Guido Verhoef (left) was the lead artist behind the record-breaking largest balloon zoo on the previous page. While an entire zoo might be a bit ambitious for a beginner to attempt, here he shows you how to start with a balloon parrot. Guido recommends using your finger-widths (i.e., across the knuckles) as a measuring tool to make the model. That way, you’ll always have your own ruler to hand!

1. Inflate two different-coloured 260-size modelling balloons (we went with red and blue), leaving about three finger-widths – roughly 5.5 cm (2 in) – uninflated. Knot them together with the two “nozzles” at the end.

2. Twist a blue bubble of about four finger-widths long, and a slightly smaller red bubble. Now, twist the two balloons together to create the bird’s head.

3. Next, create a bubble eight finger-widths long in each balloon, and twist them together to begin the body section.

4. Twist an eight-finger-width bubble in the red balloon. Bring the bubble up and wrap it around the “neck” to secure it in place. Then create a second bubble of the same length in the red balloon.

5. Bring the red bubble you just made down. With your other hand, hold the base of the main body section (as shown above).

6. For the parrot’s perch, hold the end of the blue balloon and loop it over the bird’s head to form a ring. Then, tie off the uninflated end at the bottom of the body.

7. To complete the parrot’s body, twist all the segments together until they look like below. There should be two lengths of balloon remaining: the blue one will be much longer than the red.

8. Tie a knot in any uninflated part of the red balloon and use scissors to snap off the excess; the tail can be as long as you like. You could even add in an extra balloon or two for a more showy tail!

9. Inflate a white 260 balloon to about six finger-widths long, and make a knot at both ends. Twist this bubble midway to form two “eyeballs” (A). Fold back one of the bubbles and knot the ends together (B); cut off the remaining uninflated part. Secure the eyes on to the head with the nozzles, then use a black marker pen/felt tip to draw on the pupils (C).

10. You could call me Polly… but Pop-py is probably more apt!