



Make your own Neolithic carved stone ball

Almost 400 of these balls have been found, most of them in Scotland, including five from Skara Brae. Most of them are around 7cm in diameter. Almost half of them have six knobs, though some have less and some have more. Some were decorated with spirals and other patterns.

No-one really knows what these balls were for, but here are some of the ideas archaeologists have had:

- they were used as weapons – maybe swung round in a leather strap then flung
- they were used as balls in a game

- they were weights
- they were used to help in the construction of stone circles somehow
- they were used in rituals of some sort



ONE

Take a lump of clay about the size of a tennis ball and roll it until it's nice and round.



TWO

Next, work out where your knobs will be. If you want to have six knobs, you will need three pairs of knobs, with one knob on either side of the ball, like the sides of a dice. Make six smaller ball of clay and press them on.



THREE

Now you can smooth them out with your finger or a modelling tool and then decorate them however you like. The picture shows just one idea for decoration.



FOUR

There, your balls are finished. They are lovely to hold in your hand, and it is very tempting to roll them along the ground or play bowls with them. Once the clay dries you can even paint them.

What do you think? Do you have any other ideas?

You never know - maybe you could be right!



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Heart of Neolithic Orkney
inscribed on the World
Heritage List in 1999