

Exploring Oil Spills



Every year, millions of gallons of oil end up in our oceans. This is a problem that engineering companies and environmentalists work to resolve in order to protect our oceans and the wildlife that lives in them.

Your mission: Your engineering company has been tasked with cleaning up a major oil spill disaster. **Fill a container**

with at least 2 cups of water and ½ cup of vegetable oil, canola oil or olive oil. (If you want a bigger spill, double the quantities!) Then, use household materials to clean up as much of the oil from the water as possible. This might get messy, so we recommend doing the experiment outside!

Before getting started...

- **Consider doing some research.** Use this website if you want to get more information into how oil spills happen and how we can clean them up. (<https://ocean.si.edu/conservation/pollution/gulf-oil-spill>)
- **Create a plan.** Take a look at the attached sheets to map out how to best clean up your oil spill.
- **Want an extra challenge?** If you have any feathers lying around the house, add them to your oil spill and then think: How can you remove the oil from the feathers?
- **A quick tip!** To make the oil easier to see (and to look more like crude oil!), mix it with cocoa powder before adding it to the water.