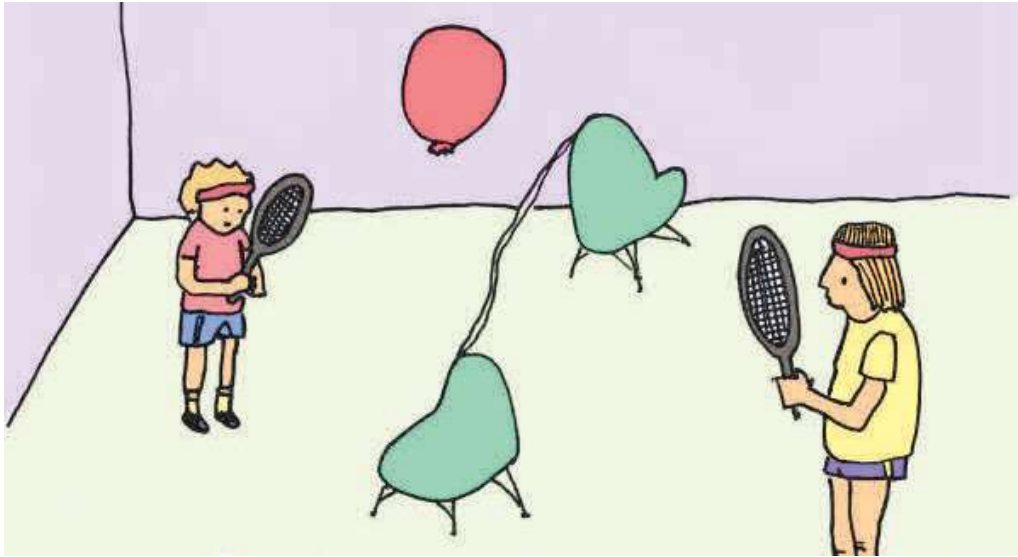


How to Play Balloon Tennis



Balloon tennis is a fun indoor exercise game designed to help kids practice hand-eye coordination, learn the basics of net sports, and have a blast - all while not destroying the house in the process! The game is essentially tennis, or volleyball, and it is ideal for toddlers who may be too young to swing a tiny tennis racket or for when you are stuck inside on a rainy day!

The rules and gameplay are fluid depending on the age and number of kids, but there is no shortage of ways to play in order to keep their attention and/or prepare them for the 2035 French Open. Just remember, if they are tiring themselves out, it is game, set, and match to you.

Prep Time: 5 minutes

Entertainment Time: 30-60 minutes

Energy Expended by Child: Moderate to High

Materials:

Several balloons swatters; paper plates, duct tape, and popsicle sticks; or just a couple of hands A piece of string and two chairs on which to tie it

How to Play:

Simple, like a basic version of tennis. It is self-explanatory. First thing, you need rackets. If you have two or more flyswatters in the house, you are all set. Otherwise, it can be fun to engage in a little arts-and-crafts time before the big match.



Kids can make their own racket by taping a popsicle stick to the back of a hard paper plate. If they want to be more creative (or you want to kill some more time), let them draw tennis strings or logos onto the plates. If you do not have any racket supplies at all, fret not, a hand works just fine. Volleyball is equally as fun. While they are taping or drawing, though, blow up several balloons.

With rackets in hand, place two chairs a few feet apart in the middle of the room and tie the piece of string between them. That is the top of the net, so make sure it is not too high. Now position one or two kids on each side of the 'court' and explain the rules of the game. Again, this is where you can get creative. At its simplest, you can toss a balloon at one of the players and start the rally, allowing them to hit it back and forth over the string. Proceed until they get bored and change the game.

At its most intense, you can you line all the players up on one side of the net and hammer a basket full of balloons at them, so they practice forehands/backhands for an hour. Kidding. Seriously, though, you can introduce scoring to work on counting and real gameplay if you want your kid to learn the rule of tennis, (hint: it may be easier to ditch the 15-Love scoring system in favor of simple 1, 2, 3.)

Want to just work on counting? Let them yell out the number of times they hit the balloon. If competitive play isn't your child's cup of tea, there are plenty of fun games kids can invent with homemade rackets and balloons. A few ideas include target practice, where they get a certain number of shots to hit an object in the room, playing on one leg to work on balance, or even just letting the kids circle up hacky sack-style and try to keep the balloon in the air. Once they start running around and hitting balloons everywhere, you can pretty much make up the rules as you go.

Send us photos of your homemade rackets or your family score card!

You do not have to watch, play, or even like tennis to appreciate this fun (and house-safe) kid's game. It is simple to set up, gets kids excited to move around, and even if it all devolves into chaos with kids hitting balloons around the house, well, that is always fun!