



How to build a backyard obstacle course

A DIY obstacle course in the garden is not only fun to build ... it's a blast to complete, too. Invite the neighbours and let the race begin.

We all want our kids to spend less time on their screens and more time being active ... and having fun, too.

Building a simple obstacle course in your garden is an excellent way to get them off the couch and into the great outdoors. It's an entertaining and engaging idea - and perfect for a crowd. They can invite their friends over, or other kids in the neighbourhood, to make an afternoon of fun.

Don't have a military background? No problem. Outlined is your DIY obstacle course, adaptable for big and little kids. Best of all, the kids can play an active role in building the course before they tackle it - and it uses stuff that you might just have lying around the house.





Obstacle 1: Jump rope

Place a jump rope on the ground. You can either lie it end to end as a (very safe) balance-beam for littlies, or set a skipping challenge for older kids - the bigger the child, the harder the task. Increase the difficulty by making them hop on one leg, or passing double loops for every jump.

Obstacle 2: Zigzag

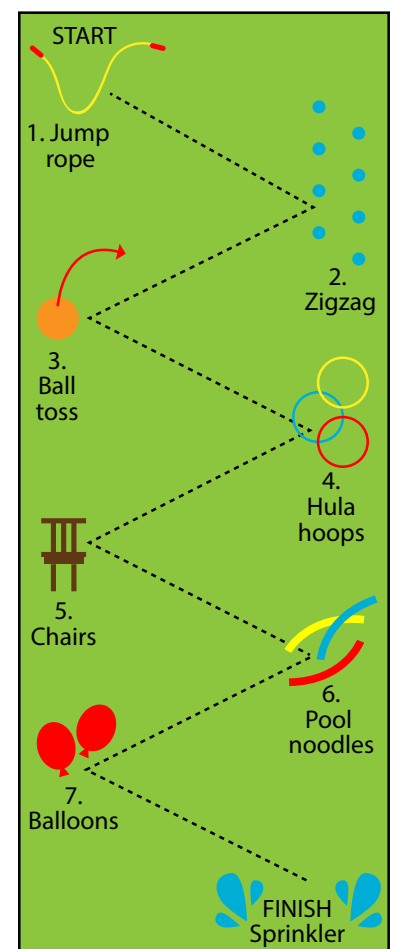
To set up a small zigzag section, unearth some cones from your garage, or use shoeboxes, upside-down plastic bowls or pots and pans - anything that can be set as markers in a pattern. Younger ones should zigzag around the objects; but the older kids can jump over them. Set the objects as far apart as you think they can manage.

Obstacle 3: Ball toss

Repurpose your laundry basket or a bucket, collect all the balls from under the house and set up a ball toss. You could also experiment with receptacles (a large plastic cup, say) and tossing implements (coins, perhaps) to suit different age groups. Basically, think big for small kids and small for big kids.

Obstacle 4: Hula hoops

Hula hoops make for a great obstacle. Hold one up so little ones can crawl through and pre-schoolers can jump or skip through. Super-keen and dexterous participants can use it as





an actual hula hoop - and they must keep it going for a minimum time frame. But make it tougher: if they drop it, they have to start again.

Obstacle 5: Chairs

Set up some chairs in a pattern for bigger kids to step along (any “the ground’s hot lava!” encouragement is always a winner). Medium-sized kids could zigzag through and toddlers can crawl underneath.

Obstacle 6: Pool noodles

Make a circle using two bent pool noodles (secure where they join with plenty of sturdy duct tape) and create jumping “lily pads”. If you’ve got a few adults on hand, bend a pool noodle into an arc and ask two parents to hold a side each - the littlies can crawl through while the older kids can leap the noodle like a hurdle.

Obstacle 7: Balloons

Blow up some balloons and enlist the help of a cricket bat, hockey stick or even just a smooth branch to keep them in the air. Five hits for littlies, 15 for big kids - bonus points if it’s a windy day.

Finish line

And finally, no obstacle course is complete without the participants getting a little wet. Set up a sprinkler at the end for a final douse, or fill a bucket with water, add water pistols and let the chaos begin.

Remember,
it’s more about
taking part
than winning.

