

Blubber Gloves

SUGGESTED AGE:

All ages (adult assistance may be required)

Marine mammals—like whales and seals—have a thick layer of fat under their skin, known as blubber. Blubber helps animals that live in the water stay warm, float better, and even store food energy for later! In this activity, make a blubber glove to see how “whale” this adaptation works, even in the coldest water!

WHAT YOU’LL NEED

- Large plastic ziplock bags (quart or ½ gallon size)
- Shortening (like Crisco—the solid white kind in a can, not liquid oil)
- Duct tape
- Bucket, bin, or ice chest
- Ice (enough to fill container about ½ way full)

STEP 1

Fill one ziplock bag about halfway with shortening.

STEP 2

Take a second bag and turn it inside out, then place it inside the first bag, over the shortening.

STEP 3

Use the zip locking strip to seal the two bags together.

STEP 4

Use duct tape to secure the seal—cover the opening where the two bags meet by folding it over the top.

STEP 5

Fill a large container with ice and water (about $\frac{2}{3}$ of the way).

STEP 6

Stick your hand inside the blubber glove and submerge it in the ice water. Make sure not to go too deep, or water may go over the edge and fill the glove.

STEP 7

Try the same thing with a hand that is NOT protected by the blubber glove. How much longer are you able to stay in the cold water with the help of your blubber?

