

Make a Marble Run!

What you'll need

- Clean recycled materials: Bottles, cardboard, cardboard tubes, containers, etc.
- Some kind of small balls (bouncy balls, marbles, etc.)
- Scrap paper (at least one blank side per page)
- Pencils with good erasers

Introduction

In this activity, you and your child will use recycled materials to build a marble/ball run!

What is a marble run?

If your child (and/or you) aren't familiar with marble runs, search images online for "cool marble run." You can also find plenty of videos on YouTube of really neat and complex marble runs.

Do it!

Before they begin building, have your child blueprint their idea for a marble run. Ideally, you should also blueprint your own design and create a marble run. If you've done the Blueprinting activity, this drawing should be familiar to you. If not, follow the guidelines below:

A blueprint is simply a drawing that shows how something will be made.

The drawing should:

- Include a view of the marble run from several sides
- Show how big it might be with measurements
- Include labels to show what is what, and what materials are used

Once finished, build the marble runs!

Note: The marble runs do **not** have to follow the blueprint exactly!

Tip: Start with a simple marble run, and then build up as desired!

Adaptations

For Younger children

Skip the blueprinting part, and help your child.

For An Extra Challenge

Set requirements for the finished marble run, e.g. "It must have a piece where the marble jumps across a gap."

Vocabulary

Blueprint: A plan that shows exactly how to make an object. Might also be called a **design** or **design drawing**.

Fun facts

Musical Marble Machine:

This YouTube video demonstrates a pretty unique marble run, which makes music! You may have seen it before:

<https://youtu.be/lvUU8joBb1Q>

Simple marble run examples



Left image credit: Robert Hunt via Flickr