

Fitness: It's Free Life Insurance by Curt Hinson, Ph.D.
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Warm-Up Activities

Follow Your Partner

Objective: Aerobic endurance; cooperation; locomotor movements.

Equipment: Music

How to play: The children form pairs. One child is designated the "leader" and the other child is the "follower." When the music begins, the leader moves around the area using different locomotor movements as the other child follows, imitating the movements of the leader. The leader changes locomotor movements and/or directions whenever he/she chooses. The follower must do the same. After a short period, the partners switch roles and continue.

Hoop Warm-up

Objective: Aerobic endurance; flexibility; agility.

Equipment: 20-30 hoops; music.

How to play: Spread the hoops out randomly around the area. The children are scattered around the area as well. When the music begins, the children move around the area and perform the following tasks:

- Move around the area without touching any hoops.
- Step inside as many hoops as possible with one foot; two feet at the same time; one foot than the other.
- Touch inside as many hoops as possible with: one hand; two hands; one hand & one foot; two hands & two feet; one hand & two feet; one elbow; two elbows; one knee; two knees; one elbow & one knee; your buttocks; two elbows; two knees; two knees & two hands; etc.
- Jump inside a hoop, lift it up and over your head, and then place it back on the floor.
- Put your hand inside a hoop and run one time around the outside of the hoop.
- Jump in and out of each hoop two times then move on to another hoop.
- Do everything above with a partner.
- Do everything above while dribbling a ball.
- Make up your own movements as you move around the hoops.
- Be creative...the list is endless!

Imaginary Rope Jumping

Objective: Creativity; aerobic endurance; muscular strength & endurance; coordination; agility.

Equipment: Music

How to play: Everyone stands in one large circle with an "imaginary" jump rope in their hands. Start the music and begin jumping. Use your imagination and create crazy ways to jump or the teacher can lead a routine. Try any trick you want...you can't mess up!

Partner Run & Walk

Objective: Aerobic endurance

Equipment: Cones

Set-up: The cones are placed in a large oval.

How to play: The students form pairs. The pairs of students are scattered around the outside of the oval (partners standing next to each other). On the signal to begin, Partner 1 begins running counter-clockwise around the outside of the oval, while Partner 2 begins walking in the same direction. Partner 1 remains running until she catches Partner 2. When this occurs, Partner 2 begins running and Partner 1 walks. The activity continues with the partners taking turns running and walking for the allotted time.

Safety: Warn students to watch out for others as they run around the cones.

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Pass & Chase

Objective: Tossing & catching; cooperation; aerobic endurance; agility.

Equipment: One soft (foam-type) ball for every two players; music.

How to play: The children form pairs. Each pair has a ball. The game begins with the partners tossing the ball back and forth to each other. When the music begins, the tag game begins. The partner with the ball is "IT" and must tag the partner with the ball (no throwing). Once a successful tag is made, the "tagger" simply drops the ball on the ground and quickly gets away from their partner. The partner now must pick up the ball and chase the other partner, attempting to tag him/her. This continues until the music goes off. The music going off is the signal to begin tossing and catching again. When the music comes back on, another tag game begins.

Variation: Instead of just tossing the ball back and forth, the players can roll the ball back and forth from push-up position; kick it back and forth from crab position; or toss it after performing a sit-up.

Spot Jumping

Objective: Aerobic endurance; agility; muscular strength & endurance.

Equipment: 20-30 poly spots; music.

How to play: Scatter the poly spots randomly around the area. Everyone starts by standing on a poly spot. When the music begins, the children move randomly around the area using a designated locomotor movement. When the music stops, everyone stops on a spot (any spot, not necessarily the one you started on). The teacher then announces a jumping task for the children to perform. After 10-30 seconds the music begins again and the children move around the area again. When the music stops a new jumping task is given.

Sample jumping tasks: Jump on and off with both feet; one foot; or alternating feet.

Jump over the spot side to side or forwards and backwards. Straddle the spot and jump on by bringing your feet together and off by spreading your feet apart.

Fitness Activities

20-Second Interval Training

Objective: Aerobic endurance; muscular strength & endurance; cooperation.

