

Darwin Twine Ball Museum

String Stats

A look at the world's largest balls of string.

Stats

Rank	Current Location	Where made	Creator(s)	Diameter Circ. Weight	Estimated Length	If unwound, would stretch to	Type of string used	Years in the building	Held the record from	Number of "Weird AI" songs composed in its honor	Winding method	Tips from creator
1.	Branson, MO	Valley View, TX	J.C. Payne	13' 2.5" 41' 6" More than 12,000 lbs.	600 miles	Darwin, MN	29 types of nylon binder twine	1989-1993	1994-present	0	A pulley system. The ball was supported on an oil drill bearing so it could spin while string was added.	"What you'd want to do is find someone who keeps cows. When they feed them hay in the winter, they just cut the twine off those big bales and throw it away."
2.	Darwin, MN	Darwin, MN	Francis Johnson	12' 9" 40' 17,400 lbs.	1144 miles	The Grand Canyon	Sisal (baling twine)	1950-1979	1969-1993	1	Railroad jacks were used to roll the ball and a block and tackle enabled Mr. Johnson to wind over the top.	Deceased. Nephew Harlan Johnson offers: "You'll have to be prepared to be totally dedicated to that project. Try to keep it indoors or covered. If I were going to do one, I'd want to mount it on casters so it could be rotated instead of rolling it around the yard."
3.	Cawker City, KS	Cawker City, KS	Started by Frank Stoeber. Cawker City residents add twine during the town's annual fair.	Across middle: 12' 9" Top to bottom: About 6' 6". 40' 16,426 lbs.	1080 miles	North Battleford, Saskatchewan	Sisal (baling twine)	1953 - present	Has not yet held the record.	0	Used to be rolled with a tractor. Currently twine is wound onto spools for welding cable, which are then raised up on poles and walked around the ball, unwinding as they go.	Deceased. From cousin (and current winder) Harold Reling: "Make sure you do it with a few friends, and wrap two or three strands on at a time. That way you don't have to walk around so much."