



Let's make a *KENDAMA**!

(*Traditional Japanese Toy)



You will need:

1 ball & string



1 cup set (3 cups)



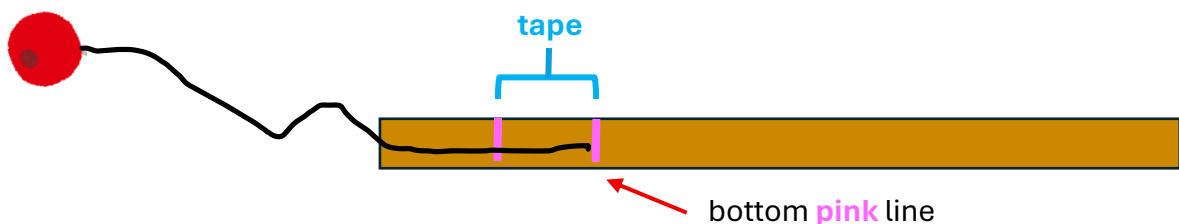
1 double-sided sticky dot



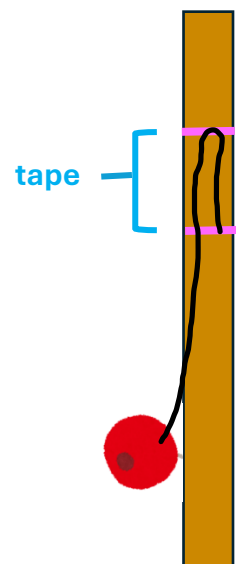
1 wooden stir stick

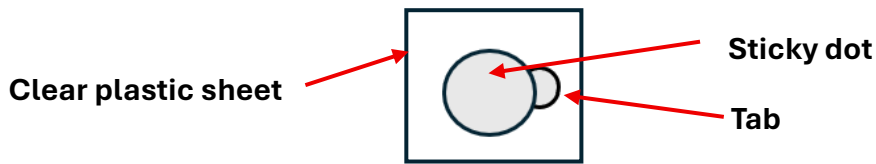


Some tape

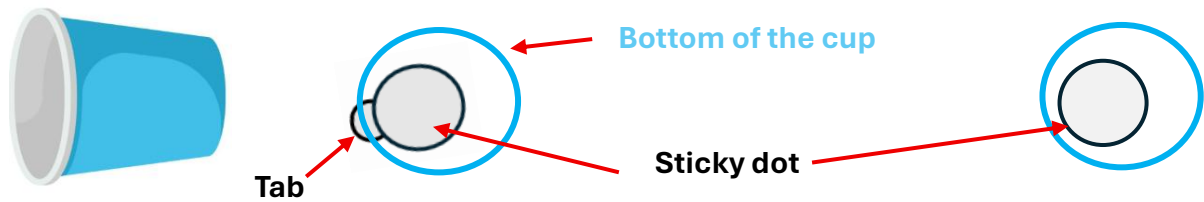


- 1) Find the side of the stir stick with the **pink** lines. Line up the end of the string to the bottom **pink** line.
- 2) Center a piece of tape* *between* the **pink** lines and attach the string to the stick by wrapping the tape *one time* around the stick. (*NOTE: The tape should be long enough to go around the stick twice.)
- 3) Hold the stick upright and let the ball hang down. Wrap the remaining tape around the part of the sting that is hanging down.

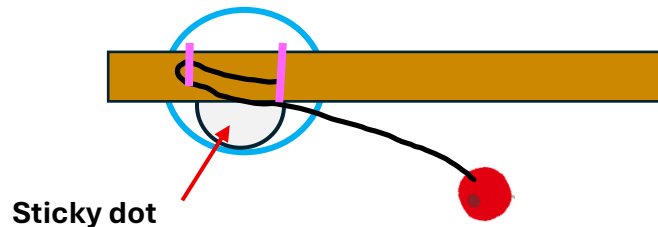




- 4) Peel the double-sided sticky dot off of the clear plastic sheet.



