# Marine Mold Fossils

**It’s time to go to the beach! The warmer weather is here, which means the chance to transform a simple beach day into a fun scientific adventure! Making Beach Fossils is a unique opportunity for children to learn about marine fossils while getting outdoors, exploring local aquatic life, and engaging in a creative sensory experience.**

## MATERIALS

**Clay or Play Dough * Seashells * Rolling Pin * Parchment Paper *Sand**

## STEPS

1) Go to the beach! Explore the shore and look for different kinds of seashells.
2) Collect your shells! Choose 6 or so different seashells to take home. Make sure they are empty and not housing marine critters.
3) Grab your sand! Collect a few tablespoons of sand to take home.
4) Mix your dough! Kneed together your dough and sand until the sand is well-distributed.
5) Roll out your dough! Place a piece of parchment paper on the table. Grab a chunk of clay/dough and place it atop the parchment paper. (This will ensure your fossils don't stick to the table surface.) Use a rolling pin to flatten it into a pancake about ¼ inch thick. This can be purchased or homemade dough (click HERE for an easy salt dough recipe).
6) Make your fossils! Carefully press each fossil into a flat part of the dough, ensuring it indents deeply enough to form an impression but not so deeply that it pushes straight through the dough. Carefully remove each shell from the dough to see your design!


***Special thanks to The Chaos and the Clutter for use of their***

# Opportunities for Expanded Learning

When we think of fossils, we often picture dinosaur bones. But there are several different kinds of fossils, including something called Mold Fossils, which are what we are making with this activity. A mold fossil is created when an organism like a shell or a plant is buried in sediment, then decomposes, leaving behind a hollow impression in the sediment in the shape of the organism. The impression is the mold. Marine mold fossils come from the hard parts of a marine organism, like a shell or a skeleton, going through this process, and then leaving their imprint behind. It preserves the shape and details of the original organism's hard surfaces.

***Learn more about the DIFFERENT TYPES OF FOSSILS AND HOW THEY FORM with LaFountaine of Knowledge HERE!***

***Take a closer look at HOW FOSSIL MOLDS AND CASTS DEVELOP with the National Park Service HERE!***

***Go on an adventure to FIND MARINE FOSSILS IN SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA at some of these promising locations!***

**Fossil Reef Park** * **Irvine Ranch Open Space** * **Anza-Borrego Desert State Park** * **Sharktooth Hill**

**Arboretum At Home Nature Adventures sponsored in part by EDISON INTERNATIONAL**