

Craft a Yarn Octopus

Have you ever wanted to create your own cephalopod? Well, maybe not, but you and your child should still check out this fun project! Kids enjoy this activity because it's simple, and the final product makes a great play or cuddle partner. You'll love its educational value; expect your kid to come out of it with stronger fine motor skills—due to the cutting and braiding—and a better understanding of measurement. The best part: you probably already have the few necessary supplies at home.

What You Need:

- Yarn in two different colors
- Scissors
- Cotton ball



What You Do:

1. Have your child measure out a piece of yarn 24 inches long. Show her how she can measure a length longer than the ruler by holding her place and moving the ruler, or simply wrapping the yarn around the ruler.
2. Have her use the first piece of yarn to measure additional pieces of yarn of the same length. Help her measure and cut 48 pieces of yarn that are 24 inches long each, and set them aside.
3. Cut a six-inch piece of yarn, and use that piece to cut 8 more 6-inch pieces.
4. Have her pick up the longer pieces of yarn, holding them at one end and making sure they all line up.
5. Fold the yarn in half. Place the cotton ball in the fold of the yarn, then wrap the yarn around it and pinch just below the ball. This is the octopus's head.
6. Help your child secure the cotton ball in place by tying one of the 6-inch pieces of yarn around the bunch where you are pinching it, just below the cotton ball (not around the cotton ball).
7. Separate six strands of yarn from the bunch and begin braiding them. If your child knows how to braid, let her take over, otherwise let her watch you until she understands the process.
8. When you braid down to the end of the yarn, knot the end with one of the shorter pieces of yarn.
9. Have your child continue to braid, working with six strands of yarn at a time, until all the yarn is braided. You should have eight legs at the end.
10. Help her trim the ends so that everything looks clean and even.

When she is done creating the form of the octopus' body, she can go back and add eyes, a mouth, or even a little hat cut out of felt.