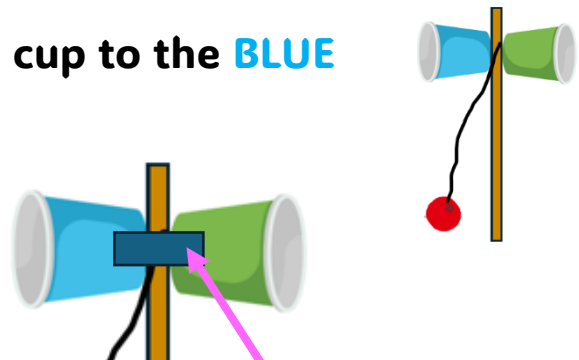
- 5) Put the sticky dot on the bottom of the **BLUE** cup, slightly off center.



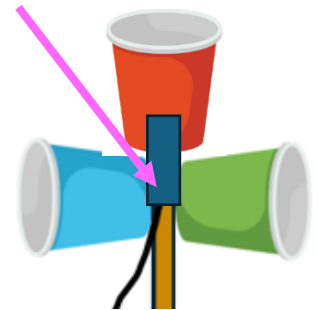
- 6) Center the part of the stick with the tape in the middle of the base of the cup and attach it to the cup using the sticky dot.

- 7) Attach the bottom of the **GREEN** cup to the **BLUE** cup using the sticky dot.

- 8) Secure the two cups together with one piece of tape on opposite sides.



- 9) Find the slit in the bottom of the **BROWN** cup and insert the top of the stick to attach it to the top of the **BLUE** & **GREEN** cups.



- 10) Tape the top cup in place on opposite sides.

- 11) You're done! Now try to get the ball into all 3 cups. Have fun!

History of Kendama

Kendama (けん玉) is a Japanese skill toy derived from earlier European and global cup-and-ball games. Its modern form—with three cups, a spike, and a stringed ball—was standardized in the

early 20th century and has since become a competitive sport.  [Wikipedia](#)

Early Global Origins

- **Cup-and-ball toys** existed worldwide, including:

- **France:** *Bilboquet* (16th century)  [kendama.or.jp+1](#)
- **Germany:** *Fang die Kugel*
- **Spain/Portugal/Mexico:** *Balero*, *Boliche*, *Bilboquet*, etc.

- These toys involved catching a ball on a cup or spike and served as both entertainment and

hand-eye coordination training.  [kendama.or.jp](#)

Arrival in Japan (Edo Period)

- First documented in Japan around **1777–1778** in the encyclopedia *Kiyusyoran*.
- Likely introduced through **Nagasaki**, Japan's only open port at the time.

- Initially used as an **adult drinking game**, not a children's toy.  [kendama.or.jp](#)

Meiji Era (1868–1912): Educational Adoption

- In **1876**, Japan's Ministry of Education introduced kendama in a children's education report.

- It gradually became a popular children's toy.  [web-japan.org](#)

Birth of the Modern Kendama

The Nichigetsu Ball (1918–1919)

- **Egusa Hamaji** of Hiroshima designed an improved kendama with **three cups and a spike**, creating the foundation of the modern form.
- Patent filed in **1918** and registered in **1919**.

- This design sparked a nationwide boom.  [kendama.or.jp+1](#)

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- Mass production began between **1924–1927**, making kendamas widely available.
- Hiroshima (especially Hatsukaichi) became the symbolic birthplace of the modern kendama.  ken-dama.com

Post-War to Modern Era

- Production resumed after WWII.
- **1975**: Japan Kendama Association (JKA) founded, standardizing rules and promoting competitions.
- **1979**: First All-Japan Kendama Tournament.  ken-dama.com
- Today, kendama is a global sport with major events such as the **Kendama World Cup** in Japan.  [Wikipedia](https://en.wikipedia.org)

Cultural Significance

- Kendama is valued for craftsmanship, coordination training, and cultural heritage.
- It is often compared to a “miniature martial art” due to its focus on rhythm, precision, and concentration.  evasionsrebelle.com

Kendama's evolution from a global cup-and-ball toy to a uniquely Japanese cultural icon reflects centuries of adaptation, craftsmanship, and competitive innovation.