

Nature Tic-Tac-Toe

Sticks and stones may break your bones, but here's a better idea: use them to create an outdoor game of tic-tac-toe! This twist on a usually-indoor activity is a great way to get your kids outside into the sunshine hunting for materials to make the game.

What You Need:

- Collection of twigs and pebbles from outside
- Scissors
- Twist ties (the kind that come with garbage bags)
- Optional: Acrylic paint and paintbrushes or permanent markers

What You Do:

1. Have your child go outside to collect twigs, sticks, driftwood and small round pebbles or stones. He will need at least four sticks of around the same length, several smaller sticks (around ten smaller sticks, each about three inches in length), and around ten pebbles or stones. The stones should be smooth and somewhat round in shape.
2. After he has collected materials, help him create an outdoorsy tic-tac-toe game. He can arrange the four long sticks in a tic-tac-toe grid pattern.
3. Have him use the twist ties to attach the sticks together at the four places where they intersect in the grid. He will wrap one twist tie around each intersection point.
4. For the tic-tac-toe Xs, he can cross two smaller same-size sticks in an 'X' pattern and attach them together with a twist tie, repeating to create several more Xs. He may also use some pebbles and paint (or write with permanent marker) an X on five of the pebbles.
5. If he used sticks as Xs, he can use plain pebbles as Os. If he used pebbles as Xs, he will want to label some other pebbles as Os by painting or writing an 'O' on them with a permanent marker.
6. Now he can play tic-tac-toe with a parent or friend! Most kids know the rules for this game, but a parent can review the rules if needed. He may wish to store his game in a plastic zipper bag, perfect for bringing along on outdoor picnics or camping trips!

