

Marbles

Marbles are a traditional children's pastime and, of course there are dozens of informal games that can be played with them including games where marbles are aimed at holes, at arches and at a target "jack". This is a good game for developing hand to eye coordination and for judging the force needed to shoot over a certain distance.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ewqFhNw9k7g> – this is a short (3:20) video showing how to set up the ring and play the game. Not all of the rules are displayed accurately but, it will give you the idea.

Description of equipment

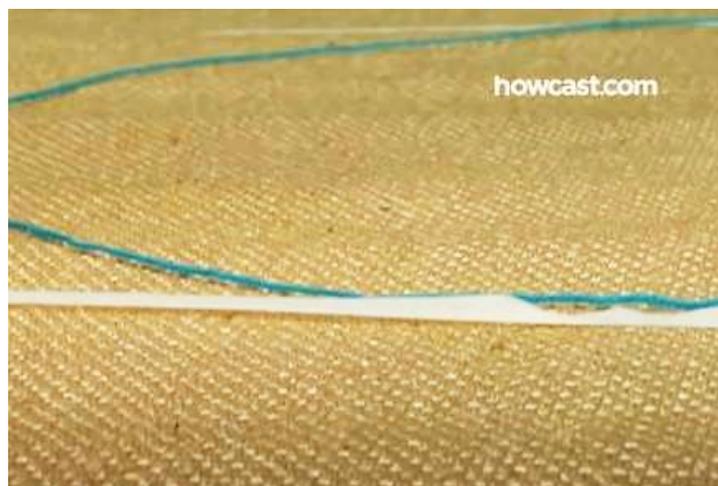
The object of the game is to win marbles from your opposition by knocking more marbles outside the ring than the opposing team but, in a friendly game it will not be for keeps.

The following instructions are for a game called 'Ringer' which, will need 2-6 players, a smooth surface to play on – something like a short-pile carpet is good because friction will slow the marbles down but, you can play outside on bare soil. Something to make or mark a circle with (string, wood a stick for the soil), an odd number of marbles – we will use 13 standard sized marbles – and one large shooter marble per player. This can be made more challenging by using a shooter of the same size as the other marbles.

The Rules of Marbles

All the marbles in play will be placed inside the ring; the larger the ring, the more difficult the game is so you decide. A good size to begin with is 3 feet in diameter. This will require a piece of string 9.5 feet in length.

Draw or mark a line next to the circle so that the circle just touches the middle of the line. On the other side of the circle, draw or mark another line the exact same as the first.



Each player, in turn, rolls their marble from one line towards the other and the person closest to the second line goes first. The next closest player goes next and so on.



There are three ways that you can have the starting formation for the marbles – in a cross shape from the middle of the ring, they can be gathered together in the middle of the ring or randomly scattered.

The Play

Players take it in turns to shoot at the marbles in the ring. Each shot must be taken from a kneeling or sitting position from anywhere outside the ring with a knuckle touching the ground. The shooter is placed in the crook of the index finger and the thumb then used to flick it in the appropriate direction. Each turn starts with the shooter marble shot from the edge of the ring inwards.



Each marble that is knocked out of the ring is a point for that player. If one or more marbles are knocked out of the ring and the shooter finishes within the ring, the player is entitled to another shot, the continuation shot being taken from wherever the shooter came to rest. The turn continues until a shot fails to knock a marble outside the ring or the shooter finishes outside the ring.

If a shot fails to knock a marble outside the ring and the player's shooter finishes inside the ring, then the shooter remains within the ring until that player's turn comes around again. This is to be avoided at all costs since it renders the shooter vulnerable to attack by the other players.

If a shooter is knocked out of the ring by another player, then the owner of the shooter is out of the game.

The game ends when the last marble is knocked outside the ring or there is only one player left. At that point the team or player that collected the most marbles, wins.

[How to set-up and play an outdoor game of marbles](#)

[A variation on the indoor game](#)

[Very simple rules for 'Ringer'](#)