



Plastic bag weaving

This activity will help you to reuse old plastic bags in a clever way that keeps them from being thrown away. You'll end up with a patch of colourful mat, which can be turned into a bigger one by joining several patches together.

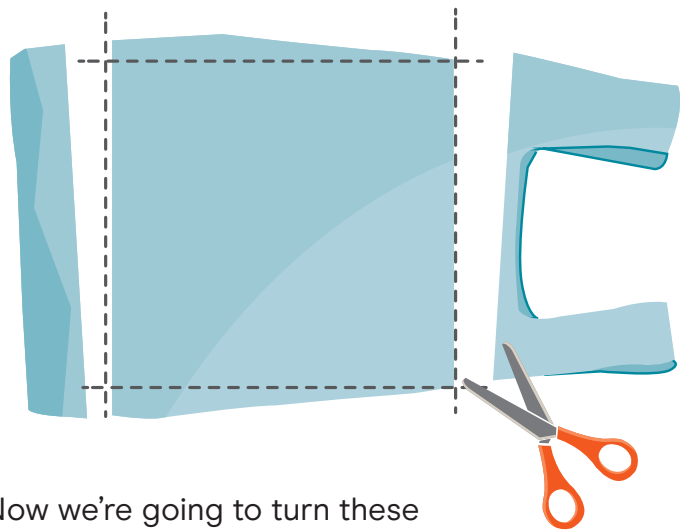
Resources:

- Plastic bags in lots of different colours
- Scissors
- A strong piece of cardboard
- Ruler
- Pen

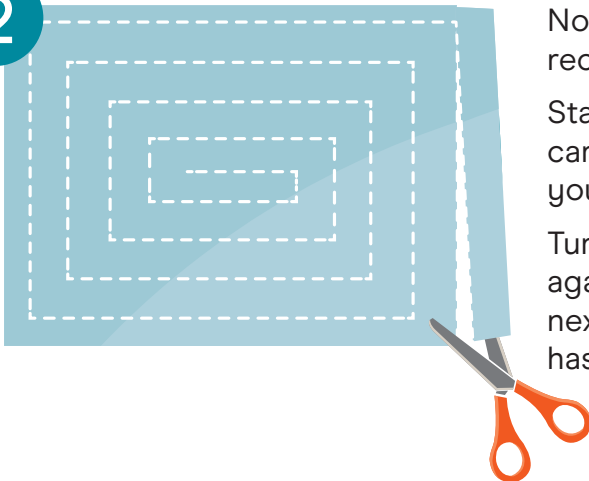
Individual or group activity

1

Start by cutting the handles and bottom edge off each bag. Then carefully cut up one of the long edges, opening it out to create a large flat rectangle.



2



Now we're going to turn these rectangles into long strips.

Starting 5cm in from the bottom corner, carefully cut in a straight line all the way up until your scissors are 5cm from the top edge.

Turn the bag so you're cutting along the edge again, and stop when you are 5cm from the next edge. Keep doing this until the whole bag has been cut.

3

The tool used for weaving is called a loom, and yours will be made from strong cardboard. The size of your loom will be equal to the size of your weaving.

Using a ruler and pen, mark the two long edges of the cardboard every 3cm and carefully make cuts towards the middle that are 3cm long.

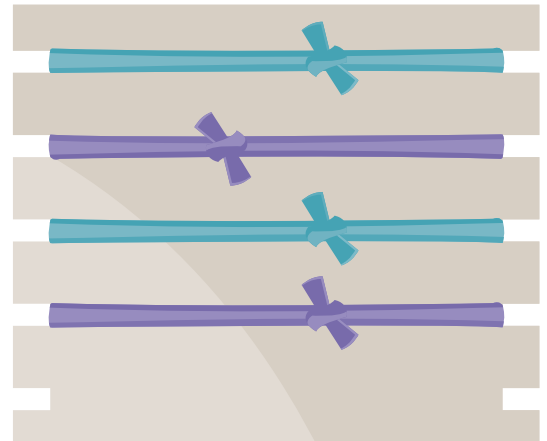




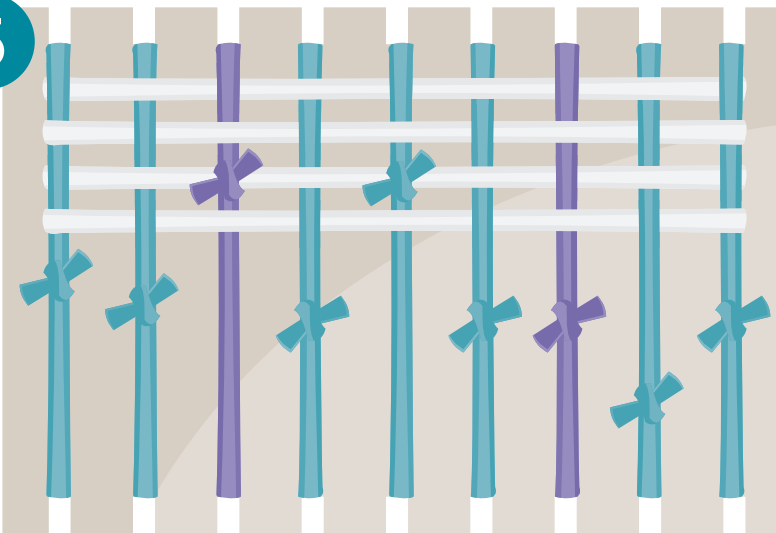
4

Take one of the plastic strips, and, leaving a long end ready to tie up, poke it into the first cut on the left edge. Take the strip from left to right and around the back. Keep looping from side to side until you reach the bottom (if your strip is too short, tie another one on).

Turn the loom over and tie the two loose ends together securely across the back.



5



Turn your loom so the strips run from top to bottom. We're now ready to weave.

Starting in the top left corner again, tying your new strip onto the original one to secure it, go under the first strip, over the next one, under, over and so on until you reach the edge. Now go back from right to left – under, over, under over – and repeat the process.

If your strip runs out, tie another one on. Keep everything really tight, pushing it up to the next row as you go. Tie the end of the final strip onto the original one at the bottom right corner of the loom.

6

Carefully cut through the strips that go over the edges of the loom. Tie pairs of strips together so that nothing is left loose and then carefully pull out the loom to reveal your woven mat.

