

Pond Explorers

Ponds or lakes are great places to explore! There is a huge variety of living things that you can discover with a simple dip-net. If you don't have a dip-net, don't worry! You can easily make one with a few items around the house. Make sure to ask your parents for help!



Make Your Own Dip-Net

To make your own dip net, you will need:

- A pair of tights, pantyhose, or other thin and stretchy fabric
- Scissors
- A wire coat hanger
- A sewing needle
- Thread
- Duct tape or packing tape
- Small wooden dowel, bamboo cane, or sturdy stick

Safety Notes: Be careful when approaching bodies of water. Don't lean so far over that you fall in, and be aware of wildlife that may be using the wetlands as their home!

Step 1

Cut the bottom part of the leg off of the tights. Tie the remaining parts of the legs together. This is your net.



Step 2

Reshape the coat hanger to make a hoop or square. This will be the frame of the net.



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Step 3

Fold you're the edges of your net over the frame and sew in place.



Step 4

Straighten the hook end of the coat hanger. Use the duct tape to tape this end to the wooden dowel.



Step 5

It's time to go pond dipping! You may want to take a magnifying glass get a closer look at what you find, or a camera to take pictures!

Using Your Dip-Net

1. You'll need a container to collect whatever creatures wind up in your net. Any small jar will do, as will an egg carton! You will need to scoop some of the pond water into your container so the creatures can still swim around while you are exploring.
2. Gently sweep your net through the water in a figure-eight motion. You want your net to almost be at the bottom of the pond, but don't stir up too much mud as it will clog up your net and make it harder to see what you've captured. Places where there are plants growing in the water are excellent spots to try as well.
3. Carefully lift your net out of the water and turn it inside out over your container, so that anything you've caught drops into your container. If you want to take a closer look, use a spoon to gently scoop them up – your hands could hurt whatever creatures you've captured!
4. When you're finished collecting, carefully pour the container back into the pond and make sure all of the creatures are safely returned.

Did You Know?

Pond dipping isn't just for fun! Scientists use this technique to help determine water quality. Check out next week's activity to see how you can determine the health of the ponds and waterways you live in.