

Squeezies©



Squeezies are particularly useful for residents who seem tense and anxious. Encourage the resident to squeeze these balloons between their thumb and fingers. They are also fun to toss and catch. This item is useful for individuals of all functioning levels. Squeezies also are a good stress releaser and useful for strengthening arthritic hands.

Cues for this action: “Here is a balloon you can squeeze without breaking it. Can you please hand it to me.”

Demonstrate - Squeeze with one hand and then with the other. Try using your fingers to flatten the squeezie or make it into a cube shape. *Return the squeezie to the resident and cue* - “Now you try it”

Promotes:

1. Use of hands and fingers.
2. Tactile stimulation.
3. Diversional activity when the residents needs a distraction.

Discussion ideas:

Do these remind you of anything?

Do your hands feel tired?

What type of work did you do that made your hands feel this way?

Which color squeezie do you like best?

Need:

- two round balloons -- same color -- 12” size
- 1 empty 16 ounce plastic soda bottle
- 1/2 cup millet bird seed (if there are other seeds in your mix, sift the birdseed through a colander. Only the millet will go through the holes, the larger seeds will not.)

NOTE: Don’t use “pearlized” colored balloons, the colors come off on your hands. Don’t use yellow balloons. They look like lemons and are sometimes bitten by people.

Instructions:

Cut off the end of the soda bottle, making a funnel.

Stretch the lip of the uninflated balloon over the neck of the funnel as shown.

Pour ½ cup bird seed into the funnel. Shake the funnel gently so as much bird seed as possible goes into the balloon.

Put the funnel to your mouth as shown, forming a seal around your cheeks and chin.

Blow into the funnel until all the bird seed is in the balloon and the balloon is half inflated.

NOTE: once the bird seed is in the balloon, it wants to stay there, but if you leave birdseed in the funnel the seed may “spurt” up when you remove your mouth from the funnel.

Let the excess air out. Remove the balloon from the funnel.

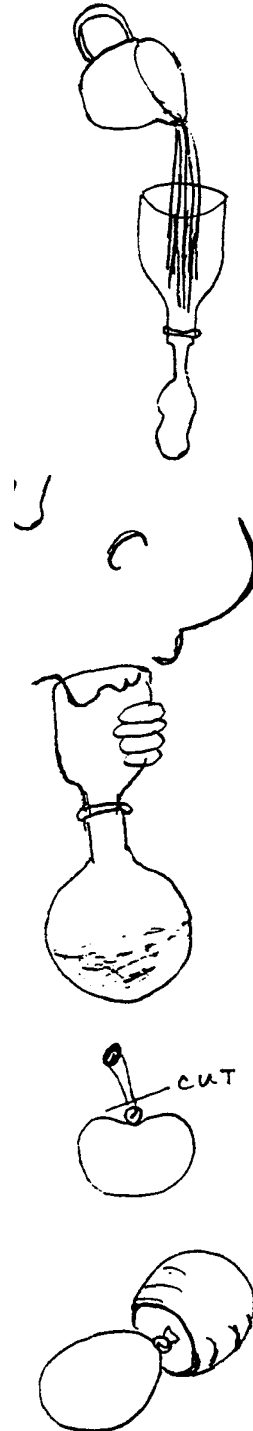
Place the balloon (now with the bird seed in it) on a table and push down on the neck of the balloon with your thumb to push all the bird seed out of the neck.

Tie the neck of the balloon at its base. Pull knot snug.

Cut off the excess balloon neck about ¼ inch above the knot.

Cut off neck of second balloon right at its base.

Grasp and stretch the second balloon and pull it snugly over the filled balloon so that the first balloon’s knot is concealed.



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Buettner, L. & Greenstein, D. (1997). Simple Pleasures: A multi-level sensorimotor intervention for nursing home residents with dementia. (Training manual and instructions)