

Caring Clowns International



Balloon Twisting

Two Ends of a Balloon – Balloons have a mouth (the open end of the balloon- where you knot it) and a tail (the closed end).

Inflating a Balloon – We suggest using a “double action” hand pump. They are inexpensive, easy to carry and fast. Double action means that the pump puts air in to the balloon in both the up and down strokes of the pump.

Hold the mouth of the balloon onto the tip of the pump, and pump the cylinder until you get the desired inflated length.

Burping – After you have inflated a balloon, let out a “squeak” of air. This is called “burping” a balloon. This softens the balloon, leaves you enough tail and will help prevent surprise popping.

As you get used to making different creations, you will see that different items (animals, hat parts, flowers) require a different softness and a different tail length to complete successfully. Generally speaking, the more twists in a creation the softer the balloon needs to be to twist it and the longer the tail needs to be. Judging this comes from experience in creating different pieces.

NOTE: Each time you twist the balloon, you will notice that the tail is shortened as the inflated part of the balloon expands because of the twists. So, always remember to leave enough uninflated balloon at the tail to allow you to twist as much as you need to for your creation.

The two most common mistakes that beginner twisters make are: not keeping the balloon soft enough to make all the twists, and not leaving enough tail for the creation to be completed.

Knotting a Balloon – After you have blown up and burped the balloon, it is time to tie the open (mouth) end with a knot.

Wrap the mouth end of the balloon around your index and middle fingers. This creates a “ridge area.” Use the index finger of your other hand to fold the mouth of the balloon through the ridge area. Pull it through, “snapping” the knot into place.

Twisting and Holding – It is imperative to always twist the balloon in the same direction, and to hold the twisted sections. Otherwise it will all unravel.

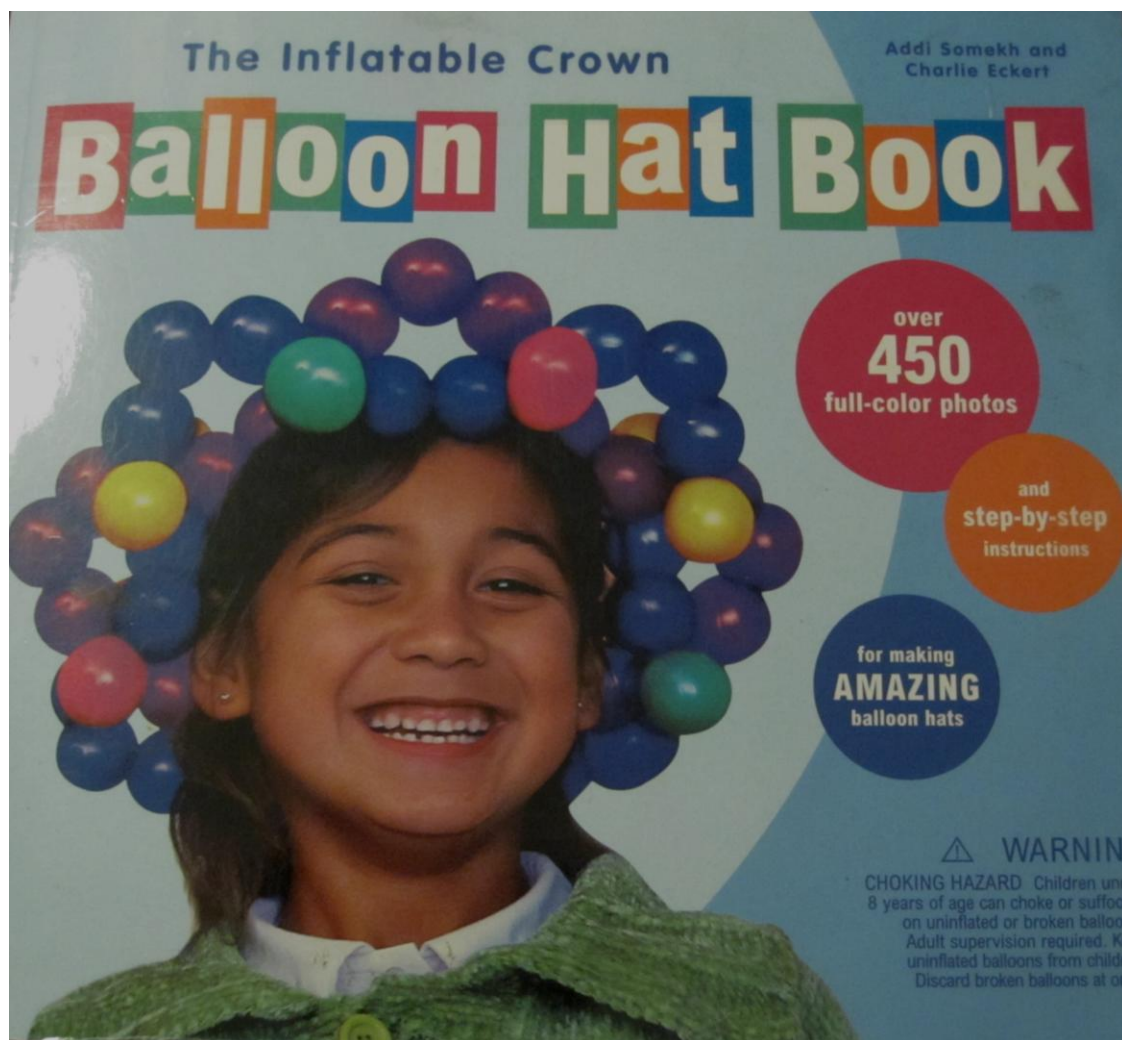
For more complicated creations with many twists, you will need to tuck some of the twisted portions of the balloon under your arm. For simpler creations, you may be able to hold the twisted sections in the hand not doing the twisting. (This will all work it self out as you get used to making different creations.)

