Mysterious figures lurking in the shadows, slipping by undetected to strike without warning. That’s the well-earned reputation of Japan’s ninjas, professional spies dating back as far as the 12th century.

Ninjas—from ninjitsu, “art of the shadow”—passed their skills from generation to generation. They spent years training to become masters of stealth and silence, learning to control body, mind, and spirit. Ninjas were often employed to gather information or weaken an enemy.

What can you learn from Ninjas? How about strength, focus and stealth? This set of activities can be broken up and used individually or compiled together into a Ninja Obstacle Course.

NINJA STAR OR SHURIKEN
(“SWORD HIDDEN IN THE HAND”)

Ninjas used the easy-to-carry stars primarily to slash or disorient an enemy. A shuriken is barely visible when thrown, making it difficult to dodge.

While real Ninja stars have very sharp blades and can be lethal, this one is simply cardboard and can be used for target practice.

WHAT YOU’LL NEED

» Ninja star template (provided in this packet)
» Tin foil
» Cardboard or cardstock
» Tape
» Scissors
» Pennies (optional)
» Target (provided in this packet on page 4)
**STEP 1**
Cut out this template:

**STEP 2**
Trace the template onto a piece of cardboard or cardstock and then cut it out. Optional: Tape a penny onto either side of the Ninja star to give it some weight.

**STEP 3**
Cover the Ninja star in tin foil (tape down edges if necessary).

**STEP 4**
Cut out the target (on the next page) and tape onto a tree or back of a chair.

**STEP 5**
Stand 4-6 feet away and try your hand at throwing your star to try to hit the center of the target. Optional: keep score using the numbers on the target.
BLOW GUN OR FUKIYA

The Japanese Ninjas would use this blow gun (tube or pipe) as a weapon to shoot darts (sometimes dipped in poison) at their enemy. The tube or pipe has a duel function in that if a Ninja had to hide underwater, it would help them to breathe while submerged.

WHAT YOU’LL NEED

» Thick plastic straw or 1/4 inch PVC pipe (cut to 18 inches long).
» Q-tips
» Feathers (optional)
» Tape
» Permanent markers (ex. Sharpies)
» Target (provided in this packet on page 4)
» Talcum powder (optional)
» Person dressed in black as a moving target (optional)

STEP 1
Decorate your pipe or straw using the Japanese Characters in this packet on page 6 (optional)

STEP 2
Tape small feathers (one or two) to one end of your Q-tip darts (optional).

STEP 3
Tape the provided target to a tree or the back of a chair.

STEP 4
Dip non-feathered end of Q-tip dart into some talcum powder (optional). Insert dart (powder tip first) to the end of your pipe or straw.

STEP 5
Stand 4-6 feet from your target and blow hard in one swift breath to shoot the Q-tip at the target.

STEP 6 (OPTIONAL)
Keep score and use a person dressed in black as a moving target.
THROWING STAR AND BLOW GUN TARGET
NINJA MOVES

Watch the Spy From Home Video to see examples of each of these moves:

DEEP GRASS RABBIT WALK
(SHIN-SO-TOH-HO)

Place the back of each of your hands under the ball of each foot in a bent over position then silently move forward. This takes a lot of practice and lots of stamina.

FOX WALK
(KITSUNE-BASHIRI)

Crouch down on all fours and raise your hands to their fingertips and your feet in tip toe (raising your heels). Scamper as silently as possible. You’ll need to strengthen your fingers and toes for this one!

FULL BODY CONDITIONING

Get in a push up or plank position with your hands as clenched fists (knuckles down). Then raise your heels up and down.

VISUAL WORKOUT

Light a candle or use a small flashlight. Stare at the flame or light for 10 or more seconds to train your eyes to focus. You can also go from a brightly lit room to a dark room to train your eyes to adjust.
The Ninja made their own 48 letters with a combination of parts of Chinese characters. These would be used for secret codes. You can add these as decoration to your blow gun (Fukiya) or use a paint pen to add them to a black arm or headband.