



PLAY BALL™



BOYS & GIRLS CLUBS
OF AMERICA



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ABOUT PLAY BALL

Play Ball, sponsored by Major League Baseball (MLB™), encourages Club members to improve their overall fitness and health through good nutrition, while participating in fun, engaging activities and games that build on the fundamentals of baseball (agility, balance and coordination).

Play Ball highlights the fun, physicality and teamwork of baseball and softball to Boys & Girls' Clubs across the country.

Play Ball is a great way to get Club members active like the professional baseball players they admire.

PlayBall.org



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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction	1
<i>Tip: For Facilitators</i>	6
Materials	8
Basic First Aid	9
Involving Older Members	15
Hot Corner Fun Facts	16
 FIRST INNING	
Treasure Hunt	19
Stay on Target	21
<i>Tip: Move it!</i>	22
 SECOND INNING	
Blind Toss	23
Limbo	25
Obstacle Course	26
 THIRD INNING	
Backward Tag	27
Diamond Tag	28
<i>Tip: Favorite Foods</i>	29
 FOURTH INNING	
Grounder Race	30
<i>Tip: Full Speed Ahead</i>	31
Air Ball	32
Switcheroo	33
 FIFTH INNING	
Foot Friends	34
Heads Up	35
<i>Tip: Think Before You Drink</i>	36
 SIXTH INNING	
Inchworm Home Run	37
Elbow Grease	38
Kick Line	39

SEVENTH INNING

The Things With Two Heads	40
<i>Tip: Packed What?</i>	41
“Foot” Ball	42
<i>Tip: Get Fresh!</i>	43

SEVENTH INNING STRETCH

Ref Says	44
Switching Gears	46
Cactus Ball	47

EIGHTH INNING

Balance Bridge	48
Hot Lava	49
Chasm	51

NINTH INNING

Basebocce	52
Handy Race	54

Activities for Ages 10-12

FIRST INNING

Color Catchers	55
Count And Bounce	56
<i>Tip: Write It Down</i>	57

SECOND INNING

Hop Toss	58
Bat Bounce	59
One-Foot Toss	60

THIRD INNING

Basebocce	61
Home Team or Visitors	62
<i>Tip: Unsalted</i>	64

FOURTH INNING

Ball Pass Base Race	65
Fetch	67
Pitcher Up!	68

FIFTH INNING

Leapfrog Diamond	69
------------------	----

SIXTH INNING

Jump Rope Jive	70
Bucket Brigade	71
Kick Line	72

SEVENTH INNING

Steal of a Deal	73
<i>Tip: Veggie Chef</i>	74
Knockout	75
<i>Tip: Eyes on the Serving Size</i>	76

SEVENTH INNING STRETCH

Instant Replay	77
One Thing After Another	78
It's a Bird, It's a Plane	79

EIGHTH INNING

Obstacle Course	80
Spider Catch	81
Chasm	82

NINTH INNING

Bases Loaded	83
Balance Beam Batter	85
Reference Guide	86



Tip:



FOR FACILITATORS

Increase your Club members' excitement for and engagement with Play Ball with these tips.

1. Create a supportive team environment.

When members support one another, the fun-factor goes way up! Encourage your members to cheer each other on, give high fives, *fist bump* etc. and point out strong teamwork and skills. Building camaraderie is key to keeping members enthused.

2. Make safety a priority. Talk with Club members about practicing safety at all times. That means staying hydrated, being aware of their surroundings, and practicing good warm up and cool down techniques. Refer to the Basic First Aid section on page 9 for additional information on staying safe during sessions.

Also talk about exercise-appropriate attire – this includes sneakers and loose-fitting clothing that doesn't restrict movement.

3. Recognize strong skills and good sportsmanship. Take time to recognize Club members' teamwork and proficiency. If a few of your members show strong leadership skills and are good sports, give them opportunities to coach fellow members. Be sure to tell Club members to do their best, no matter their skill level.

- 4. Add some healthy competition.** Most of the Play Ball Back Pocket Guide activities incorporate competition elements, which not only align with the competition elements of baseball and softball, but also help spur excitement among members. Make sure to mix up your teams as often as possible, especially if your group includes several stand-out athletes. Discourage poor sportsmanship and/or trash talk. Everyone should feel safe and supported, especially in a competitive environment.
- 5. If possible, use the co-facilitator method.** Sharing the responsibilities of facilitation increases interaction between staff and Club members, and allows you to observe skill levels and sportsmanship more closely. You can empower older Club members to assist with or lead activities. See the Involving Older Members section on page 15 for more information.

MATERIALS NEEDED

To complete all of these activities, you will need the following materials (enough for 50 participants):

- ☐ 25 Plastic balls
- ☐ Eight Plastic bats
- ☐ 25 Tennis balls
- ☐ 10 Kickballs
- ☐ 25 Cones (or pylons)
- ☐ 50 Jump ropes
- ☐ 25 Plastic toy hoops
- ☐ 10 Small beanbags
(five colors, two per color)
- ☐ Four Balance blocks (4"x 4")
- ☐ One Batting tee
- ☐ One "Knockout" object, such as an
empty can or dish soap bottle
- ☐ Masking tape
- ☐ Permanent markers
- ☐ Stopwatch

BASIC FIRST AID¹

Remember that prevention is the best defense against sports-related injuries. Be sure to follow your Club's safety policies and procedures when conducting activities, and in the event of an injury. Share the following tips with your members to help them avoid emergencies and injuries:

- **Drink water before, during and after activities.** Staying hydrated helps you avoid overheating, and keeps your muscles and joints lubricated. Before you exercise, drink 14 to 22 ounces of cool water – that's about 30 to 40 big gulps. Then, every 15 or 20 minutes during your activity, drink six to 12 ounces – about 15 to 25 big gulps. After you exercise, continue drinking water: 16 to 24 ounces, depending on how much you sweat during the activity. That's about 35 to 50 big gulps.
- **Warm up and cool down.** Take five to 10 minutes to warm up your muscles and joints before you start working out. Jogging in place, doing jumping jacks and performing some light stretches warms up muscles and joints gets you ready to exercise. Afterward, cool down with easy stretches.

¹ First Aid information adapted from MayoClinic.com and WebMD.com.

- **If you're in pain, stop.** If you feel pain, you can't catch your breath or you're dizzy or lightheaded, stop exercising. Don't be tempted to walk it off. Alert a Club staff member or an older Club member, and sit down.

If you have a visible injury – that is, one that causes swelling, bruising, bleeding or redness – avoid moving the injured area, and tell a Club staff member or older Club member, who can help you get medical attention.

- **Be aware and be careful.** When you're swinging a bat or throwing a ball, be aware of who and what is around you. Never swing a bat at another member, or throw a ball with the intent to hit another member. If you're throwing a ball, make eye contact with your partner first – that way, they'll be ready to catch it. If you're batting, take a look all the way around you before you swing, and make sure the area is clear of people and obstructions (walls, fences, trees, etc.).

No matter how much we prepare, accidents do happen. As the facilitator, you can use the guidelines below to address minor injuries and incidents. If a member sustains a major injury, call 911 and follow your Club's procedure for administering emergency medical attention, including CPR.

MINOR CUTS AND SCRAPES

These are some of the most common injuries and are easily treatable. While dealing with cuts, keep the following in mind:

- Always wear latex gloves to prevent the spread of blood-borne diseases.
- To stop the bleeding, apply firm, direct pressure to the cut or scrape with a clean gauze pad.
- Elevate the injured area if you can't stop the bleeding.
- If a wound is an inch longer, or the edges of the skin do not touch, it needs stitches. The member should be taken to a doctor for immediate care.
- To prevent the wound from becoming infected, clean it with an alcohol swab or over-the-counter antibiotic creams.
- Use a bandage or sterile piece of gauze to cover the wound so that it doesn't get injured again.
- Always dispose of the materials that you used to deal with the wound by putting them in a sealed bag and placing these in the trash right away.

