

Make Your Own Rainstick!

Create a simple rainstick using materials found at home. For centuries, indigenous people from all over the world have used rainsticks in ceremonies to attract rain. Traditionally, rainsticks are made from hollowed out cactus stalks filled with pebbles or seeds.



Materials:

- Cardboard tube (recycled) - mailing tube, paper towel or wrapping paper tube
- 2 ends - mailing tube caps or construction paper
- Packing or duct tape
- Scissors
- Aluminum foil - 3 sheets (a little longer than your cardboard tube)
- A piece of paper
- An assortment of hard, tiny dry grains or beans such as rice, beans, lentils, unpopped popcorn kernels, or seeds, etc.

Try it!:

1. Aluminium Foil Braid:
 - a. Fold one piece of aluminum foil into a triangle (it's okay if there is a longer end). Start at the longest edge and fold, twist, or crumple the foil into a long, rope-like shape. Repeat for the remaining two pieces of foil.
 - b. Join the three ends of the aluminum foil ropes by twisting them together.
 - c. Starting from the twisted end, braid the aluminum foil ropes together.
 - d. Close the aluminum foil braid by twisting the remaining ends together.
 - e. Adjust and open the braid to create small round openings in between each aluminum foil rope.
 - f. Set aside.
2. Tube Caps:

- a. Place one mailing tube cap (or one paper cap - see step b) on one end of the cardboard tube.
- b. Make a Paper Cap (alternative to mailing tube cap):
 - Trace around the end of your cardboard tube onto a piece of paper. Around that circle, draw another circle that is two times larger than your first circle. Cut out the larger circle. Cut several slits from the outer edge of the larger circle into the smaller circle. Fold the slit edges up from the smaller circle and tape on one end of the cardboard tube.
 - Repeat this process to make a second circle cap. Set the second cap aside for now.
3. Insert braided foil inside the cardboard tube.
4. Paper Funnel:
 - a. Use a piece of paper to make a funnel. Roll the paper into a cone shape, leaving an opening at the point.
 - b. Secure with a piece of tape.
5. Fill the rainstick:
 - a. Using the funnel, gently pour about a quarter cup of assorted rice, seeds, beans, or other items on hand into the tube.
 - b. Hold a hand over the open end of the tube and gently turn the rainstick over to see how it sounds. Add more grains, beans, or seeds if you want to change the sound.
6. Close the open end of the cardboard tube with the remaining mailing tube cap or the paper cap.
7. Try your rainstick out! Turn it upside down and listen to the rain.

Decoration (Optional):

- Braid pieces of yarn together and tie around the tube.
- Cut pieces of color paper into shapes and glue to the tube.
- Tie a feather to a piece of yarn and wrap it around the tube, gluing it into place.
- Paint the tube with tempera or acrylic paint

Guiding Questions:

- What sounds do you hear? Do you hear the grains, beans, or seeds traveling down the tube? Are they moving slowly? Quickly?
- What do you think you can do to change the sound of your rainstick? Would you add more or less items? Would you change the shape of your aluminum braid in any way?

Additional Resources:

Learn ways to play your rainstick and play along to some indigenous Aztec and Mayan instruments by Ruben Colon, LCSW and Paty Tapia-Colon.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bh566srd5_k