Equipment: Jump ropes

How to play: The students form groups of three. Each group has a jump rope. On the signal to begin, student 1 jumps rope, student 2 does push-ups, and student 3 rests. After 20 seconds the students rotate (1 does push-ups, 2 rests, and 3 jumps rope). They continue through this circuit for the allotted time. You can change the 3 activities every 2 or three times through. Try crunches, squats, jumping jacks, etc.

Circuit Training Curriculum

Objective: Muscular strength & endurance; aerobic endurance; flexibility.

Equipment: Circuit Training Curriculum Cards & Shield Pyramid Station Markers

How to play: Place the Pyramids around the perimeter of the gym with the station cards attached to each one. Divide the students up into groups of 2 or 3 and place the groups equally around each of the stations. On the signal to begin, the students perform the exercise or task shown on the Curriculum Cards. After 30-60 seconds the groups rotate to the next station and continue.

There are 18 different sets of Station Cards currently available: Basic Fitness 1; Basic Fitness 2; Advanced Fitness 1; Advanced Fitness 2; Aerobic Fitness 1; Aerobic Fitness 2; Flexibility 1; Flexibility 2; Abdominal 1; Abdominal 2; Plyometrics 1; Plyometrics 2; Dynamic Flexibility 1; Dynamic Flexibility 2; Basic Core 1; Basic Core 2; Balance 1; and Balance 2.

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Crazy Sprints

Objective: Interval training; aerobic endurance; problem-solving.

Equipment: "Crazy Sprint picture cards" (these pictures depict an invisible wall that the runners must pass over, under, around, or through when they cross the middle of the gym).

How to play: Divide the runners into three groups (Rockets, Roadrunners, & Rabbits). The runners stand at one end of the gym. The teacher stands in the middle with the picture cards. When each group is called they sprint to the other end of the gym, attempting to move over, under, around, or through the imaginary wall shown on the picture card.

Hot Pursuit

Objective: Aerobic endurance; agility; muscular strength & endurance; cooperation.

Equipment: None

Set-up: The students form groups of three.

How to play: The students are numbered 1, 2 and 3 in each group. On the signal to begin, Player 1 chases Player 2, attempting to tag him/her. Player 3 performs an exercise (e.g., push-ups; crunches; jumping jacks; arm circles; etc.). When Player 1 tags Player 2, Player 2 begins chasing Player 3 and Player 1 now begins an exercise. When Player 2 tags Player 3, Player 3 now chases Player 1 and Player 2 begins an exercise. Play continues in this manner for the allotted time. You can give the students a list of exercises they can choose from or call out what exercise they must do, changing it periodically.

Safety: Warn students to watch out for others as they travel through general space.

Mirrors

Objective: Aerobic endurance; cooperation; interval training.

Equipment: None

How to play: The students get partners and stand at one end of the gym. The partners face each other. One partner is the leader and the other partner is the follower. The object is for the leader to run up and down the gym with his partner trying to "mirror" him (stay with him). On the signal to begin, the leader runs in a straight line up and down the gym, while the follower attempts to stay with him. The leader can change directions, attempting to get away from the follower, but he must always travel in the same straight line. Let the pair run for about 10-15 seconds and blow a whistle. The leader and the follower now switch roles and continue. After 10-15 seconds blow the whistle again and the pair rests for approximately 30 seconds before starting again. You can divide your group into two groups, A & B. Group A runs while Group B rests and vice versa.

Shuttle Transfer

Objective: Aerobic endurance; agility; cooperation.

Equipment: Beanbags.

Set-up: The students form partners. Each partner stands on opposite sides of the area. One partner has 5 (or more) beanbags.

How to play: On the signal to begin, the player with the beanbags picks up one beanbag at a time and runs out to the middle of the area. The other partner runs out to the middle and takes the beanbag from the other partner and returns it to his starting line. The other partner returns to her starting line and retrieves another beanbag and the process continues. The object is to transfer all of the beanbags to the other person's side and back again in the quickest time possible. For a variation, set a time limit and challenge each pair to see how many beanbags they can transfer in the time allowed.