BRUISES

Apply ice to the bruised area for 10 minutes, then let it rest for 5 minutes. Repeat this process for up to one hour. Elevate the bruised area above the heart if possible. After 24 hours, apply a warm compress to the bruised area to help increase circulation. If the bruise is accompanied by abnormal pain or swelling, seek medical attention, as it may signal a sprain or broken bone.

NOSEBLEEDS

Nosebleeds are generally harmless. Here's how to control the bleeding:

- Have the Club member lean slightly forward.
- Pinch the nose shut with a clean piece of gauze for about 10 minutes.
- Apply ice or a cold pack that has been wrapped in a cloth or towel to the bridge of the nose.
- If the bleeding hasn't stopped after 10 minutes, the injury may be more serious and the athlete should be taken to a doctor immediately.

DIZZINESS

Have the Club member sit or lie down. Tell them to remain still, and to focus on breathing slowly. If the dizziness returns when they sit up or stand, have them do so slowly. If it doesn't dissipate, seek medical attention.

SHORTNESS OF BREATH AND ASTHMA ATTACKS

Ask the Club member to sit down, and focus on breathing slowly. Talk in a soothing voice to help calm them.

If the member suffers from asthma, follow your Club's procedure for administering aid. If they cannot use their inhaler on their own, shake the inhaler, insert the mouthpiece, and depress the canister once. Tell them to hold their breath for five seconds, then take five normal breaths. Repeat per doctor's orders.

If the member's condition does not improve after repeated attempts to calm them and/or administer medication, seek medical attention.

HEAT EXHAUSTION

If a member starts to overheat during the activities – symptoms may include shortness of breath, excessive sweating, faintness, dizziness, pale skin, nausea or rapid heart rate – they may have heat exhaustion. Treat heat exhaustion by lowering their body temperature:

- Take the member to a dark, cool spot – preferably with air-conditioning or an electric fan.
- Apply cool compresses to their forehead and neck.
- Tell them to lie quietly and avoid physical activity for the rest of the day.

Seek medical attention if they are unconscious, disoriented or their pulse rate is rapid but weak.

INVOLVING OLDER MEMBERS

Give older Club members (ages 13 to 18) a chance to participate and build leadership skills by integrating peer leadership opportunities into your Play Ball program.

- **Co-facilitators.** Bring in older Club members to assist with or lead activities. These older members are great role models for your group because they are just a few years older than your Play Ball participants. They are both relatable and aspirational – a winning combination that benefits your younger members.
- **Baseball Buddies.** Pair younger members with an older Club member and encourage them to set aside time to practice their baseball skills, such as throwing, catching, etc.
- **Drill Teams.** Schedule an extra session each week for older members to run drills with your group. An extra 20 minutes per week of throwing, base-running, games and calisthenics can improve your members' performance in major ways.
- **Healthy Habits.** Invite older Club members to visit your sessions to discuss nutrition and hydration. Game-ify the session(s) by adding a quiz-show element, with teams competing to answer questions about good eating habits.

- **Bases Loaded Special Event.** Schedule a friendly bout: create mixed teams of older and younger members and play ball! Create flyers for the big game; invite friends, family and other members; serve healthy snacks like air-popped popcorn, veggies and 100% fruit juices; and have fun!

HOT CORNER Fun Facts

At the outset of some of your Play Ball activities, share one of these facts with your members to increase their baseball knowledge.



One of the fastest pitches on record was thrown by Aroldis Chapman. It clocked in at 105 mph. Now *that's* a fastball.



Before the official rules of baseball were agreed upon in 1858, many regions of the U.S. had their own versions of the game – with some pretty wacky rules. For example, in Massachusetts, runners didn't have to stick to a straight line between bases, and every hit was considered fair!



The first World Series took place in 1903. The Boston Pilgrims (now known as the Red Sox) beat the Pittsburgh Pirates five games to three. Today's World Series is a seven-game tournament. The first team to win four games takes the trophy.



One of the earliest mentions of baseball was found in the diary of an Englishman named William Bray and dates all the way back to 1755. Although the game he played back then was different than the one we know now, it definitely involved a ball, a stick and a few bases!



Pro-baseball isn't just for boys. Women compete professionally in the National Pro Fastpitch league and on the USA Women's Softball teams.



It wasn't until 1857 that "called strikes" – that's when the umpire calls out "Strike!" because a batter misses or doesn't swing at a pitch in the strike zone – were added into the official rules of the game. Before then, batters could stand back and wait for a perfect pitch.



Every regulation MLB™ ball is rubbed in mud harvested from a top-secret location in New Jersey. Called Lena Blackburne Baseball Rubbing Mud, this special stuff has been used on MLB™ baseballs since the late 1930s, when Philadelphia A's coach Lena Blackburne needed to remove the slickness from new baseballs to improve grip.



In the early days of baseball, overhand pitching was illegal. Instead, pitchers had to toss the ball to the batter underhand, with a stiff elbow and wrist.



Do you know what's inside a baseball? It all starts with something called a "pill" – a cork sphere covered in rubber, smaller than a golf ball. The pill is then wound inside layers of yarn, and then covered with leather, which is hand-stitched. Making a professional baseball is no simple task: it takes about a week to make one ball, start to finish.



FIRST INNING

TREASURE HUNT

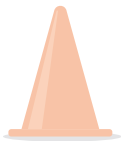
Skill Area/Focus: Agility

Time: 15 minutes

Materials Needed:

□ Cones

□ 10 small beanbags (two beanbags per team; use a different color for each team, up to five colors/teams)



Keeping your mind focused while your body is in motion is critical on the baseball field. Get ready to race against the clock in a hunt for hidden treasures!

Set-up:

1. Divide members into even teams and assign each a color that corresponds to the colors of your beanbags (up to five teams). Place the corresponding number of cones in a row, one in front of each team, to create a starting line.
2. Place three times the number of cones as there are teams around the gym or playfield, at uneven intervals, with the nearest cone approximately 10 to 20 steps away from the starting line. Enlist the help of your members to make this task go faster.
3. Once all the cones have been placed, send all members back to their team's position at the starting line. Then, tell all members to turn their backs to the cones.

4. While members have their backs turned, hide the beanbags under the cones, one per cone. Mix up the colors, so that they are scattered around the field.
5. Once all the bags are hidden, tell members to turn around.

Gameplay:

1. One member from each team races toward the cones.
2. Each member may look under one cone.
3. If the member finds a beanbag that matches their team color, they run back to the starting line with it. If they don't find a beanbag that matches their team color, they run back to the starting line empty-handed.
4. The next member of the team repeats steps one through three.
5. Team members who are not running can observe the opposing treasure hunters. If they see one of their team's beanbags when an opposing treasure hunter picks up a cone, they can tell their teammates, or get it themselves, if it's their turn.
6. The first team to gather all its matching beanbags wins.

STAY ON TARGET

Skill Area/Focus: Agility

Time: 10 minutes

Materials Needed:

- ☐ Hoop(s) or jump ropes
- ☐ Beanbags
- ☐ Tennis balls (for Team Challenge option)



In this game, the target doesn't move – you do! The “aim” is to make an accurate throw while you're running, just like you have to do when fielding a baseball!

Set-up:

1. Place a hoop on the ground, or arrange a pair of jump ropes in a circle.
2. Give each member a beanbag.
3. When you say “Toss it!” members try to throw their beanbags inside the hoop. Let them practice a few times, and then move on to the Challenge or Team Challenge below.
4. **Challenge:** Have members run in larger and larger circles around the hoop. If a player doesn't hit the hoop, they are eliminated. The player who can hit the hoop from the farthest position wins.

5. **Team Challenge:** Divide members into teams of two and give each team a tennis ball. Lay out a hoop for each team. Teams run around the hoop in the same direction. When you say “Bounce!” the player with the ball bounces it inside the hoop to the other player. The team that passes the ball the most times without dropping it wins.



MOVE IT!

Exercise doesn't have to mean doing push-ups or lifting weights. Any time you move your body, you're getting exercise!

- ☐ Ask members to share ways they like to move in everyday life: Do you like to dance to a silly song? Ride a bike? Go for a walk? Play tag?
- ☐ Ask members to share ideas for fun and easy ways to work more movement into their days. For example: How about exploring the playground from one end to the other? See how high you can jump, and then trying to beat that record?

