



Olympic construction challenge

Will you be among the lucky ones attending the Winter Olympics, or will you be watching them on TV? Paving the way to make the Vancouver games possible took plenty of time and crafty engineering, though most of us will never see the work behind the Olympic machine. One of the largest gondola projects in North America was recently completed in Whistler, where Olympic skiers will be competing. The Peak 2 Peak gondola links the tops of two mountains. It uses 27 km of cables, holds the world record for the longest span between two towers (3 km) and the highest point above the valley floor (435 m). If you like to invent and build things, you will fit right in to this month's construction challenge. Just obtain a building permit (permission!) before you start.

The Kitchen Gondola

Use your imagination to build a gondola to link the kitchen counter to a table or a desk that is three to four metres away.

You will need:

* *LEGO™ blocks or similar*

* *string*

* *tape*

* *paper clips*

* *foam or paper cup*

* *thread or fishing line*

- Use the blocks to build four sturdy towers about 20cm in height; towers can also be varying heights. Each tower needs to have a base. Or for more stability, place two towers on each base.
- Place two towers at your start point (the counter), and place the remaining two towers at the end point (table or desk) – tape each in place.
- Tape the string to the countertop, link the tops of each tower with the string (tape in place), and tape the end of the string to the end tabletop.
- Hook a paper clip to through the upper edge of each side of the cup.
- Tape some thread to the paper clip.
- Use the thread to move the gondola.

Do you want to design the future? Take part in family space workshops at the Canada Science and Technology Museum. Families who register for the March 5, April 9 and 23rd workshops construct engineering models to take home. Registration for Summer Camps (ages 8 to 12) begins February 16. Call 613-991-3053 for fee information and to register.

This article originally appeared in the February 2010 issue of Capital Parent Newspaper.