

PIGEON PAGES



Flown direct to you by Shoreditch Trust and Hackney Life

May 2020

Welcome to Pigeon Pages! Here in Hackney, family nests come in a rainbow of shapes and sizes and feathers. Whether your little chicks are baby bears, mini monsters, punky pigeons or too cool for the coop, we all have our ups and downs as parents and as children, no matter what age we are! Right now, all families — new, old, big and small — are finding things harder than usual. Our Shoreditch Trust pigeons are here to help with some ideas and advice on keeping happy together, looking after each other (and ourselves), games to make and play at home, tasty food to eat, and really just how to cope in the coop!

If you, or someone you know in Hackney or the City, needs help during the outbreak of Coronavirus, please get in touch — by email: info@shoreditchtrust.org.uk by phone: 020 7033 8501 or 020 7033 8587

OTHER WAYS YOU CAN HELP

to volunteer:

All volunteer efforts are being centrally coordinated by Volunteer Centre Hackney, to join team Hackney visit www.vchackney.org

to donate:

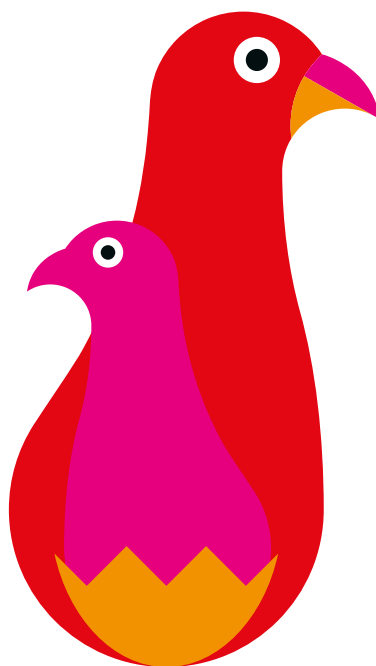
We are currently fundraising to deliver meals to people who are unwell or struggling. Please help if you can: www.bit.ly/ShoreditchTrust

more information:

www.shoreditchtrust.org.uk

Shoreditch Trust is a registered charity based in Hackney, east London. We support people who are facing challenging situations to create a happier, healthier future for themselves. Our work helps people make positive life changes, overcome challenges and build connections with our amazing community of clients, volunteers, staff, partners and supporters.

We are proud to be **#HackneyPigeons**



FIVE TOP TIPS FOR PARENTS

Being a parent in a pandemic is not something any of us expected. It isn't easy, and it can be lonely. First time mums are going through a big change without friends and family for support. Families with older children are acting as teachers whilst school is closed, keeping their children company when they miss their friends, feeding them nutritious meals even though ingredients are hard to find, making sure everyone washes their hands, stopping siblings from fighting, and working hard to keep their family safe from Covid-19.

Jane, who runs Shoreditch Trust's Bump Buddies, has been supporting pregnant women and new mums during the pandemic. Together they have devised five top tips they are using to keep their families happy.

1. USE TECHNOLOGY TO STAY IN TOUCH

As well as using technology to keep in touch with family and friends, you can also use it to meet local parent and baby groups online, from Hackney Playbus weekly songs and play sessions to the Bump Buddies weekly coffee morning on zoom (babies like looking at other babies, even online!). One local mum who usually explained to us:

"Being stuck in the house as a single parent with a child is very challenging. But thanks to the internet my baby and I are part of lots of interactive play meetings. It's so nice to see a familiar face, even online. I wish I could hug everyone on the chat, and I miss having a place to go to feel empathy in times of need, but through the online meetings I have been given amazing advice on things from the effects of teething to eczema control."

2. HAVE A SCHEDULE — BUT DON'T WORRY IF IT SLIPS!

"Since the pandemic, our lives have been tough and challenging. One of my family has health problems, so our usual daily routine has been badly affected. We cannot go shopping, or to the park, we're staying in one small space and it's extremely difficult."

Many parents are finding losing the routine of nursery or school hard. Having a loose schedule for the day can help us feel more motivated and in control. You could focus on making sure your children get a few hours of learning in each day (games can also teach children great things) or set a treat time each day for yourself or your children. Keeping your child's bedtime routine can also help you both:

"Getting her to bed is still a challenge. I try to make it special by holding back her favourite book until she's on her way to the skies. 'Good Night Moon' by Margaret Wise Brown has become our special way of saying good night and closing our day."