SECOND INNING

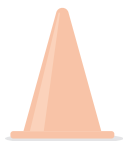
BLIND TOSS

Skill Area/Focus: Balance

Time: 10 minutes

Materials Needed:

- ☐ Cones
- ☐ Plastic ball or tennis ball



On the field, you rarely have time to stop and think about where to throw the ball – you have to make a quick decision. In this game, you don't know who you're throwing to until the last moment, and you're probably a little dizzy to boot!

Set-up:

1. Set out cones in a baseball diamond formation (be sure the distance from the center of the diamond to each of the bases is appropriate for your group's age and skill level).
2. Place one member in the center. Give them a ball.
3. Divide the other members into four groups; station one group at each of the four "bases." The groups can line up, so that only one person at a time is on base.
4. When you call "Go!" the player at the center closes their eyes and spins in a circle.

5. When you call “Throw!” the player opens their eyes and tosses the ball to the first person they see.
6. The person who receives the ball becomes the next thrower, and the groups shift, so that a new member is on each base.
7. **Team Challenge:** Divide players into two teams, but don’t make them stand on base – they can move to follow the thrower’s aim. The thrower does not open their eyes, but simply tosses the ball underhand when you say “Throw!” The first person to catch the ball wins a point for their team and becomes the thrower. The first team to catch five balls wins.

LIMBO

Skill Area/Focus: Balance

Time: 10 minutes

Materials Needed:

- ☐ Jump rope
- ☐ Tennis ball (for Challenge option)



How low can you go? Baseball requires you to stoop, bend and stretch your body – just like the classic limbo game, played here with a jump rope rather than a bamboo pole.

Set-up:

1. Two players hold a jump rope taut, just below the head level of the tallest player.
2. Tell members to line up. Then, one at a time, they must walk under the rope, bending backward to avoid touching it. Feel free to demonstrate if they need help understanding how to limbo!
3. If a member touches the rope, falls or uses their hands to support themselves as they walk underneath, they are out.
4. After everyone has walked under the rope, have the members lower it slightly.
5. The person who can go the lowest without touching the rope, falling or supporting themselves with their hands wins.
6. **Challenge:** Have players hold a tennis ball under their chins while they limbo under the rope.

OBSTACLE COURSE

Skill Area/Focus: Balance

Time: 10 minutes

Materials Needed:

- ☐ Cones
- ☐ Jump ropes
- ☐ Plastic hoops
- ☐ Balance blocks



In baseball, you never know exactly what you'll encounter – from rocks on the field to other players. This obstacle course is a fun and challenging way for members to practice balance while avoiding hazards.

Set-up:

1. Divide the group into two teams.
2. Each team sets up an obstacle course for the other team using cones, jump ropes, plastic hoops and balance blocks.
3. Each team sends one member at a time through the other team's course. The member must run the course without touching any of the obstacles.
4. The first team to complete the other team's course wins.

THIRD INNING

BACKWARD TAG

Skill Area/Focus: Coordination

Time: 15 minutes

Materials Needed: None

The ball doesn't always go where you expect, and fancy footwork is often required. This game turns tag around to help members gain confidence moving in all directions, especially backward.

Set-up:

1. Choose one member to be "It."
2. Tell members that this game is based on traditional tag, but it has a twist: they can only move backward. Remind members that, to stay safe, they shouldn't go too fast, and they should watch over their shoulders as they move.
3. Members who are tagged are eliminated. The last untagged person wins, and is "It" for the next round.
4. **Challenge:** Switch it up! Start as a regular game of tag, with all members running forward. Members must change direction when you call "Switch!" Call multiple switches during the game for an extra mind/body challenge!

DIAMOND TAG

Skill Area/Focus: Coordination

Time: 10 minutes

Materials Needed: None

This game changes up traditional tag while helping players learn the positions on the baseball field.

Set-up:

1. Tell members that this game is played like traditional tag, but with a “safe” rule: if you are about to be tagged, you can become safe by calling out a baseball position and doing five quick exercises, such as jumping jacks, sit-ups, push-ups or lateral hops. The tagger then must find another runner to chase.
2. If your members need a memory boost, share the following list of baseball positions before the game starts:

<input type="checkbox"/> Pitcher	<input type="checkbox"/> Third Baseman
<input type="checkbox"/> Catcher	<input type="checkbox"/> Shortstop
<input type="checkbox"/> First Baseman	<input type="checkbox"/> Left Fielder
<input type="checkbox"/> Second Baseman	<input type="checkbox"/> Center Fielder
	<input type="checkbox"/> Right Fielder
3. **Challenge:** A position can only be used to make one member safe. Members must listen carefully to the positions that runners call, and must not use each one more than once. If a player calls out a position that has already been used, they are out.

If you have more than 10 members in your group, open up the safe rule by allowing members to call out baseball terms and plays, such as grand slam, home run, pinch hitter, umpire, mitt, fast ball, strike zone, etc.



FAVORITE FOODS

Trying new foods can be fun, and adding new foods to your diet can help you get the nutrition you need. Ask your members the following questions to get them thinking about food possibilities:

- ☐ What's your favorite food?
Why do you like it?
- ☐ What's your least favorite food?
Why *don't* you like it?
- ☐ What's your favorite vegetable?
- ☐ What's your favorite fruit?
- ☐ Can you name a new food you tried recently? What did you think of it? Would you try it again? Would you recommend it to a friend?

FOURTH INNING GROUNDER RACE

Skill Area/Focus: Agility

Time: 10 minutes

Materials Needed:

- Tennis balls



Fielding grounders when you're on the run requires bending, stretching and accuracy. Multiplying the number of balls on the ground means players get a *lot* of practice with these skills.

Set-up:

1. Divide members into teams of two.
2. At one end of the playfield or gym, establish a starting line. All members must start behind this line.
3. At the other end of the playfield or gym, place three to four times the number of tennis balls as there are teams.
4. When you say "Go!" one member of each team runs to the balls on the ground, grabs one, and throws it to their teammate.
5. If the teammate catches the ball, they set it on the ground, and the two switch spots, with the first runner racing to the starting line, and the second racing to scoop and throw a ball.

6. If the teammate does not catch the ball, that teammate must run it back to the pile and sprint to the starting line. The thrower must throw again.
7. The first team to collect three balls behind the finish line wins.
8. **Challenge:** Increase the distance between the starting line and the pile of balls.

»»»»»»»» Tip: ««««««««

FULL SPEED AHEAD

Ever felt too full after eating? It isn't the greatest feeling in the world. Did you know that it takes several minutes for your stomach to send the "I'm full!" message to your brain? Give your stomach some help by eating slowly, so that it has enough time to sense when you've had enough to eat. Eating slowly also lets you enjoy the foods you like for a little bit longer. It's a win for everyone!

AIR BALL

Skill Area/Focus: Agility

Time: 10 minutes

Materials Needed:

- ☐ Plastic balls or tennis balls



They tell you to keep your feet on the ground, but when you're running, jumping and turning that's not always easy. This game gets members to increase throwing accuracy when they don't have a stable body position.

Set-up:

1. Divide members into teams of two.
2. Give each team a ball.
3. Have team members warm up by tossing the ball back and forth a few times.
4. Now tell them that they can only throw the ball when their feet are off the ground – that is, they have to jump while throwing. If they drop the ball, their team is out.
5. After a few rounds of this, inform them that they must catch *and* throw while their feet are in the air. Again, any team that drops a ball is out.
6. The last team standing wins.

SWITCHEROO

Skill Area/Focus: Agility

Time: 10 minutes

Materials Needed:

- ☐ Masking tape
- ☐ Tennis balls



When that pop fly comes at you, you've got to react. This game simulates the situation of catching a fly ball with the need to get into position quickly.

Set-up:

1. Divide players into teams of two.
2. Use the masking tape to create a marker on the ground for each team, and give each team a ball.
3. One player stands on the marker and throws the ball as high as they can into the air.
4. Their partner quickly takes their place on the marker to catch it. The partner must keep both feet on the marker. A successful catch earns the team one point.
5. The first team to earn 10 points wins.
6. **Challenge:** If the team drops the ball, they lose their points and have to start over.

