

77 Ways to Play Outside This Summer

From Melissa's Playbook



Melissa & Doug®

1. Grab a friend to hold the other end of a beach towel and see how long you can bounce a ball on it.
2. Get creative with sidewalk chalk — design a city, a farm, an underwater scene.
3. Paint a stepping stone for the garden.
4. Chase fireflies. Cradle them for a moment, study their twinkles, then release them to the night.
5. Set up the baby pool for a backyard bath. Don't forget the bubbles and bath toys!
6. Pitch a tent and fill it with books and arts and crafts supplies.
7. Hold races from point A to point B. First do it running, then crab-walking, crawling, hopping, etc.
8. Learn how to whistle on a blade of grass.
9. Play bubble tag.
10. Set up a "car wash" for bikes, scooters, and ride-on toys.
11. Be backyard detectives. Look for a forked stick, a sparkly rock, a petal, two types of leaves, something fuzzy, something pretty.
12. Play catch and count how many throws you can go until a miss.
13. Load up dolls in a wagon and go on a field trip.
14. Turn on the sprinkler. Try to shout out different nursery rhymes before the spray comes back around.
15. Find a babbling brook, and sharpen those stone-skipping skills!
16. Play hide-and-peek.
17. Invite friends to an al fresco iced tea party.
18. Invent a dozen new jump rope games.
19. Gather picnic blankets and old sheets for outdoor forts.
20. Make paper fans.
21. Make a daisy chain. Turn it into a flower crown.
22. Start up a lemonade stand.
23. Make a sandcastle, a sand skyscraper, a sand city, a sand zoo...
24. Bring a bin of small, plastic animals outside and build an environment for them in a corner of the yard.
25. Have a swing-along. Hit the swings and sing at the top of your lungs!
26. Play balloon badminton with two fly swatters.
27. Try to master the art of throwing a flying disk.
28. Bury plastic dinosaurs in a sandbox and let the excavation begin!
29. Invent a dozen ways to play with a paper towel tube. (Balance a ball atop it; use it to bat a ball toward a target; see how far you can roll it down the sidewalk...)
30. Set up an easel and paint the landscape.
31. Have fun with a beach ball and a laundry basket.
32. Come up with different ways to play with a hula hoop.
33. Play with ice cubes. Hold them to melt them. Watch how fast or slow they melt in the sun versus the shade.
34. Chase butterflies, catch them in a net, observe them up close, then release them.
35. Sit outside and write or draw a story.
36. Set up "summer school" in the yard with a chalkboard and stuffed animal students.
37. Play a round of backyard mini golf with a small ball and plastic cups placed on their sides. Use whatever is handy for a putter: a stick or a plastic bat.





38. Play water limbo with the hose. How low can they go before they touch the stream of water?
39. Decorate flip flops with markers, paints, and stickers.
40. Go on a neighborhood scavenger hunt, looking for different things each time: a red door, a white car, an open window, a bird on a wire.
41. Fly a kite.
42. Collect seashells, then use them to make a craft.
43. Play flashlight tag.
44. Build a paper boat, and bid it bon voyage as it sails across the baby pool.
45. Look up at clouds and find pictures in them.
46. Paint rocks. Name them. Pet them. Build them a home.
47. Make chalk outlines of your bodies on the sidewalk. Bring out some clothes and dress up these “concrete dolls”!
48. Play sponge tag.
49. Climb a tree.
50. Make a rock collection and store specimens in an old ice cube tray or empty egg carton. For an added bit of fun, use chopsticks to pick up additions to the collection.
51. Go on a hike.
52. Host a teddy bear picnic.
53. Do an A to Z scavenger hunt.
54. Make a collage from found objects in nature.
55. Take family game night outdoors, playing board games on the picnic table.
56. Have fun with a measuring tape. How far can you jump? How big around is that tree?
57. Bring arts and crafts projects outside, and don't worry about getting messy.
58. Grab some friends and build a human pyramid.
59. Roll down a hill.
60. Organize a bike parade. Deck out bikes with streamers, baskets, and other decorations.

61. Create a nature journal.
62. Paint the sidewalks with water.
63. Learn to juggle.
64. Use chalk to draw a track on the sidewalk or driveway, and race cars.
65. Host a backyard Olympics with silly events like cartwheel contests and synchronized walking (like the swimming version but on land!).
66. Have an outdoor concert. Play your harmonica, drums, or guitar under the blue skies!
67. Try to toss a hula hoop around a ball from a distance.
68. Play baseball with water balloons.
69. Play with a yo-yo. Teach yourself a new trick.
70. Hold a handstand contest in the pool. Award points for style and creativity.
71. Create an obstacle course with whatever happens to be in the yard — then run it!
72. Put on a puppet show behind the hedge.
73. Practice skipping, galloping, hopping, leaping, cartwheeling...
74. Get a new perspective! Explore the backyard with a magnifying glass.
75. Hide a treasure, make a map, pass it along to someone.
76. Draw your house from the outside.
77. Stargaze and look for constellations.

~ Here's to a summer full of play and outdoor wonder!
Enjoy!

Melissa

