



Create a Cornhusk Doll

Build a simple figure using natural materials.

Cornhusks are nature's packaging, keeping corn moist and sweet. Native Americans used the husks for textiles and to prepare and store food. They are used to help cook special foods such as tamales, a Mexican and Central American dish steamed in cornhusks. Cornhusk dolls were made by Native American tribes for thousands of years!

You can find cornhusks in a garden, at a craft or grocery store, or even buy them on-line. You can also purchase fresh corn with husks and save the husks by letting them air dry completely, storing them in an open box until you are ready to use them.

Materials Needed

- Cornhusks - 5 per doll
- Raffia - 5-12" strands per doll
- Scissors
- Bowl or tub of warm water to soak your cornhusks in
- Folded towel

Try It!

1. Prepare your materials. Soften the cornhusks before working with them by soaking them in warm water for 10-15 minutes. Lay them on a folded towel, ready for use.
2. Make the body. Stack 4 cornhusks together, making sure that all narrow ends are on one side and larger ends are on the other side. Tie the narrow ends together with raffia using a double knot.
3. Fold the cornhusks down over the knot, two cornhusks on each side.
4. Make the head. Tie raffia around the top of one end of the cornhusks to create a neck and head.
5. Make the arms. Fold a new piece of cornhusk in half. Roll the cornhusk tightly to form a long roll. Tie each end of the roll with raffia to create wrists and to keep the roll from unfolding.
6. Finish your doll. Slide the arms up between the layers of cornhusks. Tie a piece of raffia around the waist to ensure that the arms stay in place.
7. Optional: Add hair with extra raffia or turn the skirt into pants. Introduce other materials such as string, cloth, or felt to make additional clothing or accessories for your doll.

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Guiding Questions

- What happens to the cornhusks when you soak them in warm water?
- Where can you find corn husks? What are other uses?
- What did you enjoy the most when you were creating your doll?
- What else can you add to your doll to make it unique?
- Do you have a name for your doll?

Learning Behind the Play

- Encourages persistence and perseverance as your child works through a multi-step creative building process.
- Supports fine motor skills through the use of scissors, hands, and fingers to build small parts of the doll.

Take It Further

Create a cornhusk doll family that represents your family. What can you add to each doll to represent each family member? What else can you use to create furniture, food, or clothing accessories for your dolls?