FIFTH INNING

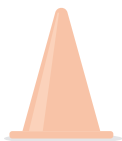
FOOT FRIENDS

Skill Area/Focus: Coordination

Time: 10 minutes

Materials Needed:

- ☐ Cones (optional)



To succeed at baseball, players don't just need hand-eye coordination – they need foot/brain coordination, too. This game requires members to stay in contact with each other while running and focusing their attention on their feet.

Set-up:

1. Divide players into two- or three-person teams.
2. Establish a course, (e.g., straight line, around a track, etc.). You can use cones to delineate the course if necessary.
3. At the starting line, teammates stand shoulder-to-shoulder, with one foot touching that of their teammate. They can put their arms around each other's shoulders for added stability. (On a three-player team, the middle player will have each foot touching that of another player).
4. The race begins when you say "Go!", teams must keep their feet in contact for the entire race. At first, most teams will have to start out walking until they get the hang of it. Remind members to watch out for each other's toes!

5. **Team Challenge:** Increase team size to four, five or more players, creating the need for even finer coordination and cooperation.

HEADS UP

Skill Area/Focus: Balance

Time: 10 minutes

Materials Needed:

- ☐ Tennis balls



In baseball, you usually try to keep the ball *off* of your head. This game puts a ball *on* your head to improve balance and focus.

Set-up:

1. Give each member a ball, and tell them to place the balls on top of their heads.
2. When you say “Go!” the players must let go of the balls and balance them on their heads.
3. The player who can balance the ball the longest wins.
4. **Challenge:** Have members balance balls on different body parts: elbows, fingers, knees, feet, etc.



Tip:



THINK BEFORE YOU DRINK

When you increase the amount you exercise, you need to take in more liquids. Staying healthy means getting enough to drink – and choosing your drinks wisely. Ask members the following questions to help them think about what they drink:

- ☐ When you're thirsty, what do you like to drink? Why?
- ☐ What does it feel like if you don't have something to drink when you're thirsty?
- ☐ What do you drink if your favorite beverage isn't available?
- ☐ Doctors say that water is the best beverage choice. Why do you think they say that? What makes water different from other drinks?
- ☐ Where can you find water when you're thirsty?
 - ☐ At a restaurant?
 - ☐ At school?
 - ☐ Out in your neighborhood?
 - ☐ At the park?
- ☐ Is there a time when you could choose water instead of juice, soda or sports drinks?

Also remind members that, by the time they feel thirsty, they're already dehydrated. Encourage them to drink water throughout the day, whether or not they feel thirst.

SIXTH INNING

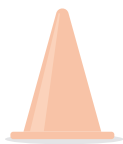
INCHWORM HOME RUN

Skill Area/Focus: Coordination

Time: 10 minutes

Materials Needed:

☐ Cones



Being aware of your body and those of other players can make a difference on the ball field. Although you probably won't get this close to others in an actual game, working together builds coordination skills.

Set-up:

1. Divide players into teams of four or more.
2. Set up cones in baseball diamond formations, one diamond for each team.
3. Have each team line up; each player places their hands on the shoulders of the person in front of them, except for the leader, who is the "head" of the inchworm.
4. Explain how inchworms must move: The leader takes one hop forward, then the second person hops forward, then the third. Only one person can jump at a time, and the inchworm must jump in order, from front to back.

5. Starting with all heads on home base, inchworms “run” the bases when you say “Go!”
6. Each player must tag each base with their hand on the inchworm’s way around the bases.
7. The first inchworm to have every player cross home base wins.

ELBOW GREASE

Skill Area/Focus: Coordination

Time: 10 minutes

Materials Needed:

- Kickball



Warm up those pitching and batting muscles and develop coordination with this fun and challenging game.

Set-up:

1. Have members stand in a circle. Give one member a kickball.
2. Members grip the ball between their elbows, and pass it to the next person, who must also use only their elbows.
3. If the ball is dropped, both the passer and the receiver are out of the game.
4. The last two players standing win.

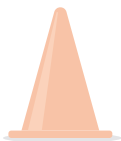
KICK LINE

Skill Area/Focus: Coordination

Time: 15 minutes

Materials Needed:

- ☐ Cones
- ☐ Kickball



This fun twist on the classic game of kickball encourages teamwork and coordination.

Set-up:

1. Set up cones in a baseball diamond formation.
2. Choose one player to be the pitcher. Station them in the center of the diamond, then give them the kickball.
3. Have all other members line up single file at home plate.
4. On your cue, the pitcher rolls the ball to the player at the front of the line. When they kick it, everyone but the pitcher runs the bases. Each player must tag every base, but they cannot stop running until they reach home plate.
5. The pitcher must recover the ball, and use it to tag out as many runners as they can. Each runner they tag becomes an “outfielder,” who can help tag out other runners.
6. The last runner to cross home plate becomes the next pitcher, and the game begins again.

SEVENTH INNING

THE THING WITH TWO HEADS

Skill Area/Focus: Agility

Time: 10 minutes

Materials Needed:

- ☐ Cones
- ☐ Kickball



It will take teamwork and agility to win this game, just like a real game of baseball.

Set-up:

1. Divide players into teams of two, up to 10 teams. (If you have more than 10 teams, run the first 10 teams through the activity, followed by the next 10, and so on. Tell non-playing members to cheer for their section.)
2. Using cones, establish a start and finish line. Each team begins behind the starting line. Place a kickball behind the finish line across from each team.
3. Teammates stand next to one another, and put one arm around each other's shoulders. They must remain shoulder-to-shoulder throughout the activity.
4. When you say "Go!" teams run to the other end of the field, pick up the ball using one player's left hand and the other player's right hand, and carry it back to the starting line.

5. Then, they must turn around and get the ball to the finish line – only this time by picking it up and throwing it, repeatedly if necessary.
6. The first team to get their ball across the finish line wins.



PACKAGED WHAT?

Most people eat a lot of pre-packaged, processed food these days, and for good reason – these foods are fast, and sometimes pretty tasty. But did you know that many of these foods contain substances that aren't nutritious? Give members the following challenge, which you can complete in your next session:

- ☐ Ask members to choose a favorite processed snack food and bring in the box or wrapper.
- ☐ As a group, read through the ingredient lists. If there are any ingredients you can't identify, look these up in the Club computer lab, or on a smartphone.
- ☐ Follow up with a discussion: What do these ingredients do for our bodies? Are they beneficial? What other snack food options do we have?

“FOOT” BALL

Skill Area/Focus: Agility

Time: 10 minutes

Materials Needed:

- ☐ Kickball
- ☐ Plastic ball and tennis ball
(for Challenge option)



Footwork is just as important in baseball as it is in kickball or any other sport. This activity develops fine motor control as well as core strength – and it’s fun!

Set-up:

1. Have players lie on their backs in a circle, with their feet in the center and their heads away from the center.
2. Place a kickball in the center of the circle, near one member’s feet.
3. The starting player picks up the ball with their feet.
4. They pass it to the next player, who must also use their feet.
5. If the ball is dropped, the passer and receiver are out of the game.
6. The last two players in the circle win.
7. **Challenge:** Use progressively smaller balls: a plastic ball, then a tennis ball.



Tip:



GET FRESH!

Food and cooking go together – but not all food has to be cooked. In fact, eating fresh (raw) fruits and vegetables is great for your body, as the process of cooking can remove some of the vitamins and minerals from food. Have members discuss fresh foods using the following questions:

- ☐ Are there any foods you prefer raw instead of cooked?
- ☐ What fruits and vegetables do you eat on a regular basis?
- ☐ What should you always do with raw fruits and vegetables before you eat them?
(Answer: Wash them!)
- ☐ What are some things that are not good to eat raw?
- ☐ How do raw foods taste different from cooked ones?

Encourage members to try a fresh food the next time they have a chance. And it's easy too. Just grab a banana, mango, kiwi fruit or a bag of baby carrots. It's not only good for you – it's delicious!

