

How to make your own obstacle course



To get children outside, help them flex their creative muscles, and have them get an all-over workout, here are some inexpensive everyday items that you can use to get your children started creating an obstacle course of their own:

1. Pool noodles

Crab walk or bear crawl through hoops, practice movement skills while hopping on one foot or jumping through taped-together rings on the ground, zig-zag through vertical noodles stuck in the ground, and work on throwing with a giant target game.

2. Scrap wood

Get ready to walk the plank! Or maybe it's a tightrope, a gymnastics beam, or a log over a dip in the ground. Place a plank across a round stump and make a seesaw to walk across. These activities will challenge children's coordination.

3. Tunnels

Crawl-through fabric tunnels make a perfect obstacle. If you don't have one at home, a large cardboard box or a blanket draped over two chairs is also fun.

4. Stumps

Place a pool noodle across two stumps and child-friendly (and short!) hurdle to run and jump over. Step, step, step across them, or roll one through the grass. Use the stumps as anchors to create a rope maze to belly crawl under (appropriate clothing required of course!).

5. Any kind of ball

Use a bat, hockey stick, or even a broom to help develop hand-eye coordination while coaxing the ball across a finish line. Want a bigger challenge? Try using a balloon.

6. Bean bags

Sew your own at home with dried beans or rice and some scrap fabric, and toss them onto a board painted with numbered circles, or try to get the most into a bucket or laundry basket. Toss all your bags and then move on to the next obstacle! If you don't want to make bean bags, use soft toys to throw at a target instead.

7. Skipping rope

A skipping rope can be the starting line for a standing jump, an easy tightrope when placed on the ground, or used in a game.

8. Water bottles

Fill up plastic water bottles or milk cartons to use as bowling pins. Place the bottles in two rows and use any large round ball to try to knock them down. It's a great activity for building arm strength, coordination, and fine motor control.

9. Hula hoops

Tie a hula hoop to a tree branch or clothesline to jump through, lay hoops on the ground in a row or pattern where kids must hop or step from one to next, or hold the hoop in two hands and skip with it.

Try these variations to make your obstacle course more challenging:

- Change directions and start from the finish line.
- Time children (or yourself!) to see how long it takes to complete the course.
- Balance a marble or plastic egg on a spoon and weave your way back through the course.
- Use your non-dominant hand for any throwing activities.
- Try completing the course while carrying a water balloon.

