



Balloon Joust

1

Here's what you need to play Balloon Joust!

- 10 balloons
- 2 straight drinking straws (or bendable straws with the bent part cut off)
- 20 feet of string (smooth line, like fishing line, strong thread, or kite string)
- 4 barbecue skewers
- Clear tape
- Safety goggles or safety glasses
- Jousting partner!



2

Set up the string

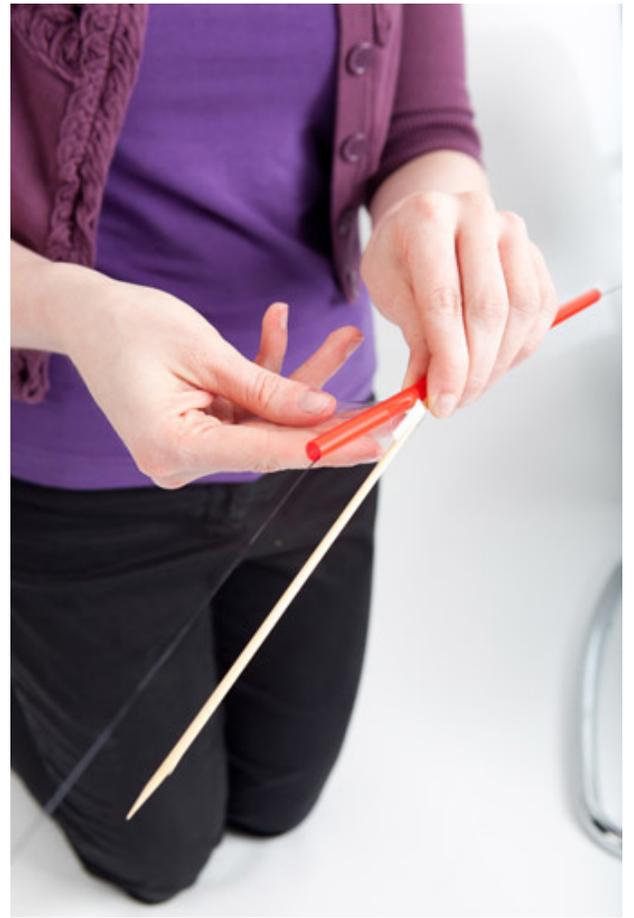
- Put on your safety goggles or safety glasses.
- Slip two straight straws onto the string.
- Tie both ends of the string to something stable, like two tables or chairs that are about 20 feet apart.



3

Attach the spears

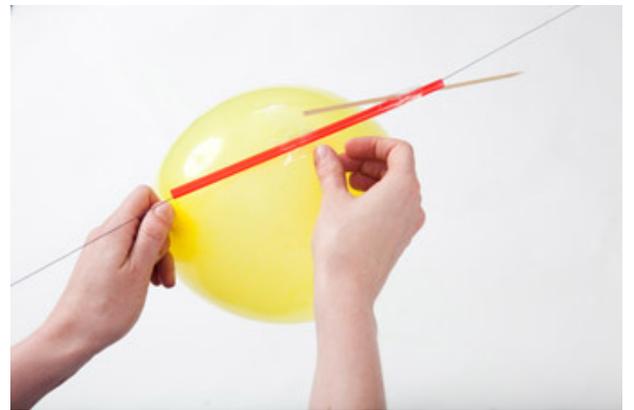
Tape a skewer to each straw. Aim the sharp end down, toward where you think the other person's balloon will be.



