

## Chapter Eight

# Dominoes

Dominoes are easy to make, their cost is negligible, and they are a very versatile toy or game. Bought table games are often far too difficult to play, but simple picture dominoes are comparatively easy.

Social interaction with another player is important; through this children learn to wait their turn, to win gracefully, and also to lose. The nice thing is that everyone can join in and have an equal chance of winning.

### Time for Manufacture

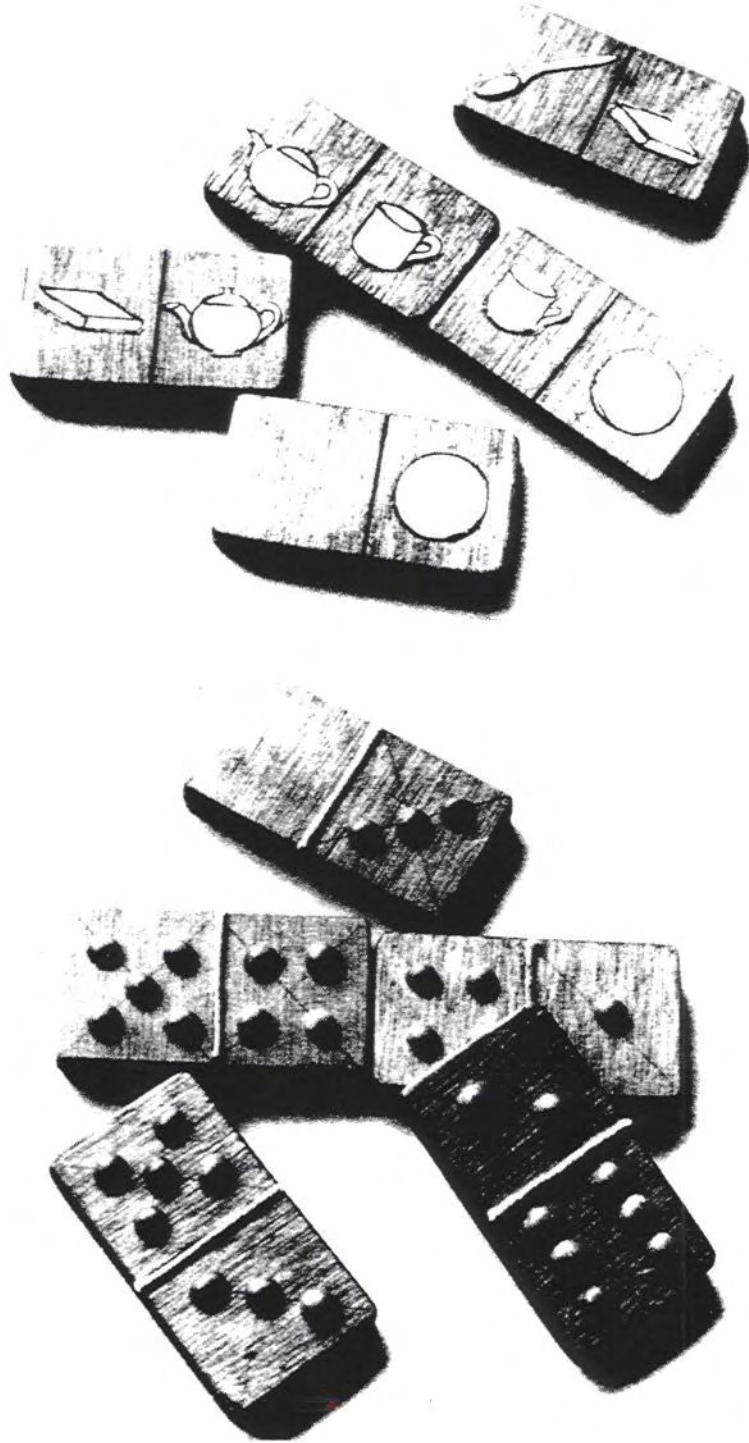
Around 2 hours for the wooden version (matchbox dominoes can be made in 45 minutes).