3. GET OUT FOR WALKS TOGETHER, OR FIND NEW WAYS TO PLAY TOGETHER AT HOME

If you can, then make time to get outside, most babies love buggy rides and research shows that exercise can help us feel good. If you can't go out then there are lots of ways you can play at home. If you don't have a lot of money for new toys then there are some great free ideas from Hackney Playbus in these pages. One mum told us:

"I made hand puppets from old socks. My baby loves them, she gets excited, clapping her hands and rolling from her side to her back."

4. TAKE TIME FOR YOURSELF

Many mums take care of everyone else in the family before thinking about themselves, but as a parent, taking care of yourself is important. Even if you can only take your morning shower, or a few minutes over a cup of tea, take that time to focus on you, and enjoy that little bit of time to yourself.

5. REMEMBER YOU ARE DOING YOUR BEST AND THAT IS GOOD ENOUGH

Remember that it's ok to be human, have a bad day, get things wrong, or find something hard. You are doing your best for you and your family, and you cannot do any more than that!

Would you like to meet other mums and pregnant women in Hackney?

Bump Buddies supports pregnant women and new mums in Hackney. A team of volunteers — all experienced local mums — can help women thinking about birth preferences, feeding choices, and the first few months with a baby. There is extra support for women and families who are homeless, have health problems, are dealing with problems at home or facing immigration issues. If you are pregnant or a new parent who would like support contact Shoreditch Trust: email: info@shoreditchtrust.org.uk call: 020 7033 8501 / 020 7033 8587



RECIPES FROM BLUE MARBLE TRAINING

Blue Marble Training is part of Shoreditch Trust. The project supports young people aged from 16-25 in east London to train as chefs. The trainees learn at WaterHouse, a busy social enterprise restaurant in Haggerston run by the charity. The trainee chefs are making the most of lockdown, carrying on learning at home, trying out new dishes and adapting some well-loved family recipes; while their teachers are running an emergency meal hub from WaterHouse to deliver meals to local people.

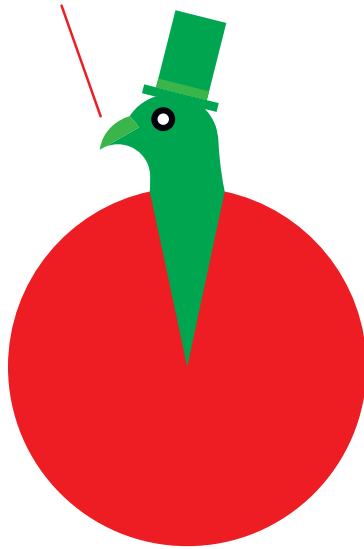
These recipes have all come from our talented trainee chefs.



Shoreditch Trust

If you, or someone you know is struggling at the moment then there are services in Hackney who are ready to help. Shoreditch Trust can help and we can also put you in touch with other services, just contact us — by visiting: www.shoreditchtrust.org.uk by emailing: info@shoreditchtrust.org.uk by calling: 020 7033 8501 or 020 7033 8587

"Oh I say — I'm a rich tomato!"



RICH TOMATO SPLIT LENTIL SOUP

serves: 2 / time: 35-40 mins

ingredients:

1 cup red split lentils.
Olive oil.
3 garlic cloves.
1 yellow onion.
2 carrots.
1 tablespoon tomato paste.
2 large potatoes.
1 cup of chopped tomatoes.
Soy sauce.
Dried thyme.
Paprika.
Salt.
White pepper.
Coriander stalks.
2 baby tomatoes for making a tomato flower garnish.

method:

1. Prepare the vegetables: Finely dice the onion and garlic separately. Rinse and peel the potatoes and carrots and cut into cubes.
2. Rinse and drain the lentils three times. Then boil them for 10 minutes in salted water, following the packet instructions.
3. Heat a generous amount of olive oil in a pan on medium heat. Sweat the diced onion in the pan for 3 minutes, with a lid over it. Stir the pan, then add the garlic and the salt and white pepper to taste. Leave for 2 minutes.
4. Add the carrots, potatoes, tomato paste, dried thyme, paprika and soy sauce to the pan. Stir well.
5. Add the cup of tomatoes into the mixture, stir and cover the pan with a lid. Leave to boil for 8 minutes on a high heat.
6. Add the boiled red lentils to the pan and stir well.
7. Add more water depending on the thickness you want the soup to be.
8. Taste the soup and add more seasoning if needed.
9. For the garnish, rinse and finely chop a bunch of fresh coriander stalks, this will add a crunch of flavour. Create a flower with the 2 baby tomatoes. You can learn how to make the tomato flower on YouTube.

to serve:

Serve the soup hot. Sprinkle the chopped coriander stalks on top. Place the tomato flower on top of the soup so that it floats.

