

Exploring Nature Play

Play
England
Freedom to play

Activity recipe: Potato peeler whittling

Difficulty: Difficult.

Age range: Over five years old.

How many can do it? Any number but it's best to work in small groups.

Where can you do it? Outdoors or indoors.

Why we like it? A safe, but exciting way to make your first pointy stick!

Ingredients

A small stick about the thickness of a grown-up's finger (soft wood such as pine works well) and a potato peeler.

Method

1. Go for a walk and find your sticks. Don't take down any branches without checking with a grown-up first. Just use what's on the floor if you can.
2. When you have got your sticks, come back to the whittling circle.
3. Choose a safe place to sit and discuss your knife and blade rules.
4. Carefully start to strip the bark from the outside of your stick using long strokes away from your body using the potato peeler.
5. You don't have to strip all the bark away, some people like to do it in bands around the stick or make patterns – you can try some different ones as you become more practised.
6. You can whittle longer sticks for walking and story sticks.

Top tips

1. Enjoy a nature walk through your local woodlands and collect some fallen branches. Check Play England's play map to see if your woodland is represented – and if it isn't, why not add it at www.playengland.org.uk/map.
2. Make sure you have a safe space to work – carry out a risk benefit assessment.
3. You could extend the activity by making bows, arrows and dibber sticks.
4. works really well with adults too.
5. For more information about whittling and safety tips, visit <http://bit.ly/18sq60M>.
6. Also check out the *Knife whittling for beginners* activity recipe for more ideas.



What the kids say
'Didn't think I would be able to peel a branch!'

'This isn't for wood it's for potatoes!'



Play England is a registered charity, no. 1150216, and is hosted by the National Children's Bureau.



LOTTERY FUNDED