Basic Balloon Decorations

Columns

Arches

And More!

Fran Burnett
Fort Osage High School
Independence, MO
fburnett@fortosage.net
Basic Balloon Decorations

Clusters...the key to most designs

3 Steps

1. Size the balloon.
   It’s important that all balloons are blown up the same size. Make a template by cutting a round hole to the diameter desired in a piece of foam board or a box. Then, pass the balloon through the hole after inflating, letting out air to the desired size. You can also purchase balloon templates.

2. Tie two inflated balloons together, sealing them.

3. Twist two groups together.

Air-Filled Balloon Column

Air-filled balloon columns must have a weight or be on a pole.

To weight them down, fill a balloon with sand or rice and tie it to the center of the first balloon cluster with nylon fishing line. Then, place this cluster on the floor.

To connect clusters, use a roll of fishing line (do not cut it!). Tie the loose end to the center of the bottom balloon cluster (the one with the weight). Then, pace the second cluster on top, turning it 1/3 turn so the balloons nest on top of each other. Bring the fishing line up through the center of the cluster, wrapping it around one of the balloons in the second cluster and ending with the fishing line coming up through the middle of the cluster.

Finish the column by topping with a balloon tied to the center of the last cluster.

Poles may be made from PVC attached to a plywood base or may be purchased.
Arches

Air-filled arches must be supported on a frame. Helium-filled arches can be made on fishing line or balloon string and then anchored with weights on either end. For indoor helium-filled arches, use 50lb nylon fishing line; for outdoor, use 100lb.

For our balloon arches at halftime, we use a length of ½ “ PVC. It’s flexible enough that two people, one at either end, can flex it to form an arch, and it’s light enough that they can hold it through the presentation.

How many balloons will I need for my arch?
The actual number depends on your design, but you’ll need about 4 to 6 balloons per foot of frame. To figure the length of the frame, or of the fishing line if you’re using helium, use these calculations.
1. For an arch that is taller than it is wide: (2 x Height) + Width = approx. total length.
2. For an arch with the same height and width: (1.5 x Height) + Width = approx. total length.
3. To make an arch that is wider than it is tall: Width + Height = approx. total length.

What size balloons should I use?
We use 12” latex balloons. There are two keys to a successful arch:
1. All balloons must be the same size, and they shouldn’t have a “neck.”
2. Slightly underinflate the balloons.

How do I make a spiral pattern?
Two color: Use two of each color balloon in each cluster. (2 red & 2 white)
Three color: Use one each of two colors and two of the third color (you will need twice as many of the third color when purchasing balloons) (1 red, 1 black & 2 white)
Four color: Use one of each color in each cluster (1 green, 1 white, 1 yellow, 1 red)

Line the balloon cluster up by matching color to color with the cluster beneath it. Then, turn it ¼ turn and nestle it into the balloons below. With each additional cluster, rotate it to create a spiral.

Balloon Buddy

You will need:
1- 12” yellow balloon
4 -12” black balloons
Decorations

Make a cluster of four black balloons. Be sure they are the same size and smaller than the yellow balloon once inflated. Fully inflate the yellow balloon and tie it into the middle of the balloon cluster. Put the yellow balloon and then wrap or tie the fishing line onto the cluster of black balloons. Decorate to theme.
Balloon Palm Tree

You will need:
29 - 5" Yellow Balloons
4 - 5" Brown Balloons
8- 260Q Green Balloon (a 260 is a long thin balloon, the same ones used for making balloon animals and such)
Makes a 3ft table top tree

Be sure the balloons are sized correctly. Make templates for each of the following sizes: 5", 4 ½ “, 4”, 3 ½ “, 3", 2 ½”, and 2"

1- Make 7 clusters of balloons, one each in each of the diameters listed above.
2- Make a cluster of brown balloons (coconuts); size to 3 inches.
3- Take the largest cluster of balloons (5”) and tie a weight to it.
4- Use a 260Q green balloon and tie one end to the center of the bottom cluster. This will serve as the upright support.
5- Cluster by pulling the 260Q down between the ballon and going under one of the balloons in the previous cluster. Pull the 260 back up to the center and pull it snugly to hold the clusters together. Remember to stagger the balloons to nestle them together into the gap.
6- Continue adding clusters from largest to smallest and wrapping the 260Q around each previous cluster. At the top, add the brown cluster for coconuts.
7- Making the "fronds" (palm leaves): Inflate 6 of the green 260Qs, leaving about 2 inches uninflated. Before you tie the balloon, measure about 2 inches from the neck (opening) and pinch the balloon there, letting out the air and tying it off so that there is about 2 inches left hanging. Holding all 6 of the inflated 260's together, pinch and twist them together at the center. Take an uninflated 260 and tie it around the bunch at the twist. This will hold the "fronds" together securely, as well as giving you a way to tie the fronds to the top of the tree.
Resources:

For Instructions & Inspirations

www.balloonresourcecenter.com (GREAT PDF files you can download for free with excellent directions)

www.youtube.com – search for xxcrunckifiedxx; This lady has loads of videos showing basic to more complex designs. And, while she’s speaking Portugese, it’s easy to follow her as she moves through each step.

www.themepartiesnmore.com

For Supplies

www.shindigz.com

www.balloonplace.com (balloons, cool air inflators, & helium tanks)

www.balloonsupply.com (cool air inflators as well as balloons)

www.balloonwarehouse.com (Super Holey Box Balloon Sizer & Plastic balloon sizer cards)