



Plastic Bottle Baskets

You will need: 2 clean plastic bottles (milk or fizzy drinks bottles are good)
2 plastic bags (ideally in different colours)
A pair of scissors

1: Cut and discard the top off one of the plastic bottles. Then cut roughly finger width strips (stakes) vertically in the lower straight sided part of the bottle. Make sure they stay attached to the base. Try and keep them about the same width if you can.

If you have an even number of strips, the weaving on the sides of the basket will have vertical stripes, and if you have an odd number of strips, the basket will have spirals.

2: Prepare the weavers by cutting strips from both your plastic bags. These should be about 2cm wide but you don't need to be too accurate.

If you cut off the bottom of the bag first, you can then cut the strip as a single long continuous piece by spiralling up the bag as you cut.

3: Tuck the end of one coloured plastic bag strip behind one of the stakes in your basket. You should see the short end on the left of the stake and the long end on the right.

Repeat with the other coloured strip, this time tucking it behind the strip just to the left of the first.

4: Start weaving from left to right.

Take the left-hand strip in front of one stake, then behind one stake and back to the outside of the basket.

Repeat this movement with the new left-hand strip (this should be the other colour).

5: Keep weaving, alternating colours with each stroke, until you have gone all the way round the basket back to where you started.

Press this first row of weaving down towards the base of the bottle as far as it will go with your fingers.

6: Repeat for the next row of weaving, and the next, and the next... until you reach the height of the sides of your basket that you want.

Remember to leave approximately a thumb thickness distance at the top of the stakes so that you have enough stake left to be able to fold it over and finish it off.

7: If your weaver strip runs out, join a new strip by tucking the end into the gap where the old strip would have come out.

8: When you have finished weaving the sides of the basket, fold each of the stakes in turn over towards the inside of the basket and tuck it into the weaving so it stays in place. It can be helpful to cut the stakes to a blunt point to make this easier.

9: Cut your second bottle to just lower than the rim of your basket. This will become the liner of your basket.

10: Push the liner carefully inside your woven basket. If you want, you can put a coloured piece of plastic bag between the liner and the basket so you see a coloured base from the outside.

11: Carefully cut off any ends of the weavers that are sticking out.

And you are done!

Don't worry if your first attempt isn't as neat as you would like it to be.

Keep practising, you will get better the more you do.

And all your materials are free so you can practise as much as you like.

Once you have mastered the weaving, feel free to experiment.

You could try using other materials for weaving, eg long leaves such as daffodils, fabric, plastic fruit netting etc

Try using more than two separate weavers. Basketmakers will sometimes use 3 or 4 weavers in traditional baskets.

What happens when you change direction of weaving? Can you make the pattern zig-zag?

Have fun!