

The Big Fun Balloon Guide

Get ready for loads of fun, plus great exercise for your residents without them even knowing. Whether it's the size, or the bouncy-ness, or the bright colours, this big fun balloon reminds people of their childhood parties – and everyone always has a good time.

Health & Safety - the safer the environment, the more fun you will have

- Don't have drinks (especially hot ones) in the area, nor brought in during the session
- Clear away or protect any fragile objects in the room including light fittings

Preparing the room and session - go through the list above

- Have some music available. Jolly, happy music works best at medium volume
- Arrange the seating in a biggish circle
- Have some masking tape ready to seal the balloon after it is blown up

Blowing up the balloon - already part of the fun

Using an electric or a manual balloon pump, or you can use your own lungs (my favourite!). Whichever way, take some recovery / "wow, look at this" breaks at different points along the way. Have a laugh, make some jokes. This is a fun session. Don't stop inflating the balloon until it is BIG. This is a heavy duty latex 36 inch balloon, so ideally you should blow it up to around 30 to 33 inches in diameter. Part of the magic is having a massive balloon.

Tying/securing the balloon

When the balloon is the size you want it, hold the mouth closed and start twisting the neck until it is one straightish piece. Double it over onto itself, then use a piece of masking tape (no other type of tape or the balloon risks being damaged) to wrap around the doubled-over neck to hold it in place. It's best the masking tape goes around the neck 2 or 3 times with the last inch left unattached.

Getting started

Have some jolly music playing. In the middle of the circle of participants, bounce the balloon on the floor with a flourish and enough force to make it bounce up to the ceiling. It's important everyone gets used to the balloon. Standing quite close, give it to each person in turn and ask them to pat it back to you. Catch it and then throw it gently back to them so that it is easy for them to pat it back. Do this 6 to 8 times (approx 30 seconds).

Other exercise ideas - keeping it varied will keep the fun at a high level

- Invite everyone to pat the balloon around and across the circle. There will be gentle players and those who want to wallop the balloon! Try to make sure everyone has a turn.
- Use just right hands, or left hands, or right feet, or left feet.

Deflating the balloon

If possible just unpeel the masking tape but if it is on too tight then carefully use scissors to snip the tape (not the balloon!!) It can be fun just to let the balloon zoom around as the air goes out of it.

Above all**ENJOY**