### Materials Required

*Do-it-yourself store.* Strips of wood, plywood, hardboard, carpenter's wood glue, clear varnish

*Miscellaneous.* Stiff cardboard, pictures, sheets of self-adhesive spots, match boxes

*Tools.* Back saw, T square, C-clamps, utility knife, steel rule, sanding block, old boards for cutting on. *Note:* These tools are not required for the simplest kind of dominoes.



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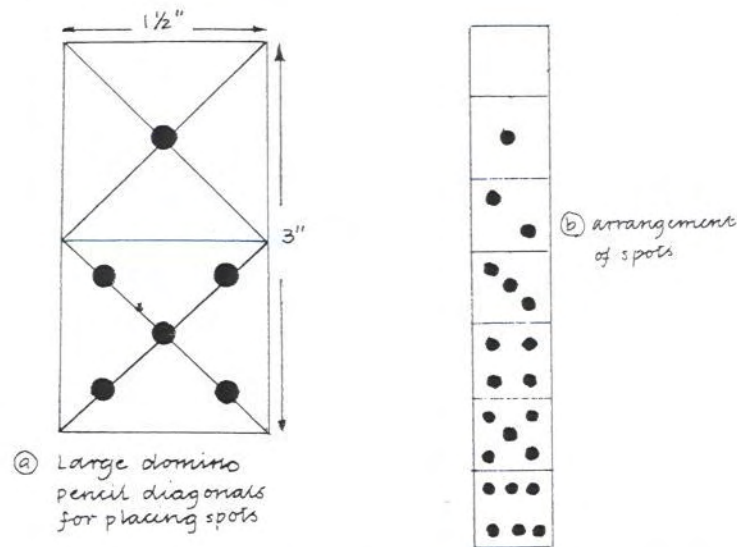
# MAKING THE DOMINOES

## Cardboard Dominoes

Take a sheet of stiff cardboard and draw out 28 rectangles measuring  $1\frac{1}{2}'' \times 3''$  each (the sheet will have to measure  $10\frac{1}{2}'' \times 12''$  in all). This will make four rows of seven dominoes. Draw a line through the center of each domino with a felt-tipped pen.

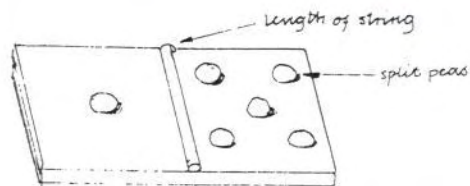
Place the cardboard on a cutting board and, using the steel rule and the utility knife, cut out the dominoes ((a) in the Figure 8-1);

Figure 8-1. Dominoes.



g	d	b	f	c	e	a	f	a	c	d	e	b	d
g	g	g	g	g	g	g	f	f	f	f	f	f	e
b	c	e	a	a	c	b	d	a	c	c	b	a	a
e	e	e	e	d	d	d	d	c	c	b	b	b	a

(c) pairing diagram for set of dominoes





Select seven pictures with eight copies of each. Stick two pictures on each domino in different combinations, using the pairing diagram as a guide (c). Instead of pictures you can use spots (b) or colors on the dominoes.

To make them more durable you can cover them with clear, self-adhesive plastic.

### Wooden Dominoes

1. Using a Wood Strip. Buy some  $\frac{3}{4}$ "  $\times$   $1\frac{1}{2}$ " strip (called "1  $\times$  2 inch"). You will need 7 feet in all. Mark out the strip into 3" lengths using a T-square to get the corners right. Clamp the strip to a table top or work bench and saw off 28 lengths. Sand down pieces until they are very smooth to the touch. Paste on pictures, colors, shapes, or dots according to pairing diagram (c) and draw a dividing line in the center of each domino. Finish with clear varnish.