SWEET & SOUR CHICKEN

serves: 1 / time: 25-30 mins

ingredients:

1 chicken breast (cut into small chunks).
Mixed peppers (red, green, yellow) cut into small chunks.
1 onion, cut into large chunks.
2 rings of tinned pineapple cut into chunks (save the juice from the tin).
Salt and pepper.
5-6 tablespoons of light soy sauce.
Cornflour.
½ cup plain flour.
1 teaspoon of baking powder.
½ cup water.
5-6 tablespoons of brown sugar.
5 tablespoons of tomato ketchup.
Vinegar.

method:

for the chicken:

1. Put the chunks of chicken into a bowl with a good pinch of salt & pepper, and half the light soy sauce. Mix it all together.
2. Add the plain flour, the baking powder, a coating of cornflour and half a cup of water and mix everything together well.
3. Heat a good depth of oil in a pan (deep enough so that a piece of chicken sits just under the surface). Fry the chicken pieces in small batches, putting each piece in separately, so you don't crowd the pan and they don't stick together. You can use a deep fat fryer if you have one at home.
4. Remove each piece when crisp and golden and put them on some kitchen towel or a clean cloth to remove the excess oil.

to make the sauce:

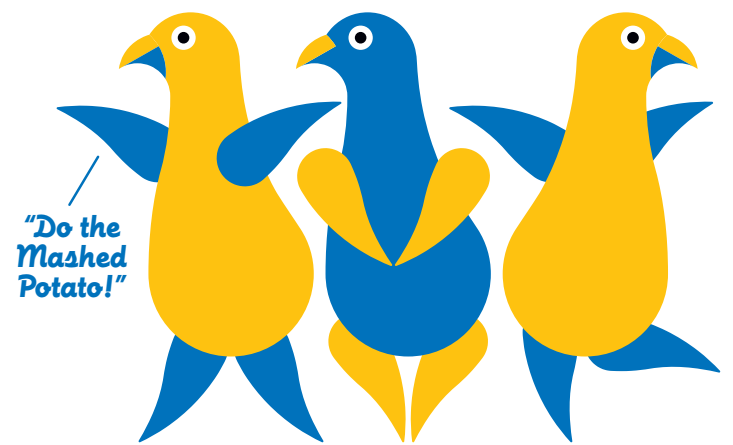
5. Put the brown sugar and ketchup into a small pan and mix.
6. Add the rest of the light soy sauce and stir again.
7. Add a little vinegar, then the pineapple juice from the can and stir together on a low heat.
8. Heat a little oil in another pan or a wok.
9. Add the onion and fry for a minute, before adding the peppers and pineapple.
10. Season with black pepper and cook for a few minutes (making sure the vegetables still have a crunch).

to finish:

11. Pour the sauce over the vegetables, mix through and then add the crispy chicken. Mix again.

to serve:

Serve with rice and a sprinkling of chopped spring onion.



SWEDISH MEATBALLS WITH MASHED POTATOES

This traditional dish has become a popular treat in a large furniture store, one of the young trainee chefs shared the recipe so you to make it at home. The meatballs are traditionally served with mashed potatoes, Swedish cream sauce and a dollop of lingonberry jam.

serves: 4 / time: 2.5 hrs

ingredients for the meatballs:

300g minced beef.
300g minced pork (if you cannot find pork you can add more beef or substitute any other mince).
100-110g of ricotta.
1 onion, diced.
2-3 cloves of garlic, crushed.
100g breadcrumbs.
1 egg, beaten.
2 tablespoons of olive oil.
Salt.
Black pepper.

ingredients for the sauce:

40g butter.
40g plain flour.
300ml beef or vegetable stock.
150ml double cream.
2 teaspoons of soy sauce.
1 teaspoon Dijon mustard.

ingredients for the mash:

6-7 potatoes.
Butter.
Salt & pepper.
A few tablespoons of milk.

method:

to make the meatballs:

1. Place the meat, ricotta, onion, garlic, breadcrumbs and beaten egg in a bowl. Season with salt and black pepper and mix well, until all the ingredients are combined.
2. Using your hands, shape around 32 meatballs, and transfer them to a lightly floured plate. Cover with clingfilm and place in the fridge for 1 hour. This sets them, so that they don't crumble when cooking.
3. Place a frying pan over a medium heat and pour in the olive oil. Add the meatballs and brown on all sides.
4. Cover the pan with a lid, lower the heat and allow to cook for 15 minutes, turning regularly. Once cooked, transfer to a plate.

