

STEM ANYWHERE ACTIVITY

Parachutes

Challenge: Build a parachute using materials from around the house.

Suggested Materials:

- Tissue paper, paper napkin, plastic sack, or other lightweight materials
- String or yarn
- Paper clips
- Clear tape

Get Inspired: Visit YouTube, search “How to make a parachute for kids,” and get inspired by the awesome examples that are out there.

Plan it Out: When you’ve gathered your materials and gotten some inspiration, it’s time to make your design plans. Take out a sheet of paper and a pencil and sketch out your parachute design.

Procedure: Build your parachute and put your design to work. Start with a single paper clip as the payload. Test how your parachute performs when it’s dropped from a specified height. Record the time it takes before the parachute hits the ground. Also, record any observations of parachute performance. Test this out with various loads, adding one paper clip at a time, and record the performance of your chute each time. For an additional math challenge, you can calculate average velocity by dividing the height of the drop by the time it took for your chute to hit the ground.

Discussion: How would you construct another parachute to withstand more mass?

