



DIY Musical Instruments

Make your own musical instruments at home.

Music ties together all of humanity, and learning how to make musical instruments gives children a deeper understanding of music's power.

Making musical instruments for children is also a fun activity that parents/carers and children can do together.

Take those important steps toward musical bliss with the crafts and activities. There are many types of musical instrument crafts to choose from, and you're sure to find something to spur your child's musical instincts.

Cardboard guitar

What you need:



- Cardboard box
- Pencil
- Scissors
- Glue
- Tempera paints
- Paintbrush
- Metallic felt-tip marker
- Straight pin
- Fishing line
- Duct tape

Step 1: Draw a life-size guitar on the long end of an appliance box. You can make an acoustic guitar or an electric guitar shape.

Step 2: Trace around the neck of the guitar on cardboard to make another neck; make this one a bit longer than the original.

Step 3: Cut both pieces out, and glue the second neck to the back of the first neck. This will reinforce your guitar so you can strum wildly! If you've made an acoustic guitar, cut out a hole in the body of the guitar, so it looks like a real guitar.

Step 4: Paint your guitar however you'd like. You can add your band's name, logo, or whatever you want.

Step 5: When the paint is dry, draw frets (the lines along the neck of the guitar) with the metallic felt-tip marker.

Step 6: With a straight pin, make four small holes for an electric guitar or six small holes for an acoustic guitar along the top of the neck and four or six holes at the bottom third of the body of the guitar.

Step 7: Measure the length from the top holes to the bottom holes, and add four inches.

Step 8: Cut four or six pieces of fishing line that length. Thread a piece of fishing line through the front of a top hole, and tape the line down on the back of the guitar with duct tape; repeat for the bottom hole. Do the same with the other holes and other pieces of line.

Musical Can Shakers

What you need:



- Three small metal coffee cans with lids
- White paper
- Colored markers
- Old magazines
- Scissors
- Glue
- Measuring cup
- Uncooked pinto beans
- Popcorn (that has not been popped)
- Uncooked rice
- Heavy-duty tape

Step 1: Wash and dry the coffee cans.

Step 2: Decorate three sheets of paper with colorful drawings of musical notes or fun shapes. You can also use old magazines to cut out pictures of your favorite musical legends or stars, and glue them on the paper.

Step 3: Glue your design to the outside of the coffee can, covering the brand name and logo.

Step 4: Now put one half cup of uncooked beans in a can, one half cup of uncooked popcorn in another, and one half cup of uncooked rice in the third.

Step 5: Pop on the plastic lids, and make sure they are securely in place. Tape the lids in place with heavy-duty tape. Now it's time to shake, shake, shake your way to musical adventure.

**Notice how different the sounds inside each can are, thanks to the different shapes and densities of the contents.*

Fish Line Music Board

What you need:

- Smooth board, 16 x 6 x 1 inches
- Pencil
- Ruler
- Hammer
- Ten one-inch nails
- Scissors
- Nylon fishing line

Step 1: Lay a 16 x 6 x 1-inch board flat on the table in front of you so that one of the six-inch sides is nearest you.

Step 2: Draw five straight pencil lines down the length of the board about one inch apart, beginning one inch down from the top and one inch in from the left side.

Step 3: Pound a nail about one half inch deep at the top of each line (you may want to do this for your child).

Step 4: Cut five pieces of nylon fishing line in the following lengths: 14, 12, 10, eight, and 6 inches. Tie a loose slip knot in both ends of each piece of fishing line.

Step 5: Put the slip knot of the 14-inch piece of fishing line over the top left nail on your board, and pull the knot tight.

Step 6: Put the slip knot at the other end of the fishing line over a loose nail, and stretch the line as tightly as you can toward the bottom of the leftmost pencil line that you drew.

Step 7: Hammer the nail into the board about one half inch deep. Nail the other pieces of fishing line onto the board in the same way.

Step 8: Work from left to right on the board, each time using the longest piece of fishing line that you have left.

You now have a musical instrument. Pluck each string with your index finger. Which string has the highest sound? Which has the lowest? Practice with your new instrument, and use it to make music.

Glass Jars



What you need:

- Six to eight different-size glass jars with lids
- Water
- Metal fork

Step 1: Gather together six to eight different-size glass jars with lids.

Step 2: Fill each jar half full of cool water, and tightly close the lids.

Use a metal fork to gently strike the jars.

Can you hear the music ring? Do all the jars sound the same? Does the music change when you strike the top, middle, or bottom of the jar?

Step 3: Pour out half the water in each jar, and repeat the experiment. How have the tones changed?

Step 4: Once you're familiar with what note each of your jars will play when softly hit, you can try to play your favorite tunes.

