

Static Electricity Can Races

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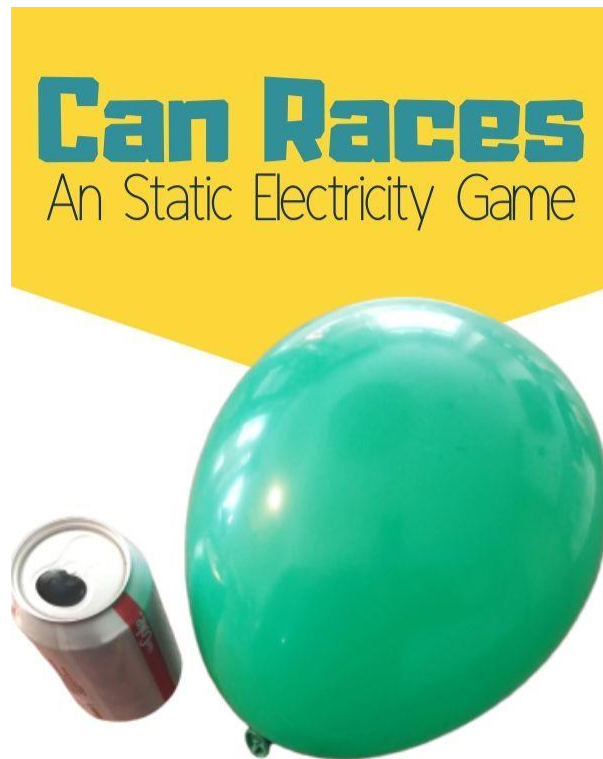
This [STEM challenge](#) allows kids to use static electricity in a fun way. Use cheap items you already have on hand and a little static magic to hold static electricity can races.

Supplies

- Empty Aluminum Can (1 per racer)
- Balloon (1 per racer)
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How To Run a Static Electricity Can Race

Before you start the static can races, rinse out and dry the aluminum cans. A can that is not dry will not roll correctly.



To start the activity, create a starting line and a finish line. The lines do not have to be far apart just far enough so kids will enjoy the activity without frustration. I made the race about 8 feet long.

Then, Line up the can behind the starting line and give each racer a balloon.

Explain that when the balloon is given an electric charge it will attract the can. It is their job to move the can from the start line to the finish line using only the balloon's charge. To charge the balloon, have kids rub it on their hair or clothing.

Race Rules

- Racers may not touch the can with the balloon or anything else to move it.
- If the can comes in contact with any object including the balloon the player must return their can to the start line and start over. The one exception being if a child's can bumps into another child's can.

Ready, set, go start some static electricity can races!

How Does this Static Electricity Trick Work?

When you rub a balloon on your hair or clothing it gives the balloon extra electrons creating a negative static charge. When an object has a negative charge, it repels electrons from other objects while attracting its protons. In this case the can is so lightweight that the balloon's negative charge was strong enough to move the can from point A to point B!