



Egg Carton Hermit Crab

While most crabs have hard exoskeletons to protect themselves from predators, hermit crabs have soft, curled abdomens. To keep their soft body safe, hermit crabs rely on hollow objects, like empty snail shells, for shelter.

Build a home for a hermit crab with an egg carton, cotton ball, and your imagination!

Materials

Glue
1 egg carton
1 cotton ball
Markers or paint
Googly eyes
Pipe cleaners
Scissors

Directions

1. **Cut out** 1 cup from an egg carton, then **cut** out a semicircle on one side. This will be where your hermit crab's head will poke out.
 - a. No egg carton? No problem! Use the bottom of a paper cup instead or use a paper tube and fold one end so that the "top" of the hermit crab's shell is closed.



2. **Glue** a cotton ball to the inside of the egg carton cup so that most of the cotton ball pokes out from the semicircle. This will be the head of your hermit crab.
3. **Cut** pipe cleaners so you have six, 2-3 inch pieces. **Glue** 3 pipe cleaners on each side of the cotton ball on the inside of the egg carton. **Bend** the end of the pipe cleaner to make an upside-down U shape. These are your hermit crab's legs. Like all crabs, hermit crabs have five pairs of legs. Hermit crabs use the first pair of legs as pincers, and the second and third pairs to walk around. Their shorter fourth and fifth pairs of legs are tucked away inside their shell, helping hold onto their mobile home.
4. **Color** your cotton ball "head" and egg carton "shell" with markers or paint. Most hermit crabs depend on empty snail shells to protect their soft bodies. What color shell will your hermit crab have?
5. **Glue** a pair of googly eyes to the front of the cotton ball. Your hermit crab is complete!
6. *Optional:* Snail shells come in all kinds of shapes, colors, and sizes. Add a second egg carton cup to make an extra-tall shell for your hermit crab, or use craft supplies to add a barnacle hitchhiker. You can even add some craft moss to act as algae growing on the shell! Use the image below as inspiration, and enjoy your new hermit crab!