SEVENTH INNING

Stretch

REF SAYS

Skill Area/Focus: Agility

Time: 10 minutes

Materials Needed:

- ☐ Cones
- ☐ Tennis balls



This flexible game is a baseball-themed take on Simon Says. It helps members develop agility and the ability to shift gears quickly. It also helps members with listening and attention skills, which are important on and off the field.

Set-up:

1. Arrange players in the play area. Give each one a ball and a cone.
2. Explain to players that you will be calling out a series of actions.
3. If you say “Ref says” before an action, players are to perform that action. If you do not say “Ref says” before an action, players should not perform the action. Players who perform the action when you did not say “Ref says” are out of the game.

4. Good actions for this game include:

- ☐ Pick up the ball
- ☐ Throw the ball in the air
- ☐ Toss the ball to another person
- ☐ Jump as high as you can
- ☐ Jump over the cone
- ☐ Put the cone on your head
- ☐ Switch positions with the person to your left/right
- ☐ Do five push-ups
- ☐ Do five jumping jacks

5. If players are mature enough, the winner of each round can become the Ref.

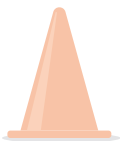
SWITCHING GEARS

Skill Area/Focus: Balance

Time: 10 minutes

Materials Needed:

□ Cones



Running fast is great for building speed and cardiovascular health. Moving slowly is great for strength and balance. In this activity, members do a bit of both.

Set-up:

1. Set up a circular or oval-shaped running course defined by cones, or use an existing track.
2. Explain to members that they will be changing pace during the activity, depending on your instructions.
 - a. “Slow Gear” means to move as slowly as possible, yet remain in motion.
 - b. “Middle Gear” means to run at a normal pace.
 - c. “Fast Gear” means to run as fast as possible.
3. Members begin running at a normal pace around the course.
4. Call out the gears. If a member doesn’t switch speeds instantly, they are out.
5. The last person in motion wins.

CACTUS BALL

Skill Area/Focus: Coordination

Time: 15 minutes

Materials Needed:

- Tennis balls



In a baseball game, you often have to make split-second decisions. In this game, two words that sound alike determine a player's action. Players must listen for the right word and react appropriately.

Set-up:

1. Divide players into two or more teams.
2. A representative from each team steps forward.
3. Toss the ball toward the reps from each team.
4. Just before the ball reaches the players, call out "Catch It!" or "Cactus!"
5. If someone catches a ball on "Catch it!" they get a point for their team.
6. If someone catches a ball when you say "Cactus!" their team is out for the remainder of the round.
7. End the round after you have tossed five balls.
8. The next group of team representatives steps forward, and play begins again.

9. After all members of all teams have had a chance to catch, the game ends. The team with the most points wins.

EIGHTH INNING

BALANCE BRIDGE

Skill Area/Focus: Balance

Time: 10 minutes

Materials Needed:

- ☐ Jump ropes



This game builds both balance and teamwork – critical skills both on and off the field.

Set-up:

1. Divide members into teams of four.
2. Give each team two jump ropes. Tell each team to lay the jump ropes on the floor, parallel to one another, approximately 24 inches apart. This is the “bridge.”
3. Have teammates join hands. When you say “Go!” teams must walk single file across the bridge. Team members cannot touch or step outside the jump ropes – if they do, their team is out.
4. When teams reach the other side, tell them to narrow their bridges – that is, move jump ropes so that they are approximately 18 inches apart – then join hands and cross the bridge.
5. Continue narrowing the bridges until one team remains.

HOT LAVA

Skill Area/Focus: Balance

Time: 15 minutes

Materials Needed:

□ Plastic hoops



This timeless kids' favorite is used here as a fun contest of balance.

Set-up:

1. Lay out hoops fairly close together, using one more than the total number of players.
2. Tell players to stand in a hoop. Tell them that they will be jumping from hoop to hoop without touching the ground outside the hoops – a.k.a. the “hot lava.” If a player touches the lava, they are out.
3. The player closest to the empty hoop jumps onto it.
4. The player closest to the vacated hoop jumps onto that one, and so on.
5. As the game progresses and/or as players are eliminated, move the hoops farther and farther apart to increase the challenge.
6. The last player in the game wins.

7. **Challenge:** Play the game with the rules of musical chairs. Lay out one fewer hoop than there are players, and have players circle the hoops. When you call out “Hot Lava!” players must jump into a hoop. The player left without a hoop is out. The last player standing on a disk wins.
8. **Team Challenge:** Increase the challenge by splitting the members into teams of two or three. Teams must join hands or put their arms around each other’s shoulders as they jump from hoop to hoop, avoiding the hot lava. The last team standing is the winner.

CHASM

Skill Area/Focus: Balance

Time: 10 minutes

Materials Needed:

- Tennis ball



This partner game determines just how far members can stretch without losing their balance.

Set-up:

1. Divide players into two lines, with the players standing to face one another. They should be close enough to touch hands easily.
2. Give the player at one end of the line the tennis ball.
3. The player with the ball passes it to the person across from them. Note: Players are not allowed to move their feet once the ball is in play.
4. Players pass the ball across the “chasm” to the end of the line.
5. When the ball reaches the end, all players take one small step back, and pass the ball back up the line.
6. As the lines move apart, it becomes more difficult to pass the ball, and players must lean, stretch and reach to get the ball from one person to another.

7. If a ball is dropped, both the passer and the receiver are out of the game.
8. The last pair to successfully pass the ball wins.

NINTH INNING

BASEBOCCE

Skill Area/Focus: Coordination

Time: 15 minutes

Materials Needed:

- ☐ Plastic ball
- ☐ Tennis balls
- ☐ Markers
- ☐ Masking tape
- ☐ Cones (optional)



Bocce is a classic game of skill. In this variation, tennis balls are used instead of bocce balls, and the emphasis is on accurate throwing. This is a great way to wind down a session.

Set-up:

1. Give each member a tennis ball. Have members write their initials on their tennis balls using the marker and tape.
2. Toss a plastic ball across the playfield or gym. This ball is the target.

3. Have members stand behind a designated “pitching line” (you can mark it with cones if necessary) and toss their balls toward the target. The goal is to get their ball to land closest to the target ball.
4. The person who gets their ball closest to the target wins one point.
5. The first person to earn 10 points wins.
6. **Challenge:** Move the target after each toss.
7. **Team Challenge:** Divide the group into teams. Mark each player’s ball with their team’s name. The team that gets the tennis ball closest to the target earns two points; the second closest earns one point. The first team to earn 10 points wins.

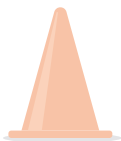
HANDY RACE

Skill Area/Focus: Coordination

Time: 10 minutes

Materials Needed:

- ☐ Cones
- ☐ Tennis balls



In baseball, hands and feet have to work together. In this simple activity, members are challenged to use them both. It's not quite as hard as patting your head and rubbing your stomach at the same time – or is it?

Set-up:

1. Set up cones in a line.
2. Give each player a ball.
3. Have each player run the cones slalom-style while tossing the ball from one hand to the other.
4. If a player drops a ball, they are out.
5. Players keep running the course until only one remains. This player is the winner.

ACTIVITIES FOR AGES 10-12

FIRST INNING COLOR CATCHERS

Skill Area/Focus: Agility

Time: 10 minutes

Materials Needed:

- Beanbags (3 colors)



In a real baseball game, you have to make quick decisions and think on your feet. This mini-game simulates that experience.

Set-up:

1. Have members stand single file, and ask the first person in line to step forward.
2. Throw three different colored beanbags in the air at once.
3. Call out which color to catch when the bags are in the air. If the player misses or catches the wrong color, they are out. If they catch the correct bag, they move to the back of the line.
4. Play continues until one player remains.
5. **Team Challenge:** Split players into two teams. Have each team field one player at a time; these two must compete to catch the correct bags in three out of five throws. The winner of each match-up earns one point for their team. The team with the most points after all players have had their turn wins.

COUNT AND BOUNCE

Skill Area/Focus: Agility

Time: 10 minutes

Materials Needed:

- Tennis balls



Baseballs that bounce off the ground behave unpredictably, and players often have to chase them down. This game encourages players to keep their eyes on the ball, even when it's moving erratically.

