

HOW TO PLAY MARBLES



1. **Draw a circle on the pavement in chalk.** A traditional chalk circle should be around 1m across. This will be your marble ring during the game. Draw the circle as evenly as you can to ensure a fair game.
2. **Choose a shooter marble.** Your shooter (or "taw") marble will be what you use to knock other marbles out of the circle later. Choose a marble bigger than all your other marbles so it has plenty of power. A good shooter marble should also be heavier than your others and as smoothly round as possible. Use a big marble as your shooter so it is easier to knock the other marbles out of the circle.
3. **Place ten to fifteen marbles in the center of the ring.** Space the marbles so that they evenly fill the ring, but try to place the majority nearer to the center. How many marbles you choose depends on how long a game you want. The more you place, the longer the game will last.
4. **Decide whether you want to play for keeps.** Marbles can be played either "for fair," which means that every player keeps their marbles or "for keeps." If you choose to play for keeps, marbles can be won by other players by knocking them out of the ring. Choose how you're playing in advance so you know what to expect while playing. *Never let another person trick you into playing for keeps if you are a beginner.*
5. **Decide who will go first.** Draw a line in the ground with your chalk, then stand about 3m away from your line. Have each player take turns flicking their shooter at the line. The player whose marble lands closest to the line goes first (with second, third, fourth, etc., going as follows).
6. **Kneel outside of the ring and shoot your taw marble from the ground.** Your objective is to knock marbles out of the ring.
 - a. To shoot your marble correctly, fold your thumb, pinkie, and ring finger into your palm.
 - b. Roll your pointer finger around the marble, holding it against your thumb knuckle.
 - c. When you're ready to shoot, flick your thumb out.
 - d. Use the hand you normally write with to shoot the marble.

- e. Some variations of the game give a penalty (like losing a turn) if you touch the chalk circle with your knees while shooting. Decide with your friends whether you want to play with this penalty.
7. **Grab any marbles you knocked out.** Don't wait until the end of the game to gather your marbles, as you might not remember which ones your shooter got out. Pick them up right after your turn and gather them in a neat pile. Some variations of the game state that if you got a marble out, it is still your turn. Ask the other players whether they want to follow this rule.
 8. **Leave your shooter marble in the ring if you don't knock out any marbles.** You will shoot from within the ring during your next turn (using the same shooting method as before). If your marble is moved within the ring by another player, you will play from wherever it lands. Decide with your friends whether you want to add a penalty for those who move their shooter marble by accident while it's in the ring.
 9. **Knock the other player's shooter marble out for a quick win.** If your opponent's shooter marble is within the ring, it's vulnerable to being knocked out. Players whose shooter marbles are knocked out automatically lose the game. If this person was the only other player besides yourself, you win the game. Because shooter marbles are bigger and heavier, they are generally harder to knock out than other marbles.
 10. **Continue knocking out marbles until none are left in the ring.** Unless your game ends abruptly by knocking other shooters out, this is the only way to end the game. Most marble games last between fifteen and thirty minutes.
 11. **Count up how many marbles you knocked out.** Each marble usually equals one point. If you're playing with marbles of different colors or sizes, you may want to assign points to each marble type depending on difficulty. When you've finished counting your marbles, write the number down or keep it safe in your memory.
 12. **Compare your score with your opponent.** If you chose not to play for keeps, determine another prize for the winner. Perhaps bragging rights are enough, but players often commit to each giving the winner a marble of the losers' choice. Once you've finished, play another round or wrap up the game.



An old clay marble



Plain glass marbles



'Toothpaste' marbles