to make the sauce:

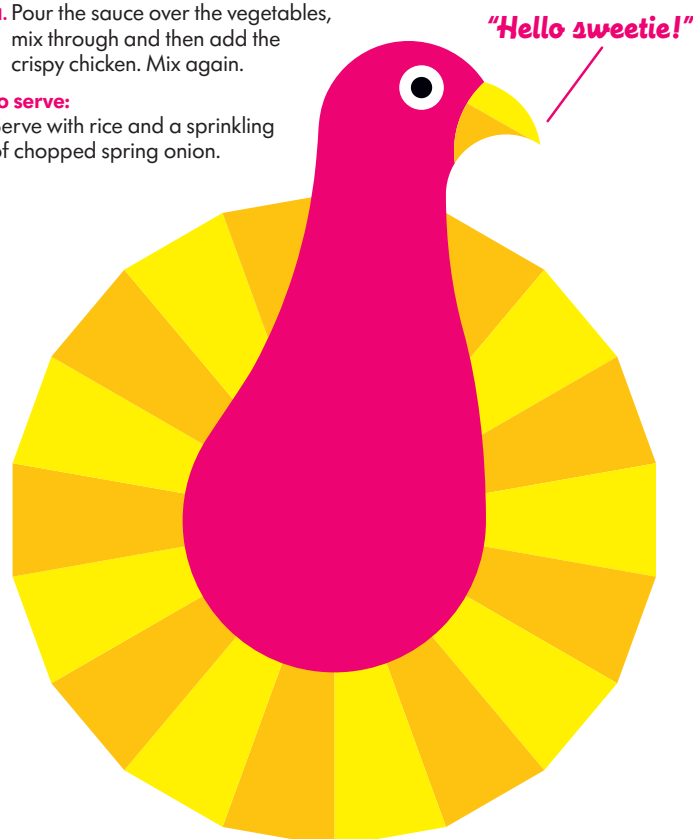
5. Place the same pan back over a low heat & melt the butter.
6. Once the butter has melted, put in the flour, stirring continuously for 2 minutes, allowing the flour to cook through.
7. Next whisk in the stock bit by bit, continuing to stir.
8. Add the cream, soy sauce and Dijon mustard.
9. Continue whisking, then bring the pan to a simmer and allow the sauce to thicken for about five minutes.
10. Season with salt and black pepper.

to make the mash:

11. Peel and wash the potatoes and then cut them into quarters.
12. Put the potatoes in a pan with enough cold water to cover them.
13. Place the pan over a high heat and boil until the potatoes are soft enough for a fork to push in.
14. Drain the potatoes and let them dry a little, and then put them in a bowl.
15. Mash the potatoes, then mix in melted butter, salt and pepper to taste, with a few tablespoons of milk.
16. If you like your mash very fine, you can push it through a sieve with the back of a spoon to remove any small lumps.

to serve:

Serve the mash on plates, with a pool of sauce on the side and meatballs on top. Add a dollop of lingonberry jam to dip the meatballs in. You can also use cranberry or redcurrant jam or jelly, or even apple sauce.



The young trainee chefs who wrote the recipes on the opposite page have been putting some great strategies in place to handle anxiety and isolation during the pandemic and lockdown.

This article, for young people (and adults!), looks at five reasons why it's normal to feel anxious at the moment, and five ways we can deal with anxiety. These are based on ACT principles, which stands for Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT).

COPING IN THE COOP



"I'm trying to do as much exercise as possible in the house and trying to stay fit. I have created a little routine that I do throughout the week for about an hour and have set up a small mini gym in my room."

"I play a lot of video games online with friends. Obviously in normal situations that's not the only way you want to be talking to your mates, but it's a good way to stay connected, and doesn't feel forced."

5 REASONS WHY HUMANS GET ANXIOUS

1. OUR GENES: 'WE ARE PROGRAMMED TO SEE THE BEAR'

Imagine your ancestor saw a blob on the horizon and turned to a friend and said, 'Is that a bear or a blueberry bush?'. The optimistic friend said, 'It's a blueberry bush', and ran over, but your pessimist ancestor stayed behind, scared it might be a bear.

Even if the friend was right and got a nice lunch of blueberries, it would have only taken one mistake for them to be a nice lunch for the bear. Your pessimist ancestor missed out on blueberries, but lived to pass on their anxious genes to you.

