

The Way Things Go

This supremely demented documentary by two German artists is greatly appreciated by nerds for the amazing chemistry and physics required to keep self-generated chaos on track. Science teachers play the video for lessons in equilibrium and causation, while artists roll the film at parties for an irresistible and mesmerizing spectacle. I like it for the illustration of the never-ending chain reaction that seems to take over the world. A Mr. Wizard science demonstration that takes on its own life.

—KK

From the back cover:

"Inside a warehouse, artists Peter Fischli and David Weiss build an enormous, precarious structure 100 feet long made out of common household items—tea kettles, tires, old shoes, balloons, wooden ramps, etc. Then, with fire, water, gravity, and chemistry, they create a spectacular chain reaction, a self destructing performance of physical interactions, chemical reactions, and precisely-crafted chaos worthy of Rube Goldberg or Alfred Hitchcock."

The Way Things Go

Peter Fischli and David Weiss

VHS video, 30 minutes

\$20

First Run Features

800/229-8575

firstrunfeatures.com



Silly Putty — By the Pound

Silly Putty, normally sold in itsy-bitsy dabs in expensive egg-shaped containers, is a lot of fun. Rolled up by the pound it becomes...well...very silly. Ten pounds of silly putty is enough to transfer a whole page of comics at once, or to make a humongous superball, or to lighten up an entire boardroom. Nothing dispels the humdrum like a tub of this stuff. Or hand some out to everyone at your next PTA meeting. Don't ask why, just say Dow Corning Dilatant Compound in bulk please.

—KK

Dow Corning Dilatant Compound

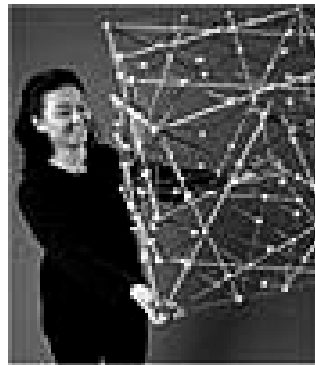
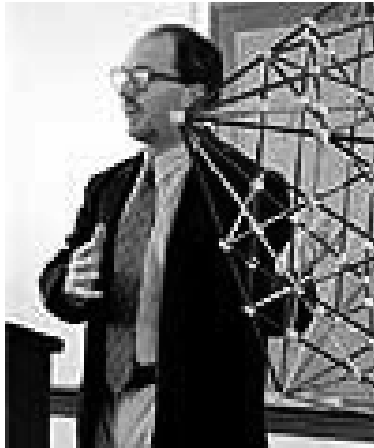
\$16 per pound

From:

Funstuffusa

Fax 209/844-9892

www.funstuffusa.com



Zomes are used to teach symmetry, projections, geometry, tilings and mosaics, architectural space frames and truss structures, crystallography, and chemical structures.

The minimum kit makes a cubic structure which can be dunked into soap water to generate soap films.



Zome System

Geodesic structures have always been tricky to mess around with because the vertices have to be precise, which often equals expensive. This reasonably priced system provides highly machined plastic connectors and sufficient highly engineered struts in various lengths to build scores of geodesic forms. The possibilities of shape are open-ended so that even small kids can build with it (struts are color-coded to ease assembly), and yet logical and complex enough that the same components can be used in a high school math or even college engineering classes. They also offer a selection of lesson plans built around this research toy. I had my first "aha" experience of geodesics while building with it: crystals are geodesic!

—KK

Zome System

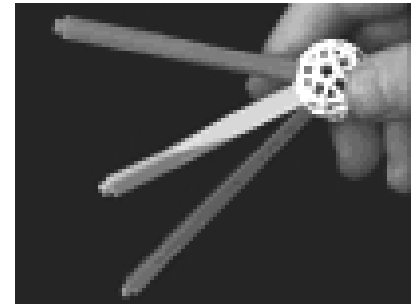
Kits range in price from \$10 for a 72-piece starter kit to \$125 for a set with almost 1,000 pieces. Or you can buy 'em by the piece.

Zometools

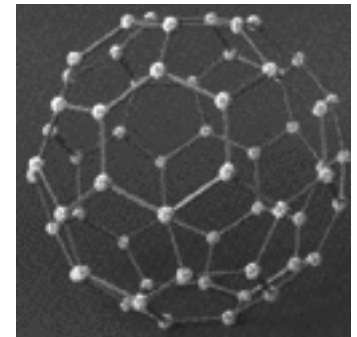
1526 South Pearl Street, Denver, CO 80211

303/733-2880, 888/966-3386

www.zometool.com



Holes in the connector balls are shape coded to only accept the proper length strut at the correct angle.



A truncated icosahedron, otherwise known as a Buckyball.

Kid Pix

Still my favorite graphics program. It's more fun than Kellogg's Sugar Frosted Flakes! Why can't Photoshop make cool sounds? Someday I'd like to do an entire comic using Kid Pix; it's that good.

—Scott McCloud

Kid Pix Deluxe 3rd Edition

Macintosh or Windows

2000, \$30

The Learning Company, www.learningcompany.com

Or, for example, Amazon