Set-up:

1. Divide members into two teams. Tell teams to line up in two lines behind you. The team on your left is “Team Left” and the team on your right is “Team Right.”
2. Tell players that you'll be tossing tennis balls for one member to catch. For each turn, you'll indicate which team should send a member to chase the ball by saying “Team Right” or “Team Left,” followed by a number. That number signifies the number of times the ball should bounce before the player catches it. Teams should send members in the order of how they've lined up.
3. Each time a player makes a correct catch, they earn one point for their team. The first team to get 10 points wins.



Tip:



WRITE IT DOWN

Start a discussion about keeping track of what you eat. Ask members if they can say what they ate earlier in the day, the day before and a week ago. You can use questions like these:

- ☐ How many times did you eat fast food in the past week?
- ☐ How many times did you have fresh fruit in the past week?
- ☐ How many sodas did you drink in the past week?
- ☐ How much water did you drink per day during the past week?

Point out that it can be very challenging to know what you're eating over time without a record, and that it's hard to change habits that you aren't aware of. Challenge members to keep a food diary for a day or even a week, and then come back to discuss it later in the program. Ask members what they notice about their moods and energy levels in relation to what they ate.

SECOND INNING

HOP TOSS

Skill Area/Focus: Balance

Time: 10 minutes

Materials Needed:

- Tennis ball



The way to win this game is by paying attention and having great balance – two important factors in winning a baseball game, too.

Set-up:

1. Tell players to line up single file.
2. Give the player in the front of the line a tennis ball. Tell the player to make one hopscotch-style jump on their left, right or both legs, and then turn to toss the ball to the next player.
3. That player must duplicate the first player's move, add one of their own and then turn to toss the ball to the next player.
4. If a player can't repeat the sequence accurately, they are out.
5. Once the ball reaches the end of the line, everyone turns around, and the game begins again.
6. Play continues until one person remains. They are the winner.

BAT BOUNCE

Skill Area/Focus: Balance

Time: 10 minutes

Materials Needed:

☐ Plastic bats

☐ Plastic balls



The purpose of this game is to understand the physics of the intersection between a bat and a ball. Plus, there's a little contest with gravity!

Set-up:

1. Pass out bats and balls to eight players.
2. On your cue, players attempt to bounce the ball off the bat more than once, as with a paddleball.
3. The player who completes the most bounces is the winner of that round. Players step to the side, and eight new players step up. The game begins again.
4. After all players have attempted the game, the first-round winners face off. The player who completes the most bounces in this round wins.

ONE-FOOT TOSS

Skill Area/Focus: Balance

Time: 10 minutes

Materials Needed:

- Tennis balls



When you're under pressure to perform in a real game of baseball, you have to keep your cool – and your balance! – while you keep your eye on the ball.

Set-up:

1. Divide players into two to three teams.
2. One player from each team comes forward. Give each player a tennis ball.
3. On your cue, players stand on one foot. They then repeatedly toss the balls high in the air and catch them.
4. If a player drops the ball or puts their foot down, they are out.
5. The team with the last player standing earns one point.
6. The team with the most points after everyone has had a chance to toss the ball is the winner.

THIRD INNING

BASEBOCCE

Skill Area/Focus: Coordination

Time: 15 minutes

Materials Needed:

- ☐ Plastic ball
- ☐ Tennis balls
- ☐ Markers
- ☐ Masking tape
- ☐ Cones (optional)



Bocce is a classic game of skill. In this variation, tennis balls are used instead of bocce balls, and the emphasis is on accurate throwing. This is a great way to wind down a session.

Set-up:

1. Give each member a tennis ball. Have members write their initials on their tennis balls using the marker and tape.
2. Toss a plastic ball across the playfield or gym. This ball is the target.
3. Have members stand behind a designated “pitching line” (you can mark it with cones if necessary) and toss their tennis balls toward the target. The goal is to get their tennis ball as close to the target ball as possible.
4. The person who gets their tennis ball closest to the target gets one point.

5. The first person to earn 10 points wins.
6. **Challenge:** Move the target after each toss.
7. **Team Challenge:** Divide the group into teams. Mark each player's ball with their team's name. The team that gets the tennis ball closest to the target gets two points. The team that gets their tennis ball second closest earns one point. The first team to earn 10 points wins.

HOME TEAM OR VISITORS?

Skill Area/Focus: Coordination

Time: 15 minutes

Materials Needed:

- ☐ Tennis ball



Things can change quickly in a baseball game, and you can't have your eyes everywhere at once. This twist on Duck, Duck, Goose helps players focus their attention while improving their turning and catching ability.

Set-up:

1. Have members stand in a circle, facing the center. Then, count them off into two teams (alternate between 1's and 2's, so that team members aren't standing next to one another).
2. Pick one player to be "It" and give them the ball. The game begins when "It" starts walking around the outside of the circle,

behind all the players as they would in a game of Duck, Duck, Goose. As the person who's "It" passes each player, "It" designates that player as either "Home Team" or "Visitor."

3. When a player is called "Home Team," nothing happens and the person who's "It" keeps walking. When "It" says "Visitor," that person must turn quickly to catch the ball "It" tosses. If the "Visitor" drops the ball, they become "It" and their team loses one point. If the "Visitor" catches the ball, their team earns one point, and the person who is "It" continues around the circle.
4. Remind members that they shouldn't call "Visitor" on the same person more than once per round.
5. Play continues for 15 minutes; the team with the most points at the end of the game wins.
6. **Challenge:** Have the "It" player move farther and farther from the circle.



UNSALTED

Did you know that the amount of sodium (salt) you eat can make a difference in your health? Doctors say we should limit our salt intake to help avoid high blood pressure and heart disease. But extra salt is in almost everything we eat, making it hard to get used to eating less-salty food. Share this information with members, and then open a discussion about the use of salt with questions like these:

- ☐ Do you ever shake salt onto your food? Which foods? Why?
- ☐ What's a food you like that's definitely "salty"?
- ☐ Have you ever tried not adding extra salt to your food?
- ☐ Did you know that doctors recommend not eating too much salt? What do you think of that?
- ☐ Could you go a day without extra salt? A week? A month? Why or why not?
- ☐ What are some ways to add flavor to food without salt?

FOURTH INNING

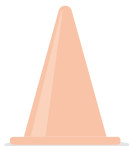
BALL PASS BASE RACE

Skill Area/Focus: Agility

Time: 10 minutes

Materials Needed:

- ☐ Cones
- ☐ Tennis balls



In this game, players practice running the bases as a team, with an added twist: they have to toss and catch a ball while running, too!

Set-up:

1. Divide members into two teams.
2. Set up cones in a baseball diamond formation. The cones can have plenty of room between them – the farther apart they are, the more challenging this will be!
3. Team one starts at home base, while team two starts at second base. Give the first runner of each team a tennis ball.
4. The players run the bases one member at a time in opposite directions: team one runs counter-clockwise from home base to home base; team two runs clockwise from second base to second base. Remind members to stay safe, and to look out for the other team's player.

5. As the players from each team pass each other while rounding the bases, they must toss their tennis balls to one another, then keep running. If a player drops the ball or fails to catch the toss, they must start back at their initial base and run the bases again.
6. As each team member crosses their last base (home or second, depending on the team), they pass the ball to her next teammate, who runs the bases.
7. The first team to get all of its members around the bases is the winner.

FETCH

Skill Area/Focus: Agility

Time: 10 minutes

Materials Needed:

- Tennis balls



Throwing long distances, along with speed and accurate catching is critical, especially for outfielders. In this game, teams compete to throw, run and catch.

Set-up:

1. Divide members into teams of even-numbered players.
2. Have teams line up next to one another, single file. Give the first member of each team a tennis ball.
3. On your cue, the players throw the ball as far as they can. The player who throws the farthest earns one point for their team. After throwing the ball, they go to the back of the line.
4. On your signal, the next player in line runs to their team's ball. The first one to reach it earns one point for their team.
5. On your signal, the player who ran to the ball throws it back to the next teammate in line. The first player to catch the thrown ball gets one point for their team.
6. Play continues until all team members have either thrown or run to the ball. The team with the most points at the end of the game wins.

