

Recycled Rhythms

Make music from recycled goods! Create simple instruments from everyday household items and explore rhythm, sound, and creativity.

Gather Your Materials

• Empty tissue box or small cardboard box	• Paper towel or toilet paper tubes
• Clean plastic containers with lids	• Dry rice, beans, or pasta
• Rubber bands in different thicknesses	• Paper plates
• Cardboard scraps	• Tape or child-safe glue
• Crayons, markers, stickers, or colored paper	

Make Your Recycled Instruments

Box Guitar: Stretch rubber bands around an empty tissue box or sturdy open-top box. Try different thicknesses and gently pluck each one to compare pitch.

Container Shaker: Put a little dry rice, beans, or pasta in a clean plastic container. Close the lid securely and have a grown-up tape it shut. Compare soft and loud shakes.

Paper Plate Drum: Decorate a sturdy paper plate or empty round container. Tap different areas with your hands and compare the sounds.

Cardboard Rhythm Sticks: Roll sturdy cardboard into two tight tubes and secure them with tape. Tap them gently together to keep a steady beat.

Super Scholar Challenge

Create a four-beat rhythm, repeat it three times, then teach the pattern to someone else!

Explore Rhythm & Sound

Use your homemade instruments to discover how musicians organize sounds into patterns.

Music Word	Kid-Friendly Meaning
Beat	The steady pulse you can clap, tap, or march along with.
Rhythm	A pattern of long, short, strong, and quiet sounds.
Tempo	How fast or slow the beat moves.
Pitch	How high or low a sound seems.
Volume	How loud or soft a sound is.

Try These Music Games

- **Copy My Beat:** One person plays a short rhythm and everyone else copies it.
- **Fast and Slow:** Play the same rhythm slowly, then try it faster.
- **Loud and Soft:** Repeat a pattern quietly, then loudly while keeping the same beat.
- **Recycled Band:** Give each player a different homemade instrument and perform one rhythm together.
- **Sound Scientist:** Change one part of an instrument and describe how the sound changes.

Why Recycled Rhythms?

This activity combines music, creativity, listening, pattern recognition, and reuse. Children can experiment with how different materials create different sounds while seeing how everyday objects can be given a new purpose.

Grown-Up Notes

Wash and dry reused containers before crafting. Adults should securely tape or glue containers holding rice, beans, pasta, or other small pieces. Check materials for sharp edges, staples, or broken plastic. Small parts can be a choking hazard, so adult supervision is recommended.

Bonus idea: Put on a family concert! Give your recycled band a name, choose a leader to count '1, 2, 3, 4,' and perform an original rhythm together.

Create • Listen • Make Music

Super Scholars