Basic DO's and DON'Ts

- Store your balloons in a cool, dry place away form the sun. They will last longer. (Balloons become opaque and deteriorate in the sun and in high heat.)
- Do not chew on balloons or put them in your mouth.
- *CAUTION PARENTS* - Let parents know to not allow their children to put balloons in their mouths. (If a balloon pops in one's mouth and gets inhaled, the latex fragments will potentially lodge in the lung and can cause suffocation.)
- When twisting tight balloons (such as flower pedals), put the balloon off to your side to twist – away from your face and those of others – just in case the balloon pops.
- Do not put any special powders or other materials inside balloons.
- Don't blow up sculpting balloons with helium.
- Do not use regular balloons for your creations. They are not meant for twisting and turning.
- Do not use alcohol felt markers to draw on balloons. These markers will eat through balloons. (Most use "Sharpie" markers.)
- Pick up all burst and waste balloons and balloon pieces. This is a safety measure, so children and small animals do not eat and swallow them. It is also a courtesy to not leave balloon waste where you have been working.

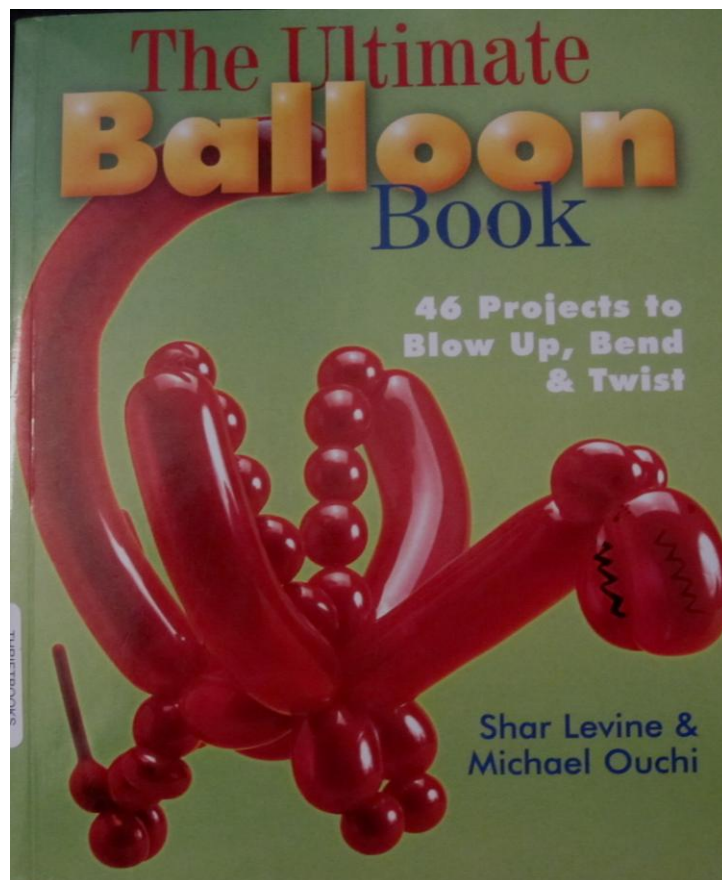
Balloon Suppliers – The standard and best manufacturer of sculpting balloons is Qualatex. A good competitively priced source for balloons is *Balloons To You* **www.btydirect.com** (view supplies on the site, then call 1-800-636-4887 to order)

Books on Ballooning - There are many good books available on balloon twisting. Two of our favorites are below.



The Inflatable Balloon Hat Book
By Addi Somekh and Charlie Eckert

(ISBN 0-8118-2994-4)



The Ultimate Balloon Book
By Shar Levine & Michael Ouchi

(ISBN 0-8069-2959-6)