PITCHER UP!

Skill Area/Focus: Agility

Time: 10 minutes

Materials Needed:

- ☐ Plastic bat
- ☐ Tennis balls



Pitching accuracy is crucial in the game of baseball. In this game, players take turns trying to hit a familiar target that they'd normally try to miss – a baseball bat.

Set-up:

1. Divide players into two teams and line them up, alternating one team member with another.
2. Give the first player three balls.
3. Stand some distance away from the players and hold up the bat. Keep it stationary.
4. The first player throws the ball at the bat, trying to hit it.
5. If they hit the bat with the ball, they earn one point for their team. They then throw the other two balls and move to the end of the line. (You can assign a member to scoop and throw the balls back to the line, or you can do it yourself.)
6. Play continues until all players have thrown. The team with the most points at the end of the game wins.

FIFTH INNING

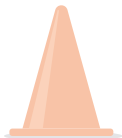
LEAPFROG DIAMOND

Skill Area/Focus: Balance

Time: 5 minutes

Materials Needed:

□ Cones



You won't see players in a real game running the bases like this, but it builds balance, coordination and teamwork.

Set-up:

1. Divide players into two teams.
2. Set up cones in two baseball diamond formations.
3. Starting at their respective home bases, each team runs its bases leapfrog-style.
4. The first team to get all players to home base wins.

SIXTH INNING

JUMP ROPE JIVE

Skill Area/Focus: Coordination

Time: 5 minutes

Materials Needed:

- ☐ Jump ropes
- ☐ Tennis balls
- ☐ Stopwatch



In baseball, you need to be able to switch gears quickly, while maintaining focus and accuracy. This game helps members hone their gear-switching skills.

Set-up:

1. Divide members into pairs.
2. Give each pair two jump ropes and a tennis ball.
3. Tell members that they will have 60 seconds to complete the following circuit as many times as possible:
 - a. Jump rope 10 times.
 - b. Toss the ball back and forth five times each (that's five tosses and five catches per person).
4. The team that completes the sequence the most times in 60 seconds wins.
5. **Challenge:** Mix up the number of repetitions, or add activities such as sprints or push-ups into the sequence.

BUCKET BRIGADE

Skill Area/Focus: Coordination

Time: 10 minutes

Materials Needed:

- Tennis balls



In this activity, teams have to work together to get balls from one place to another while working on their hand-eye coordination.

Set-up:

1. Divide players into teams of at least three players, preferably more.
2. Line teams up, with players spread out enough that each player has some distance from his teammates (10 to 20 paces is a good distance).
3. Give a tennis ball to the players at each end of the lines.
4. When you say “Go!” players must relay both balls up and down the line. Remind players to stay sharp – balls will be tossed in both directions!
5. The first team to get the balls up and down the line five times each wins.

KICK LINE

Skill Area/Focus: Coordination

Time: 15 minutes

Materials Needed:

- ☐ Cones
- ☐ Kickball



This fun twist on the classic game of kickball encourages teamwork for both runners and fielders.

Set-up:

1. Set up cones in a baseball diamond formation.
2. Choose one player to be the pitcher. Station them in the center of the diamond, then give them the kickball.
3. Have all other members line up single file at home plate.
4. On your cue, the pitcher rolls the ball to the player at the front of the line. When the player kicks it, everyone but the pitcher runs the bases. Each player must tag every base, but they cannot stop running until they reach home plate.
5. The pitcher must recover the ball, and use it to tag out as many runners as they can. Each runner they tag becomes an “outfielder,” who can help tag out other runners.
6. The last runner to cross home plate becomes the next pitcher, and the game begins again.

SEVENTH INNING

STEAL OF A DEAL

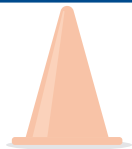
Skill Area/Focus: Agility

Time: 15 minutes

Materials Needed:

☐ Cones

☐ Tennis ball



Stealing bases is challenging to do and prevent. Even though it is prohibited in many youth rules, it can be a lot of fun, and practicing a solid steal builds both agility and awareness.

Set-up:

1. Set up cones in a baseball diamond formation.
2. Have three members stand at first, second and third bases, while another member stands in the center (the pitcher), with a baseball. These members are the Home team.
3. Have two members stand at any two of the bases. These members are the Visitors.
4. When you say "Go!" the players on the bases attempt to steal the next base in line. It's the Home team basemen's job to alert the pitcher of a runner; it's the pitcher's job to get the ball to a baseman in time to tag the runner and prevent the steal.

5. For each thwarted steal, the Home team earns one point. For each base stolen, the Visitors earn one point.
6. Cycle through members until everyone has played. The team with the most points at the end of that round wins.
7. Then, switch positions; if a member played for the Home team in the previous round, that member switches to the Visiting team, and vice versa. Begin the game again.

»»»»»»»» Tip: ««««««««

VEGGIE CHEF

Pretty much everyone knows you're supposed to eat your vegetables. But how many of us know all the ways there are to prepare them? Have members share some of their favorite veggie dishes, from a fresh carrot to a simple salad to a fancy curry. Encourage members to try a new vegetable in the coming week, whether at home, at school or at a friend's house, and to share their experience with the rest of the **PLAY BALL** crew.

KNOCKOUT

Skill Area/Focus: Agility

Time: 15 minutes

Materials Needed:

- ☐ Kickball
- ☐ “Knockout” object, such as an empty can or dish soap bottle



This kicking relay ends with a fun surprise that helps members build accuracy.

Set-up:

1. Set up a non-breakable “knockout” object on the ground. This is the target.
2. Tell members to line up single file, about three feet from each other. Place the target about 15 feet away from a player who’s at one end of the line. The last person in line should be directly across from the target.
3. Give the kickball to the player farthest from the target. Starting with this player, the players pass the ball down the line by kicking. The last player in line attempts to knock over the target with the ball.
4. After they kick, toss the ball to back to them. The player then races the ball to the back of the line and the relay begins again. The game ends when all members have had a chance to kick at the target.

5. **Team Challenge:** Count off the members in the line into two teams, alternating 1's and 2's. For each successful knockout, the team earns a point. The team with the most points after everyone has kicked is the winner.



EYES ON THE SERVING SIZE

What is a “serving” of food? Is it the amount listed as a serving size on the package? Is it enough to make you feel full? Is it the amount you eat before you get bored and move on to something else? Challenge members to evaluate serving sizes by:

- ☐ Asking themselves whether they have ever considered what a reasonable serving might be.
- ☐ Thinking about whether different foods should have different serving sizes.
- ☐ Comparing how much they would normally eat to the amount listed on the package. Is it more or less? Why?
- ☐ Ask members to come up with what they think a reasonable serving size would be for a number of different foods. Tell them to visit PBSKids.org's It's My Life site to compare serving sizes of food items they see every day. For example, a serving of bread is about the size of a CD, and about as thick as a kid's finger. Visit **<http://pbskids.org/itsmylife/body/foodsmarts/article3.html>** for more information!

SEVENTH INNING Stretch

INSTANT REPLAY

Skill Area/Focus: Agility

Time: 10 minutes

Materials Needed: None

Players get fit and sharpen their memories with this mind/body game.

Set-up:

1. Tell members to face you, with at least one arm's length of space from any other member. Let them know that they'll need to watch you closely, and repeat your actions.
2. Then, perform a combination of jumping jacks, sit-ups, push-ups and lateral hops.
3. Members must repeat the actions you performed. When a member misses an action, they are out. Enlist eliminated players to watch for missed actions.
4. Perform another series for members to follow, until only one member remains. They are the winner.

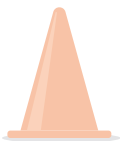
ONE THING AFTER ANOTHER

Skill Area/Focus: Balance

Time: 10 minutes

Materials Needed:

□ Cones



Balancing while switching from one physical action to another is key to success on the field. This activity mixes and matches actions to create a balance challenge.