Pie Pan Tamborine

What you need:

- Foil pie pan
- Nail
- File or hammer
- Jingle bells
- Yarn or string

Step 1: Punch holes in the edges of an aluminum foil pie pan with a nail. Help children smooth the sharp edges of the holes with a file or hammer.

Step 2: At each hole, tie a small jingle bell to the pan with yarn or string. Now jingle those bells -- you'll have a rhythmic adventure you won't be able to resist.

Musical Chimes

What you need:

- Six-inch block of wood
- Sandpaper (optional)
- Paint
- Paintbrush
- Markers
- Stickers
- Cord or yarn
- Scissors
- Different-size nails
- Metal dowel

Step 1: Find a long, flat block of wood that is about six inches long. Use sandpaper to smooth the wood if needed.

Step 2: Paint or decorate the wood with markers and stickers.

Step 3: Cut eight to 10 pieces of cord or yarn, each about 12 inches long. Tie a piece of cord or yarn every half inch along the block of wood. Trim the ends of all the cords so they are even.

Step 4: Tie the different-size nails on the dangling ends of the cord. Cut another length of cord for a hanger, and tie each end to an end of the block of wood.

Step 5: Hang your chime from a porch or window. Stroke the dangling nails with a metal dowel for a lovely, tinkling sound.

Bottle Cap Clickers



What you need:

- Soda or beverage bottle caps
- One large nail (larger than a two-inch nail)
- Hammer
- 2 inch nails with large heads
- Long piece of wood
- Sandpaper (optional)

Step 1: Collect dozens of bottle caps from old-fashioned glass soda or beverage bottles. Help children use the biggest nail to punch a hole through the center of each cap.

Step 2: Once each cap has a hole, place four caps on each 2 inch nail. Make between four and 10 nails with caps on them.

Step 3: Hammer the nails halfway into the wood, leaving the bottle caps free to jingle. (If the wood is rough, use the sandpaper to smooth it before hammering nails into it.)

Step 4: Shake the finished rattle for a distinctive sound. Shake, shake, shake it!

The Humming Instrument



What you need:

- Waxed paper
- Foil pie pan
- Scissors
- Tape

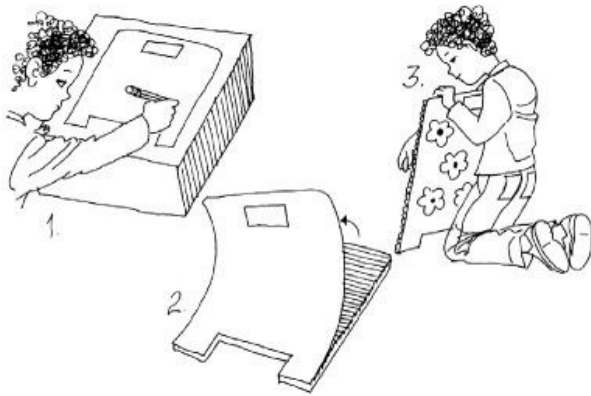
Step 1: Cut a circle of waxed paper that is two inches larger than the top of a foil pie pan.

Step 2: Place the circle on top of the pan, and press the excess paper down over the sides of the pan.

Step 3: Tape the paper onto the pan at two opposite points only.

Step 4: To play, place your lips lightly against any edge of this instrument. Hum a tune, and watch the paper vibrate to amplify the sound.

Cardboard Washboard



What you need:

- Corrugated cardboard box
- Pencil
- Heavy-duty scissors
- Paint
- Paintbrush
- Glue

Step 1: Using the illustration as a guide, draw two washboard shapes on the side panel of a large corrugated cardboard box. Make sure you draw and cut out rectangular holes at the top of the instrument.

Step 2: Cut out the washboards, and paint one.

Step 3: On the unpainted washboard, peel off the top layer of paper to expose the corrugated ridges. Glue this to the unpainted side of the other washboard. Let the glue dry completely.

It's time to make music. Rake your fingers across the bumpy surface to create a fun, scratchy sound.

Wood Tap

What you need:

- Six to eight different-size and -shape wood pieces
- Small hammer
- CD player (optional)



Do all wooden doors produce the same knock? Do all blocks of wood sound the same when they are hit and tapped on? Do they sound identical to the doors? Of course not.

Step 1: Gather up six to eight wood pieces that are different sizes, shapes, and colors.

Step 2: Tap twice on the first block of wood with your hammer. Listen carefully so you'll remember the tone.

Step 3: Tap on the second. Then the third, and continue until you've tapped on all the blocks.

Step 4: Line up the blocks in musical order (highest-pitched tap to the right, lowest-pitched tap to the left.)

Step 5: Now "play" your wooden block instrument for a remarkable sound. For added fun, tape record your songs!