



MAKING A RAINSTICK

Rainsticks are musical instruments originally played by people who live in the deserts of northern Chile. They believe that when they play them it will make the rain come. You can buy rainsticks made of wood in the shops, but real rainsticks are made from dead cactus tubes. Hundreds of cactus spines are hammered into the tubes. Then the tubes are filled with tiny lava pebbles, and when these fall gently through the cactus spines they make a sound like rain falling through trees. You can make your own rainstick out of other things, like cardboard tubes, plastic or metal pipes, even egg cartons!

An Easy Way to Make a Rainstick

Materials needed:

1. A paper towel tube or other longish cardboard tube.
2. Two lengths of aluminium foil, cut about one and a half times the length of your tube and about 6 inches wide if you are using a paper towel tube, but wider if the tube is wider.
3. Small dried beans, lentils, unpopped popcorn, dry rice or tiny pasta.
4. Card or stiff paper to cap both ends.
5. Glue. 6. Scissors. 7. Tape.
8. Sticky backed coloured paper, or/and pictures cut out of a magazine, or felt-tipped pens or stickers.

How to Make It:

1. Twist each piece of the aluminium foil into a long spring shape (so you have 2).
2. Put the aluminium foil springs into your tube, making sure they reach from top to bottom.
3. Trace around the end of your tube onto the thin card or stiff piece of paper. Draw a bigger circle around that circle and then draw a lot of spokes between the two circles, as shown in the illustration. Repeat so you have two caps.
4. Cut along the spokes.
5. Take ONE of the caps and put glue on the inside of the spokes and glue the cap onto one end of your tube. You can also tape it round the outside to make sure no tiny lentils can escape.
6. Now pour some dry beans or lentils or rice or unpopped popcorn into your tube. The tube should only be about 1/10 full. If you would like to experiment to see how different amounts of seeds or beans change the sound, put the palm of your hand over the open end to stop them falling out and tip the tube gently. When satisfied, cap the open end as described in 3 above and decorate your rainstick.

