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Science Experiences That Come To You

Stress Ball

Ingredients & Supplies:

- 3 Balloons
- Scissors
- Funnel or piece of paper (rolled into a funnel)
- 1 cup Lentils or split peas

Instructions:

Blow up a balloon. Hold it tight and keep it inflated for 30 seconds. Now deflate the balloon by letting the air out. You want the balloon to be stretched out a bit. If needed, blow up the balloon one more time and let the air out.

Get your funnel. If you don't have a funnel, use an 8x11" piece of paper and roll it into a funnel. Make sure that one side of the funnel is larger than the other.

Now put the smaller end of the funnel into the balloon. Make sure it goes far into the opening of the balloon.

For this next step, ask for a parent or friend to help. One person needs to hold the balloon and the funnel. Make sure the funnel stays inside the balloon! Now ask your helper to carefully pour the lentils into the funnel. The lentils should go directly inside the balloon. Don't fill up the balloon! Make sure you leave at least 2-3 inches of the balloon at the top without lentils.

Now it's going to get tricky, so be careful or you'll have a big mess!

Using the scissors, cut off the top of the balloon. Make sure that there is enough balloon left on the top to keep the lentils inside.

Blow up a second balloon, and then deflate it. Cut off the top of the balloon. This should be only the narrow part of the balloon – about 2 inches. While one person holds the lentil-filled balloon, a helper stretches the second balloon and puts it over the filled balloon. Make sure to cover the side with the hole.





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Blow up the third balloon and deflate it. Cut off the top of the third balloon. Stretch it over the filled balloons for a final covering.

Great job! You have just created a stress ball!

Stress balls can be filled with a variety of substances. Here is a list of other things that you can fill up your balloon with to create different stress balls.

- Flour
- Cornstarch
- Sand
- Rice
- Birdseed

The Science Behind a Natural Stress Reliever

Many of us get stressed. School can get very stressful with all of the homework, tests, and projects! But, there are many ways to relieve stress and have fun. Science shows that laughter is one of the best ways to reduce stress!

Our bodies have a variety of hormones that control our emotions like cortisol and epinephrine (also known as adrenaline). When we get stressed, these hormones negatively affect us. But laughter makes us happy and can control these hormones! Laughter also increases the effectiveness of T cells, the good infection-fighting antibodies that help our immune system.

Laughing increases your blood flow which improves the function of blood vessels and the heart. A strong heart protects you from cardiovascular problems, such as a heart attack.

Laughter triggers the release of endorphins. These types of hormones are natural chemicals that make us feel happy. More endorphins equal less stress!

You know when you laugh so hard that your stomach hurts? This feeling is your diaphragm exercising! The muscles of your diaphragm are giving you're abs a good workout. After you finish laughing, your muscles in your diaphragm and your shoulders relax. What a great way to relieve stress and relax!



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Laughter is a wonderful, natural medicine, and it's so easy to do! If you get stressed at school or at home, there are so many ways to laugh!

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