

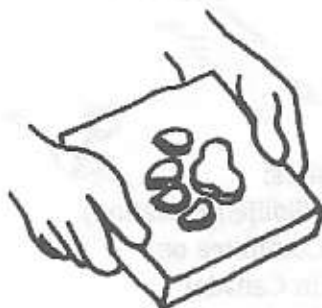
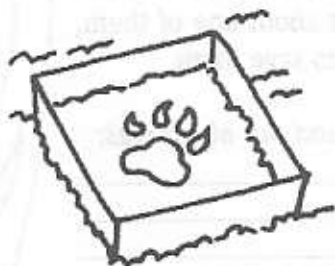
## Making a Plaster Cast of Animal Tracks



Make a cast of an animal track.

### You need:

- a small box or bag of plaster of Paris
- a mixing bowl
- a stick for stirring
- a water bottle with water
- a few cardboard strips.



Plaster of Paris, also called patching plaster, can be found in most hardware stores. For a mixing bowl, use a flexible plastic dish, such as a clean margarine container. After you're finished you don't have to wash it out. Just let the plaster harden, then crack it out by squeezing the dish.

When you have found a track, put a 2 cm high cardboard strip around it like a collar. An easy way to make the collar is to cut a milk carton into 2 cm wide rings. The collar will keep the plaster from running all over the ground.

You'll have to experiment with how much plaster different size tracks will need. For the average dog track, start by putting 10 teaspoons of plaster in the mixing bowl. Slowly add water and stir until the plaster looks like grey pancake batter or cake mix. Carefully pour the plaster into the track and let it harden. You can also practise by making a track in playdough and pouring plaster into the track.

Once the plaster is set, you can lift the cast off the track. Brush off any dirt and you'll see what the foot of the animal that made the track looked like. Notice the shape, where the toes are, and any claw marks. Can you identify what animal made the track?