

Discover Plankton



How to make your plankton net

Plankton is a name for all the plants and animals that float around in the World's Oceans. Plankton is usually very small but can be found anywhere in the sea. By making the plankton net described in this fact sheet, you should be able to catch a few small animals to look at.

What you will need

You will need the following bits and pieces:

- A 2 litre plastic milk bottle
- A 2 litre plastic drinks bottle
- A 'knee high' nylon stocking
- A 70ml specimen container
- A marker pen
- Duct tape (this is not essential)
- A pair of blunt ended scissors (**or sharp knife if an adult is doing the cutting for you**)



Step one

Cut the plastic milk bottle as shown



Step two

1. Cut a 5cm wide ring out of the drinks bottle, forming a collar and put it inside the cut out milk bottle to strengthen it

Step three

Taking of the cap, put the specimen container in the nylon stocking (so that the open end of the container is facing the open end of the stocking) and feed through the neck of the plastic milk bottle as shown.

In this picture you can see the collar that was cut from the drinks bottle, inside the the milk container.



Step four

Fold back the nylon stocking over the milk container as shown.

Step five

Cut a flap in each side of the milk container as shown. The flaps allow a free flow of water through the net as it is dragged through the water.

Add some duct tape for that professional look. In order to make the net even safer, line the plastic edges of the milk container with duct tape, before covering with a stocking, or bend the edges over.



Step six

Take off shoes and socks or put wellies on. Go paddling with an adult and push your net through the water for ten minutes or more. What you catch will probably be smaller than a grain of sand, so you will need a microscope to see it. When you have finished fishing, remove the nylon stocking carefully, keeping water in the specimen container. Put the lid back on the container and then pour your catch onto a white tray. If you look carefully you should see a few little dots jumping around.



Step Seven

Look at your catch through a powerful magnifying glass (x10 to x20) or use a small field microscope. Look out for Discover Filey Events, where you will be able to examine your catch using high quality 'Trekker' and Video microscopes.



Looking at 'Minibeasts' is a great hobby for children and adults, quality microscopes can be bought at online stores such as the One Stop Nature Shop: www.onestopnature.co.uk

Safety Notes

Children should be supervised at all times when making the net or in the sea. ALL CUTTING WITH SHARP BLADES SHOULD BE DONE BY A RESPONSIBLE ADULT
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