Set-up:

1. Divide members into two teams.
2. Line up four cones at uneven intervals in front of each team.
3. Tell members that the areas between the cones are “activity zones.” For example, between cones one and two, players must hop. Between cones two and three, players must move sideways. Between cones three and four, players must run backward. (Feel free to make up your own sequence of activities.)
4. On your cue, the first member of each team runs the course. When players reach the end of the course, they must turn around and complete the course in reverse (run backward; move sideways; hop).
5. If a player performs the wrong activity, they must return to the start and run the course again.
6. The first team to get all of its members back to the start wins.

IT'S A BIRD, IT'S A PLANE!

Skill Area/Focus: Coordination

Time: 10 minutes

Materials Needed:

☐ Plastic hoop

☐ Tennis balls



In baseball, everything is in motion during a play. Players need experience reacting to changing circumstances while maintaining accuracy.

Set-up:

1. Tell members to line up single file, then number off into two teams (alternate one's and two's). Give each member a tennis ball.
2. Station yourself approximately 20 paces away from the front of the line, holding a hoop off to the side. Slowly raise and lower it.
3. Players attempt to throw a tennis ball through the moving hoop one at a time. Each time a player gets a ball through the hoop, that player's team earns one point.
4. The game ends when all players have had a chance to throw. The team with the most points at the end of the game wins.
5. **Challenge:** Toss the hoop in the air or roll it along the ground to create an even more challenging target.

EIGHTH INNING OBSTACLE COURSE

Skill Area/Focus: Balance

Time: 10 minutes

Materials Needed:

- ☐ Cones
- ☐ Jump ropes
- ☐ Plastic hoops
- ☐ Balance blocks
- ☐ Tennis balls (optional)



In baseball, you never know exactly what you'll encounter – from rocks on the field to other players. This obstacle course is a fun and challenging way for members to practice balance while avoiding hazards.

Set-up:

1. Divide the group into two teams.
2. Each team sets up an obstacle course for the other team using cones, jump ropes, plastic hoops and balance blocks. (Optional: Teams can stipulate other obstacles or activities, such as throwing a tennis ball back and forth to teammates at the starting line, or performing a certain number of push-ups, sit-ups or lateral hops. If one team chooses to do this, ensure that the other team incorporates any additional activities as well.)

3. Each team sends one member at a time through the other team's course. They have to run the course without touching any of the obstacles.
4. The first team to complete the other team's course wins.

SPIDER CATCH

Skill Area/Focus: Balance

Time: 5 minutes

Materials Needed:

- ☐ Tennis balls
- ☐ Stopwatch



Throwing from awkward positions is part of a real baseball game. Both throwing accuracy and balance have to be spot-on to win this game.

Set-up:

1. Divide players into pairs of teams, and give each team a tennis ball.
2. Have teammates face each other, then crouch down and put one hand on the ground.
3. Then, tell the teams to start a game of catch, with each player keeping one hand on the ground at all times.
4. If a player drops the ball or removes their hand from the ground, the team must start its catch-count over. The team that makes the greatest number of successive catches in five minutes wins.

CHASM

Skill Area/Focus: Balance

Time: 10 minutes

Materials Needed:

- Tennis ball



This partner game determines just how far members can stretch without losing their balance.

Set-up:

1. Divide players into two lines, with the lines facing one another. The players should be close enough to touch hands easily.
2. Give the player at one end of the line the tennis ball.
3. The player with the ball passes it to the person across from them. Note: Players are not allowed to move their feet once the ball is in play.
4. Players pass the ball across the “chasm” to the end of the line.
5. When the ball reaches the end, all players take one small step back, and pass the ball back up the line.
6. As the lines move apart, it becomes more difficult to pass the ball, and players must lean, stretch and reach to get the ball from one person to another.
7. If a ball is dropped, both the passer and the receiver are out of the game.
8. The last pair to successfully pass the ball wins.

NINTH INNING

BASES LOADED

Skill Area/Focus: Coordination/Agility

Time: 15 minutes

Materials Needed:

- ☐ Cones
- ☐ Kickball



This riff on a classic game of kickball gets players moving at every base.

Set-up:

1. Set up cones in a baseball diamond formation. Basic gameplay will mimic baseball.
2. Divide members into two even-numbered teams. One team will start as the defense, and one as the offense. Have the defensive team choose a pitcher, three basemen and three outfielders. Give the pitcher a kickball, and tell them to stand in the center of the diamond, facing home plate. Tell the basemen to go stand near their bases, and have the outfielder stand at right, center and left-field, outside the diamond, facing home plate.
3. The first offensive kicker approaches home plate. The pitcher rolls the kickball toward the kicker. When they kick the ball, they must race to first base.

4. If the player reaches the base without being tagged out by the pitcher or a baseman, both the kicker and the baseman must perform a pre-determined set of exercises (10 jumping jacks, 10 push-ups, 10 sit-ups, etc.). As the facilitator, you should designate the exercises that members will perform at each base. The kicker cannot be tagged out while performing the exercises, but if the baseman finishes exercising before the kicker does, the kicker is out.
5. Play continues until the offensive team has three outs, or all players have kicked. Then, the teams switch. The team with the most home runs after each team has played offense is the winner.

BALANCE BEAM BATTER

Skill Area/Focus: Coordination

Time: 10 minutes

Materials Needed:

- ☐ Plastic ball
- ☐ Plastic bat
- ☐ Balance block (4"x 4")



This game helps players hone their balancing skills, which are critical to strong batting.

Set-up:

1. Divide players into two teams.
2. Set up a balance block, such as a 4"x 4" piece of wood that a player can stand on safely as they hit a ball.
3. In turn, have each player stand on the block and attempt to hit three pitches from you, or from another member (underhand, or as appropriate to the members' skill level).
4. If the player manages to stay on the block for all three pitches, they earn one point for their team. They also earn one point for each pitch they hit while staying balanced.
5. The team with the most points after everyone has hit is the winner.

PLAY BALL BACK POCKET

Guide References

<http://www.PlayBall.org>

How Much Physical Activity Do Children Need? (CDC):

- www.cdc.gov/physicalactivity/everyone/guidelines/children.html

The CDC is a trusted source for health and fitness info – we always consult their work first.

Healthy Living/Fitness section at HealthyKids.org (AAP)

- www.healthychildren.org/English/healthy-living/fitness/Pages/default.aspx

Major children's publisher Scholastic engages experts in the field of child development to create content for the Scholastic website. It is a respected resource for information on growing children.

PBJS also consulted the President's Challenge and Let's Move! programs, both of which expounded the benefits of developing a strong commitment to physical activity at a young age.

The American Academy of Pediatrics powers HealthyKids.org, a highly informative and trustworthy source for information on the needs of growing kids. The Fitness section is robust, and includes articles on getting the right physical activity at the right time

- www.healthychildren.org/English/healthy-living/fitness/Pages/Physical-Activity-Make-the-Right-Choice-for-Your-Child.aspx,

daily activity recommendations

- www.healthychildren.org/English/healthy-living/fitness/Pages/Energy-Out-Daily-Physical-Activity-Recommendations.aspx

and how to encourage kids to be physically active

- www.healthychildren.org/English/healthy-living/fitness/Pages/Encouraging-Your-Child-to-be-Physically-Active.aspx

Physical Development: Agility & Balance and Physical Development: Strength & Coordination (Scholastic)

- <http://www.scholastic.com/teachers/article/physical-development-agility-and-balance>
- www.scholastic.com/teachers/article/physical-development-strength-and-coordination

Kids and Exercise and Fitness and our 6- to 12-Year-Old (KidsHealth.org)

- www.kidshealth.org/parent/nutrition_center/staying_fit/exercise.html#cat20889http://kidshealth.org/parent/nutrition_center/staying_fit/fitness_6_12.html#

KidsHealth.org is a three-pronged site featuring sections for parents, teens, and young children. It is supported by the Nemours Center for Children's Health Media, a part of The Nemours Foundation – which itself is a non-profit organization devoted to improving children's health.

Physical Development: Agility & Balance and Physical Development: Strength & Coordination (Scholastic)

- www.scholastic.com/teachers/article/physical-development-agility-and-balance
- www.scholastic.com/teachers/article/physical-development-strength-and-coordination



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