

# Making instruments at home

## YOU WILL NEED

- A variety of containers, including boxes, yoghurt pots, other plastic containers, buckets, bottles and cans –all of varying sizes
- Rubber bands
- Water
- Things to use as beaters: spoons (metal, plastic and wooden), straws, paintbrushes.  
Things to go in containers: pebbles, beads, paper clips, coins etc.

# Finding sounds around the house

Almost anything will make a sound. Experiment with different beaters. Talk about the different sounds or timbres. Find different things to hit and different ways to hit them (ensure that a young child is supervised). Try with things placed on a surface and the difference when you hold it:

- Saucepans
- Bowls
- Bottles (have a go at putting in different amounts of water)
- Tin cans

Find things that you can scrape as well as hit

- The sides of tin cans
- Some ridged plastic bottles
- Radiators
- Bannisters

Talk about the types of sound:

- High/low
- Bright/dull/muffled
- Sustained/short
- Loud/soft

# Making rubber band instruments

1. Find containers strong enough to put rubber bands on
2. Experiment with different containers, different sizes with different sized rubber bands
3. Play the instruments making up different patterns, melodies and sounds
4. Try repeating a pattern over and over – this is called looping, or a riff or an ostinato.

Questions to ask

- Which sounds do you like best?
- Which sounds are high and which sounds are low?
- Can you change the sound on one rubber band?
- What happens when you pull the band?
- Why do the bands sound high/low
- Do some containers make better sounds than others?
- Do you have a favourite note?
- Do the sounds remind you of anything?

# Making shakers

Get creative with different containers – what different objects can you find to go inside small boxes, plastic pots/bottles/glass jars

Again listen carefully to the sound and discuss why different containers and contents make different sounds.

Discuss the ways that you can play the containers – long and short sounds. What things sound like shakers (e.g. digging sand, walking on gravel etc)?

# Making sustained noises

Try blowing across bottles – this can be tricky at first. The tip is to blow half across the bottle and half into the bottle. Experiment with different sizes and differing amount of water. Discuss high and low pitch, short and long notes.

# Glossary

**LOOP** – a repeating section of sound material (most commonly used term in popular music)

**MELODY** – this is also known as a tune and consists of notes and rhythm that are linked together to form a single line, usually, but not always, above the accompanying features of a piece of music.

**OSTINATO** – this is a short pattern of notes that repeats in the same instrument

**PITCH** – this is how high or low the sound is

**RIFF** – this is a repeating pattern of notes, like a loop or ostinato

**TIMBRE** – this is about the character and quality of the sound

# Cross curricular links

## SCIENCE

Learning about how sound is made. Learning about different materials.

## DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

Constructing instruments and refining them.