

Easy Squeeze Experimentation

There's a lot of stress-relieving squishy and poppy gadgets out there. Try this homemade hack that upcycles leftover household materials and won't break the bank. While you're at it, have a conversation about matter's many states - solid, liquid, and gas. The cornstarch and conditioner concoction created in this activity opens the door to the fourth state of matter: plasma. What about something that falls into more than one category? Well that's a



Non-Newtonian fluid!



Materials:

- 1 cup of **hair conditioner** - Check out your local dollar store clearance section! Or use up those left-over hotel conditioners...
- 3 cups of **cornstarch** divided - The ratio in the directions is a starting point; continue to add cornstarch to your desired consistency.
- Large mixing **bow**
- Wooden or rubber **spoon**
- Sturdy **balloons** - Match colors to your theme!
- Empty **mesh produce bags** - These hold onions, lemons, and cheese wheels to name a few. The larger the hole, the better the squeeze-impact!

- **Rubber band**, trash bag twisty tie, or a hair tie will also work

Directions:

First, prepare the work area. Corn starch and conditioner clean up easily, but this is a hands-on happy mess! Measure out **2 cups** of **cornstarch** to start. In the large bowl, slowly work the powder and **1 cup** of **conditioner** together with a wooden spoon.

As the product starts to change in texture, continue to add corn starch (up to another 1 cup) a little at a time until the consistency resembles a **fluffy slime**. (Fun alternative — if you keep adding corn starch the result will become stiffer like a silly putty.)

Puzzle the brain with questions like, “What do you think will happen when we combine a solid with a liquid?” Afterwards, **compare** with past experiences, “Where have you seen this texture before?”

Next, prepare the **balloon**. Help **stretch** out the balloon by repeatedly inflating it. “What state of matter is inside the balloon?” Let the balloon answer as the air is released!

Adults, hold the balloon open, as large as you can, while your helper **smushes** the cloud-like slime inside. Once the balloon is at max-capacity, tie it off. Then place the balloon into the mesh bag. Wrap the balloon, trimming off the extra mesh and tie it in place with a trash bag tie or rubber band.

Now it's time to **squeeze!** Watch the balloon push through the mesh creating an **awesome texture and tantalizing view!** Add googly-eyes to make a smush-able friend, green leaves for a grape cluster, or other seasonal **embellishments** to finish off your creation.

As always, share your pictures at www.joanruddimane.com and on social media!

