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BEST IN SNOW

HOW TO CREATE THE MOST AWESOME SNOWMAN EVER

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Turn the next snowfall into a truly memorable winter event with these fun ideas to build a snowman (or snowwoman) that'll thrive and survive long after the others on the block are gone!



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What takes 10 billion snowflakes to make, and boasts that one of the largest of its kind was a creation in Maine that stood just a few feet shorter than the Statue of Liberty? Correct answer: One *w-a-y* cool snowman! Read on to learn how to make your own personal Snowzilla—the sturdiest, most creative, most durable snowman in town.

Getting Your Snowman Started

1. Set the snowy stage the night before (or the morning of) by reading a mood-setting, snow-inspired story, such as *Snowy Day*, *Polar Express*, *Snowmen at Night*, *The Snowman*, or any other family favorite.
2. Formulate a snowman-plan that includes a list or sketches designating who will do what, when, and where. Give your kids tasks, such as selecting a location, rolling the snow, assembling accessories, decorating, and more. Having a plan in place will help maximize your family time and your snowman building momentum.
3. Scientists agree that for the best results, snow should be somewhere between “wet” and “dry,” at least a couple of inches deep, and falling at or around 30°F. These conditions allow snowflakes to bind together better to make the best snowballs and snowmen possible. To test the snow, prepare a snowball and toss it in the air or at a tree. If it holds together, you’re ready to roll. If not, add water to the snow via a spray bottle, a watering can, a hose connected to an indoor water supply, or wait for better snow in another storm.

The Science Behind Your Creation

Snowexperts say the head-torso-base approach used way back in the Middle Ages still works well for the snow creatures we build today. Try these snow-rolling, body-sculpting tips:

1. Start each part of your snow pal by packing and rolling a large amount of snow in different directions (left, right, back, and forth). Do this for the head, torso, and bottom; if you roll snow in the same direction, you’ll end up with snow cylinders, not balls. Roll the bottom snowball until it’s knee-high, the torso

until it's two-thirds the size of the base, and the head until it's two-thirds the size of the middle.

2. For a six-foot-high snowman, the bottom should be three feet in diameter; the torso, two feet in diameter; and the head, one foot across.
3. Before you start your snowman, flatten the top of the base with your hand, a shovel, or a ruler. Then place the torso on top. Flatten the top of the torso and the bottom of the head, and then add the head. Pack additional snow around the three large snowballs to connect them. Smooth and sculpt.

Location, Location...Decoration!!!

You'll want to select a flat, snowy spot to plant your snowman, with two or more inches of wet snow underneath. This will keep your snowman upright and prevent it from leaning. Avoid blacktop driveways. They conduct heat as the weather warms up and will shorten your snowman's life. Keep your snowman out of the sun if you can—an area that's shaded most of the day is an ideal spot.

Style your snowman with the many natural and amazing wonders winter has to offer. Incorporate sticks, twigs, branches, and leaves nearby; take a hike and look for out-of-the-ordinary findings, or consider using a few of these:

- The old standards, including a few pieces of coal, a carrot, a hat, and a scarf
- Fabric and clothing, including old T-shirts, oversize shirts and sweaters, shawls, jackets, ties, socks, shoes, and more.
- Remnants from skeins of yarn or string, sheets of cardboard, rope, chains, jewelry (costume or homemade), twinkly lights, popcorn or cranberry ornaments, buttons, bows, recyclables, holiday decorations from Valentine's Day, St. Patrick's Day, May Day, Fourth of July, and so on, plus other everyday and/or unusual items. Fasten accessories by tying knots or attaching clothespins.

And don't forget to personalize your creation with little details, such as:

- Hats, gloves, mittens, scarves, raincoats/umbrellas, jackets, sweaters (crazy holiday ones are the best!)
- Household and garage items including: aprons, cooking mitts (they make great hands!), chef hats, cooking utensils, gardening tools, work tools, and tool belts
- Sports caps, helmets, T-shirts, and team jerseys; old bats, baseballs, footballs, tennis racquets, croquet sticks, golf clubs, and Hula-Hoops; and anything else you find around the house
- Swimsuits or trunks, sunglasses, masks/goggles, snorkels, flippers, rafts, swim toys, Hawaiian shirts, flip-flops, sunglasses, bottles of sunscreen, and beach towels
- Uniforms, theatrical costumes, robes, pajamas, and vintage clothing

If you are literary, add a book. Love to travel? Include a suitcase. Honor the doctor, artist, policeman, or teacher in the house by including a badge, helmet, stethoscope, paintbrush, uniform, or apple. If you get more snow, add more snow people. Big or small—the more, the merrier! Have them interact in some way—let them dance or hold hands.

Tags

snow, snow people, family



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Patricia J. Murphy is an award-winning writer who loves to make snow people with her family. She lives in a northern suburb of Chicago, IL.

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