

How To Make a Balloon Car

MATERIALS

Each team of participants needs:

- Jet:
 - Balloon
 - Flexible straw
 - Rubber band or tape
- Body (*select one*):
 - Water bottle
 - Toilet-paper tube
 - Juice box
 - Disposable cup (paper or plastic)
 - Fast-food or deli “clamshell” container (the top and bottom connect with a seam in the back)
 - Ice-cream container (pint or quart)
 - Milk carton (individual size)
 - Cardboard sheet
 - Orange-juice can
- Axles (*select one*):
 - Straws
 - Barbeque skewers
 - Chopsticks
- Wheels (*select one*):
 - Bottle caps
 - Candy mints (with a hole in the middle)
 - CDs
 - Cardboard circles
- Connector for attaching wheels to the axle (*select one*):
 - Dry sponge
 - Foam
 - Clay
 - Marshmallow (cut in half)

INSTRUCTIONS

TO MAKE THE JET:

1. **Put** the long end of a flexible straw into a balloon.
2. Using either a rubber band or tape, **attach the straw to the balloon** so that no air can escape.
3. **Poke two holes** in the bottle’s sides. Make the hole on the part of the bottle that will be the bottom of the car. Make the holes directly across from each other so the axle goes straight across.
4. **Slide** a straw through the two holes. **Adjust** the straw so the axle goes straight across.
5. **Repeat** for the second axle.
6. **Slide** a barbeque skewer through each straw.

TO MAKE THE WHEELS:

1. **Wedge** a square of sponge (or foam or marshmallow) into a bottle cap to make a wheel. **Do this four times** to make four wheels.
2. To make it easy to push a skewer into the sponge, use the skewer’s point to **poke holes** in the sponges.
3. **Center** the holes so the wheels will spin evenly and not wobble up and down.
4. **Push** the wheels onto the ends of the skewers.

TO INSERT THE JET:

1. **Poke a hole** in the top and back of the bottle.
2. **Push** the jet into place so that the straw’s balloon end pokes out the top and the open end pokes out the back.
3. **Make sure** the straw at the back is as **parallel** to the floor or tabletop as possible. If it points up, down, or to the side, your car won’t move as fast or as far as it would if the jet points straight back.

TO POWER THE JET:

1. **Blow up** the balloon by blowing through the straw.
2. Put your finger over the end of the straw to **stop** air from escaping.
3. **Put** the car on a smooth surface. Then let go, and ZOOM!

(This activity was adapted from pbskids.com. Look at their site for a video tutorial and samples of cars.)