2. WE CAN TALK — THE DOUBLE-EDGED SWORD

Speaking and communicating is a special human skill. It's a great tool which means we can talk about risks and problems and make plans to prevent or reduce them. It's also a double-edged sword, because it means we can create feelings of anxiety by thinking and talking about things that have already happened or worrying about future events over and over again (sometimes called ruminating).

3. MEDIA AND SOCIAL MEDIA

Try an experiment — look at the news for five minutes and pay attention to the types of stories that feature. We're bombarded with stories about coronavirus, but also crime, climate change and predictions of global recession.

As we talked about above, there are good reasons why humans are programmed to keep an eye out for potential risks — it keeps us safe and our children safe to pass on our genes. In modern life we have easy access to lots of information, but if we're worrying a lot, this stream of information can mean unlimited access to worrying news.

4. UNCERTAINTY

Many of us can handle bad news if we know how to respond to it. But uncertainty, or waiting can make us anxious. You might be thinking, 'Will I catch coronavirus, will my family, will I lose my job, when will things go back to normal?'. And your mind would prefer anything to not knowing. However, this is where the story gets really interesting.

5. WE TRY TO CONTROL IT

Despite anxiety being a part of being human, many people see it as something to be avoided or controlled. The problem is, we can't avoid or control anxiety.

Imagine I told you I would give you a million pounds if you didn't think of a pink elephant. Could you do it? Like trying not to think about a pink elephant, the more we try to avoid or control anxious thoughts, the more they are there. If we see anxiety as something we must control, we set ourselves up to become anxious about our anxiety.

Saying 'I'm anxious that I might get anxious' might sound silly, but it can lead to us avoiding the things that make us feel anxious.

If we do this all the time it means we start organising our lives around avoiding things that might make us anxious, rather than focusing on enjoying the things we love, that make life meaningful.

Trying to avoid unwanted thoughts and feelings is often part of feeling low, or anxious or distressed, because it makes our lives less enjoyable in the short term and makes anxiety worse in the long term.

5 IDEAS TO HELP DEAL WITH ANXIETY (BASED ON ACT)

1. FOCUS ON WHAT'S IN YOUR CONTROL

It's really easy to get caught up in all the things that aren't in our control right now; how the virus might affect you or your loved ones, what might happen in the future, when life will go back to normal. And while it's perfectly natural to get caught up in these sorts of worries, the more we focus on what's not in our control, the more anxious we'll feel.

So, work out what you can control and then make a plan to manage the risks as you see them. Inform yourself of the facts, but no more.

But even if your plan is really good, remember you might still feel some anxiety sometimes (because it's impossible not to worry at all).

So, when you feel worried, try to...

2. DROP ANCHOR

The problem with anxiety is that the harder we try to avoid it, the stronger it becomes.

During these uncertain times, we're all likely to experience some emotional storms; unpleasant thoughts and feelings swirling around our minds and bodies. When this happens, it's helpful to drop anchor by getting a sense of where we are and refocusing our attention on the activity we're doing.

Here are some suggestions, or find your own methods:

- Look around the room and notice 5 things you can see.
- Notice 3 or 4 things you can hear.
- Notice what you can smell or taste or sense in your nose and mouth.
- Notice what you are doing with your body, sensations in your hands and feet.
- End the exercise by giving your full attention to the task or activity at hand.

3. DO THINGS THAT MATTER TO US

We only feel anxious if we care about something, this means we can move our attention to focusing on the thing that matters. Sometimes this is called 'pivoting to what matters'.

The quotes from the trainee chefs are great examples of pivoting their attention towards the people and things that matter to them, their friends, working out, pets and time spent outdoors.

If you're feeling anxious about coronavirus, ask yourself 'What can I do right now — no matter how small it may be — that improves life for myself or others I live with, or people in my community?' And whatever the answer is — do it.

4. PRACTICE SELF-COMPASSION

Most of us are good at caring — being compassionate to people in our lives. And when we're feeling worried or are being hard on ourselves, kind words or a hug from a friend, family member or colleague can help.

Many of us can't see the people who usually give us a hug, or chat to us after a long day, so we need to fill this compassion gap with compassion for ourselves.

Self-compassion doesn't always come naturally to us, and it is often when we have more time on our hands that we forget to set any of that aside for self-care. Here are some exercises to get you started:

- Cook your favourite meal — or an 'as best I can' version with the ingredients you can get.
- Plan an 'ideal' night in, who will you call? What film or TV programme will you watch? What will you eat? What music will you listen to?
- Dedicate a time in the day to do something you like; a gentle stroll, hot bath, read a favourite book.
- Give yourself a hand massage or warm cuddle with a hot water bottle.