4

Attach the balloons

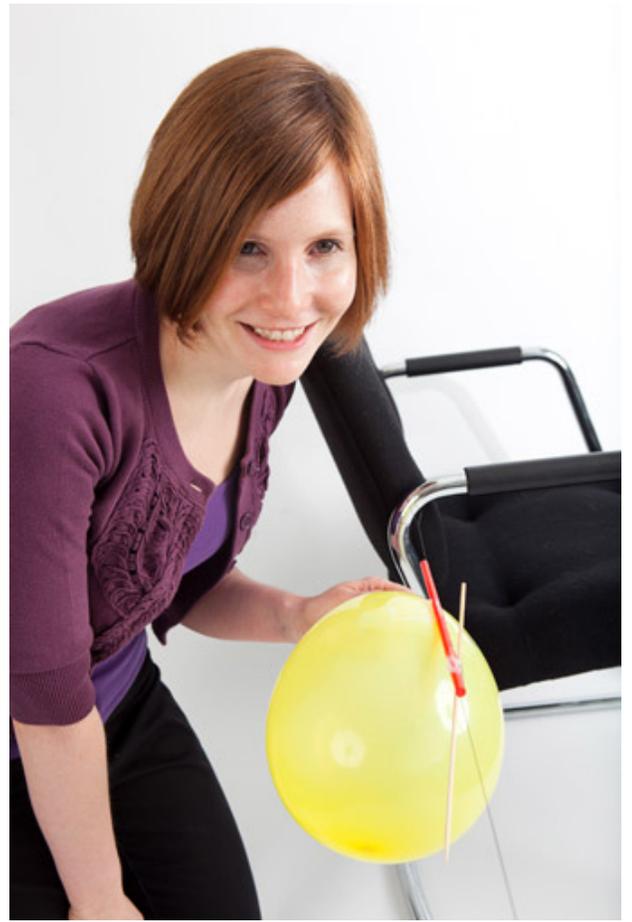
- Pre-cut strips of tape to have on hand as you attach the balloons. You'll be glad you did!
- Inflate the balloons. Pinch the neck, and hold it closed to keep air from escaping.
- While pinching the neck, each player should tape the inflated balloon to his or her straw.
- *TIP: If the balloon is hard to inflate... Stretch it a few times, and then blow it up.*
- *TIP: If it is hard to both hold the balloon closed AND tape it onto the straw... Tear some tape strips ahead of time to make it a little easier. It may take one or two tries to get the hang of it.*



5

Move to the starting line

- Pull the balloons back to the opposite ends of the line. These are the starting lines.
- On a count of three, both players should release the balloons.



6

Duel

The winner is the person whose balloon doesn't pop.



7

Rematch

- If both balloons survive, pull them back to the starting point.
- Adjust the skewer so it will pop your opponent's balloon.
- *TIP: If the balloon moves slowly... To make your balloon travel faster, tape it to the straw so that the air blasts out parallel to the string.*
- *TIP: If the balloons don't pop... Re-aim the skewers. Also, make sure the balloons are fully blown up.*
- *TIP: If the balloon flies off the straw... Use two to three strips of tape to hold the balloon onto the straw.*



8

Rematch (cont'd)

Try again. Replace popped balloons with fresh ones, and keep jousting!



9

Did you know?

Your balloon “dart” uses jet power to move. The stored air in the balloon pushes through the opening, creating **thrust**—the force that pushes the dart forward. So when air from the balloon moves in one direction, it pushes the dart in the opposite direction.



10

Try this next!

- **Darts.** Make a “dart” by attaching a balloon, skewer, and straw together, just like in Balloon Joust. Make a target by inflating a second balloon, but tie this one closed, and tape it at one end of the string. Launch the dart at the target. If the dart balloon hits the target just right...POP!
- **Team Darts.** Tape a “target” balloon at the string’s center-point. Each player makes a “dart.” On “3-2-1 Go!” they send their darts at the target from opposite ends of the string. POP!
- **Push over.** Put two straw-balloon combos on a single line, aimed at each other. (No skewers.) Put a marker, such as a pencil, on the floor at the string’s center-point. Launch the balloons. The winning balloon is the one that pushes the other one beyond the centerline.
- **Tough Guy.** Give your balloon extra powers by using two or more skewers or by applying tape across the front as “armor.”
- **Race.** Set up two long lines, side by side. Race two balloons. Whose goes the farthest? Whose crosses the finish line first?



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