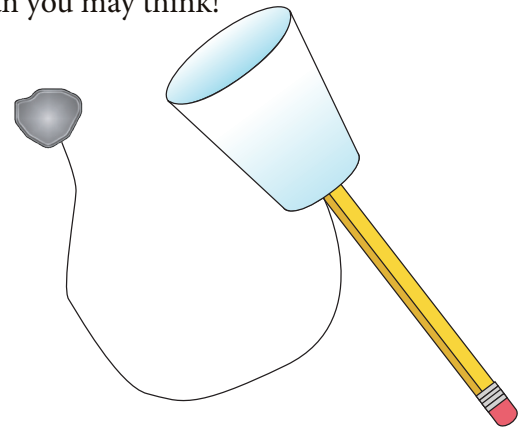


Cup and Ball Game

Versions of the cup and ball game have been played all over the world since at least the 14th century. It's known as Bilboquet in France, Kendama in Japan, Balero in Latin America, and Bilbo Catcher in England. The toy was very popular in 18th century Virginia. Make your own game and then put your hand-eye coordination to the test. Though easy in concept, getting the ball into the cup is harder than you may think!

What you will need:

- Small paper cup, or disposable yogurt container
- Pencil
- Scissors or a safety pin
- String, approximately 18 inches long
- Aluminum foil
- Tape or hot glue
- Optional: markers, or something to decorate with



Put it all together

1. **Make your cup.** Turn the cup or container over and find the center. Use a sharpened pencil to poke a hole through the bottom. If it is too difficult, ask for help using scissors or a safety pin to start a small hole just big enough for the pencil. Push the pencil through approximately one inch. Tape or hot glue it in place.
2. **Add the string.** Cut a piece of string, approximately 18 inches in length. Tie it around the pencil where it meets the bottom of the cup. Tape or hot glue it in place.
3. **Attach the ball.** Wrap aluminum foil around the other end of the string and squeeze it into a ball. Keep adding foil until it is about the size of a grape. Add tape or hot glue if needed to hold the ball on the string.
4. **Play catch!** Hold the pencil in one hand and swing the ball on a string up into the air in one swinging motion. As it comes back down, try and catch it in the cup. Remember, practice makes perfect!

Optional:

Decorate! Use markers, stickers, or colored paper to decorate the cup and the stick.

Design your own! Variations of this game exist all over the world. What happens if you change the size or the weight of the ball? Can you make it more difficult by changing the size of the cup? What happens if you slide the pencil through two sides of the cup instead of up through the bottom?

Take it further!



St. Sernin, Mademoiselle, William Combe, J. D Dugourc, and Rudolph Ackermann. *Healthful sports for young ladies*. London, 1822. Library of Congress, 2009358399.

In her 1822 book, *Healthful Sports for Young Ladies*, Mademoiselle St. Sernin encourages playing games “in order to preserve oneself from the evil habits which are the offspring of idleness.” This evil is not to be confused by the game of Devil that St. Sernin mentions below. The game of Devil is shown being played by the girl in the far right of the illustration.

*In every time, at ev'ry age,
By grave and gay, by fool and sage,
Or more or less, we're sure to see
The love of dear variety.
The Cup-and-Ball thrown to and fro
The pious game of Domino
Amuse by turns, with various games
Of other shapes and other names,
While, without meaning any evil,
Some may prefer to play the Devil.*