5. FIND HELPFUL THINGS

Seek out resources for help, support, and advice. This can include friends, family, neighbours, health professionals, community organisations and emergency services. If you are able to offer support to others, let them know; you can be a resource for other people, just as they can for you. Some good local and online resources:

- Hackney Council helpline.
- www.same.org.uk/what_we_do/support/helpline
- Russ Harris has produced this free ACT-based resource with practical strategies to manage anxiety in the face of covid-19: <https://coronadosafe.org/blog/face-covid/#.XrqHAWWhKg2w>
- Here's a YouTube animation that explains why humans evolved to be good worriers: <https://youtu.be/kv6HkipQcfA>

"It's been quite difficult; lockdown has definitely affected me, there's been a lot of anxiety. But I'm quite lucky because I have a dog. We go for long walks every day and I find it really helps me cope with the mental strain of everything. Even if you don't have a dog, I think just taking the opportunity to be outside for a little while has helped."

*(*Remember, if you are in an abusive situation, Boots on Mare Street has a 'safe space' to get immediate help. Ask the pharmacist to use the consultation room, they will direct you without further questioning.*)*

PLAY AT HOME WITH HACKNEY PLAYBUS!



Hackney Playbus is a brightly coloured double-decker bus, converted into a play space for babies and young children, and their parents and carers.

The bus is full of toys, books, and activities to help children learn, develop and have fun; and full of helpful information and friendly staff to help families get support. The charity has been running since 1972, helping children grow and families make friendships that last a lifetime.

Hackney Playbus usually brings play and learning to stops across east London. The bus is parked at the moment, but the team has shared these great ways to make toys for free at home.

"You don't need anything fancy to play and have fun! A little creativity and a little inspiration goes a very long way. Play is really important to children's learning and development. These games are great for children under five, and as long as you're having fun, your little one is very likely learning something important."

Claire Lindsay
Playbus Project Co-ordinator

Find out more:

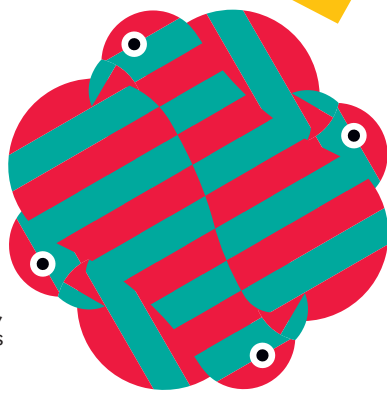
We hope you enjoy these fun games. To find out more about the bus timetable, sign up to their newsletter, see weekly videos about making toys at home with everyday things, or to make a request for their weekly song and story, visit their website: www.hackneyplaybus.org

HOMEMADE BALLS!

Babies and toddlers love to roll, push, and throw balls. It teaches them to move their bodies and use objects. Here are three ways to make your own balls at home. The balls you make will be quite soft, so they are safer for playing indoors if you don't have a garden.

- Use lots of pairs of socks to build a bigger and bigger sock ball.
- Scrunch up some newspaper and wrap round and round in masking tape.
- Ball up some light scarves and wrap them up in another scarf, tying the ends together in a knot. You can keep building up the layers until you have a nice big soft ball. This can be an activity all by itself for your toddler!

You can use your homemade balls indoors or outside, to have all kinds of fun.



SKITTLES!

- Use empty plastic bottles as skittles and your homemade balls to knock them down.
- You can also put a sock over the bottle and ask your child to use a sock ball the same colour to knock it over. Matching is an early childhood maths skill, so while you're having fun your little one is also becoming a mathematician. For younger children, you can just talk about the similarities and they will learn bit by bit: 'Look, this sock is red and that bottle is red too!'
- If you don't have empty plastic bottles, you can use cardboard tubes from toilet rolls.

HOOPLA!

- Place empty containers such as a bin, cooking pot, or box at different distances across the room and see if your child can aim and throw a ball into the containers.
- You can add in counting by asking questions like: 'How many balls did we get into that basket?'
- For older children you can make the game into a competition, by giving different points for getting a ball in different containers — the furthest away scores the most points!
- If you have a sofa, line up a row of different hoops along the front — anything with a handle that you can wedge under the cushions. Or just make simple hoops from card or boxes or... anything really!

