS

- Turn off your devices to give yourself the best chance of relaxing, being mindful and enjoying a sensory forest-based experience.
- Slow down. Move through the forest slowly so you can see and feel more.
- Take long breaths deep into the abdomen. Extending the exhalation of air to twice the length of the inhalation sends a message to the body that it can relax.
- Stop, stand or sit, smell what's around you, what can you smell?
- Take in your surroundings using all of your senses. How does the forest environment make you feel? Be observant, look at nature's small details.
- Sit quietly using mindful observation; try to avoid thinking about your to-do list or issues related to daily life. You might be surprised by the number of wild forest inhabitants you see using this process.
- Keep your eyes open. The colors of nature are soothing and studies have shown that people relax best while seeing greens and blues.
- Stay as long as you can, start with a comfortable time limit and build up to the recommended two hours for a complete forest bathing experience.