2. Using Hardboard or Plywood. Measure out board into rectangles measuring  $1\frac{1}{4}$ "  $\times$   $2\frac{1}{2}$ ". For 28 dominoes you will need a piece of board or wood measuring  $8\frac{3}{4}$ "  $\times$  10". The board needs to be at least  $\frac{3}{16}$ " thick. Clamp the board to table or work bench and saw off the pieces. Finish as for (1) above.

### Matchbox Dominoes

These are not as durable as the wooden dominoes, but they are so easy to make that you can have several different sets of games for next to nothing.

Collect 28 matchboxes and glue the drawers into the lid with household cement. Either paint the boxes or cover with paper. Choose seven little pictures, obtain eight copies of each, and paste onto the pieces according to pairing diagram (b). Draw a line down the center of each piece and finish with clear self-adhesive plastic.

### Dominoes for the Visually Handicapped

Dominoes can easily be made with raised dots so that they can be felt by the visually handicapped, while remaining an attractive set for anybody to use. Wooden dominoes should be made as described above (1 or 2). Draw dividing lines on the pieces and sand and varnish. When the varnish is dry, pencil in the diagonals [as in (a) in Figure 8-1], pencil in a light spot for each dot [see (b) for arrangement of spots and (c) for pairing diagram.] For number dominoes 0 = a, 1 = b, 2 = c, 3 = d, 4 = e, 5 = f, 6 = g. Buy a small quantity of split peas. Put a dab of glue on each spot and press on a split pea [see (d)]. Finally, glue a length of string along the center of each domino.

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## USING THE TOY

Once your child is able to recognize pictures of objects and is starting to cooperate in games with you, she will be ready for the simplest version of picture dominoes.

The nice thing about dominoes is that once the game has been learned (and it is one of the easiest to learn), variations can be introduced to facilitate new skills at different levels of development. Color and shape recognition, number skills and language skills can all be encouraged by means of a variety of sets of dominoes. Also, as it is a game of chance, anyone can win (not just the cleverest player, as in chess).

Here are some suggestions for sets of dominoes:

### Color Matching

Make a set of dominoes using the following colors: red, yellow, green, blue, orange, black and white.

Stage 1. Play a simple game of dominoes where all that is required is correct color matching to place your piece.

Stage 2. When it is your turn, name the colors quite naturally as you place them in position or look for them, but do not insist that the child does the same. Children are great imitators and will probably start to copy your naming of the colors when they are ready: in the meantime they are learning to link the name with the color on your pieces.

### Shape Matching

Make a set of dominoes using the following shapes: circle, square, triangle, rectangle, star, crescent, and ellipse (egg shape). As before, play the game at first without naming the shapes, but when the child is very familiar with the game, start naming some of the shapes when it is your turn.

### Picture Matching and Language Games

Stage 1. Make a set of dominoes with seven pictures of common objects (see the section on Picture Cubes). Examples: chair, spoon, cup, bed, tree, cat, shoe.

Stage 2. Make a set of dominoes with seven action pictures (see section on Picture Cubes). Examples: eating, sitting, standing, skipping, drinking, sleeping, drawing.

Stage 3. Make a set of dominoes that can be described by a simple sentence—for example, BOY EATING, GIRL EATING, DOG EATING, BOY SITTING, GIRL



SITTING, DOG SITTING, DOG STANDING. This is a more difficult game than the first two, as the child has to attend to two things (the actor and the action) in order to match the pictures correctly.

All these versions should be played first as simple matching games before any language is introduced. Wait until the child is very familiar with the game before bringing in the descriptions or names of the pictures. Even when you do, remember not to demand any words from your child. It is simply a case of *you* naming the pictures as you choose a domino or place it in position. For instance, in Stage 3 dominoes, when it is your turn and you are scanning your pieces, you could say, "I need a DOG SITTING; that won't do, it is a BOY SITTING."

### Number Dominoes

The more conventional game of dominoes with patterns of spots is excellent for number recognition and matching. As before, wait until your child is both very familiar and very good at the matching game before you attempt to name the numbers when it is your turn.