# **Chapter 13: Activities**

## **Incorporating Activities for Functional Fitness**

### **Brian Justin**

# Movement Competence Activities

# 1. Bear Walks

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Movement category** | Primal pattern:  push | | FMS category: stability | |
| **Laban’s movement framework** | | Body: total body integration | | Space: general space, forward/backward, straight path | | Effort:  slow pace, free flow | Relationship: solo, cooperative |

***Purpose***

This activity take a fun approach to teaching students how to stabilize their core musculature in a push pattern. Students also learn about bears!

***Instructions***

1. Stand with your feet shoulder-width apart.
2. Lower your upper body so that your hands are on the floor in a push-up position.
3. With your rear in the air, bend your knees slightly and start walking forward with your hands and feet alternating.
4. Move the designated distance and then roar like a bear.

***Modification***

To make it easier on the core, students can move with their knees on the ground. To make it harder, they can crawl backward.

***Teacher Points***

* Check for students’ ability to find the rhythm with their legs and arms.
* This is a good developmental exercise to work toward teaching push-ups as it will provide the core stability to handle holding the push up position (see the next activity).
* Fun bear fact to share with the class: Bears can run up to 50 kilometers per hour over short distances!
* Fun question for the class: Can you get to that speed moving like this?

***Reflection***

* What body parts did you feel working the hardest? (For older students, you can refer to specific muscle areas.)
* Where would the strength developed from this activity be useful for in your daily life and play? (You may get all kinds of answers here!)

# 2. Totally Tubular Back Rows

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Movement category** | Primal pattern:  pull | | FMS categories: manipulation, stability | |
| **Laban’s movement framework** | | Body: total body integration | | Space: self-space (kinosphere), shoulder height | | Effort: slow pace | Relationship: solo, cooperative |

***Equipment***

Resistance tubing and wall hooks or posts for anchoring it

***Purpose***

This activity teaches students how to stabilize their core in a pull pattern using tubing as resistance.

***Instructions***

1. Attach an exercise tube to a wall hook or around a post at shoulder height. If you want your students to row with both hands simultaneously, place one handle through the hook or around a post and pull it through so the handles are even. If you would like students to use one hand at a time, simply wrap the tubing around the hook or post, place one handle through the other, and pull tight. Alternatively, if students are mature enough, you can have one student hold the tube for another.
2. Be sure that students assume a parallel stance. Have them hold the handles or ends of the tubing and squeeze their shoulder blades together as they pull their arms back while keeping their elbows just below shoulder level for a high row. Alternatively, they can pull while keeping their arms by their sides for a low row.
3. Ensure that students maintain control of the tubing and don’t let it slingshot on the return.

***Teacher Points***

* Ensure synchronous motion between shoulder blades and arms.
* Teach students to keep their core tight and their upper body upright while resisting the force of the tubing.
* Variation 1: More advanced students can squat and then row on the ascent.
* Variation 2: Students in grades 6 through 8 can lunge and row.

***Reflection***

* When do you use pulling strength while playing in the park?
* When do your mother and father need pulling strength for chores at home?

# 3. Have a Seat

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Movement category** | Primal pattern:  squat | | FMS categories: stability, locomotion | |
| **Laban’s movement framework** | | Body: lower extremity | | Space: self-space (kinosphere) | | Effort: slow pace | Relationship: solo, cooperative |

***Equipment***

Chairs

***Purpose***

This activity teaches students how to stabilize their core in a squat pattern.

***Instructions***

1. Stand in front of a chair with your feet shoulder-width apart.
2. Place your arms out in front at shoulder height in “zombie position.” (Teaching note: You can change this positioning if you want students to pick up objects.)
3. Push your rear back while bending your knees, lightly touch your rear on the chair (or child size chair), and then return. If there is no chair available, have them squat only to a depth before their buttocks rotates downward and their low back starts to round.

***Teacher Points***

* Be sure that students’ knees are in line with their shoelaces.
* From a side view, see if students’ shoulders line up within their foot base.

***Reflection***

If you have to pick up a heavy toy, how would you do it?

# 4. An Order of the Knight Hood

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Movement category** | Primal pattern:  lunge | | FMS categories: stability, locomotion | |
| **Laban’s movement framework** | | Body: lower extremity | | Space: self-space (kinosphere) | | Effort: slow and fast pace | Relationship: cooperative |

***Equipment***

Pool noodle or foam sword

***Purpose***

This activity teaches students how to stabilize their core in a lunge pattern.

***Instructions***

1. In partners, the students will each hold a pool noodle in one hand and face each other. Be sure they are far enough apart so they have room to lunge toward each other.
2. Each student will take turns lunging in front of each other while the partner “knights” the other by touching both shoulders with the pool noodle or foam sword.
3. The student knighting will be instructed by the teacher to make it a long knighting process (takes 5-10 seconds for example) or a short one (as quick as possible). This will allow the student lunging to experience different tempos of lunging and its effects on the legs and core for holding the posture under different speeds. The slow lunges will allow the teacher to observe form. To have some fun with it, give instructions in medieval style!

***Teacher Points***

* Be sure the knees are in line with the shoelaces.
* The front shin should be vertical while the knee of the back leg can be in line with the hip or just behind it.
* Torso should be vertical with the spine in neutral (low back slightly arched).

***Reflection***

* What sports do you see lunging in? (Due to the fact that it is a knighting activity you can introduce fencing if it is not mentioned.)
* What directions can you lunge in? How does lunging help you put the brakes on to change direction when playing sports?

# 5. London Bridge Is Going Up

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Movement category** | Primal pattern: bend | | FMS category:  locomotion | |
| **Laban’s movement framework** | | Body: lower extremity and core | | Space: self-space (kinosphere) | | Effort: slow pace | Relationship: solo, cooperative |

***Purpose***

This activity teaches students how to stabilize their core in a bend pattern.

***Instructions***

1. Lie down on your back with your knees bent.
2. Raise your hips toward the sky until they are in line with your knees. Your pelvis should be level, like a tabletop. Hold the position for a few seconds.
3. Lower your hips back to the ground under control.
4. Stand with your feet hip-width to shoulder-width apart and your knees slightly bent.
5. Pinch the skin on your back so that it makes a horizontal fold.
6. Bend your torso forward as if to pick up a pencil from the floor but stop if you feel like you are losing the skin in your fingers. (Students will likely stop moving before they hit 50 degrees.)
7. Now, move closer to the wall with your buttocks facing the wall.
8. Try it again but this time punch the wall with your butt. (This gets students to move from the hips.)
9. Did this feel different from the first time? Did you go farther without the skin leaving your fingers? This is how you should bend to pick things up!

***Reflection***

1. Use your fingers to feel your spine in your low back. Bones and discs in there help you move.
2. This structure is important to your health. (Talk with students about how this is true.)
3. Watch what happens when I push the front of this jelly donut. Where do you think the jelly will go? This is why we protect our backs by bending from the hips when we pick things up. We don’t want to put pressure on our discs like the jelly in the donut. (The specifics of this demonstration will differ depending on your students’ grade level.)

# 6. Totally Tubular Wood Chops

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Movement category** | Primal pattern: twist | | FMS categories: manipulation, stability, locomotion | |
| **Laban’s movement framework** | | Body: total body integration | | Space: self-space (kinosphere), low to high | | Effort: slow pace | Relationship: solo, cooperative |

***Equipment***

Resistance tubing and wall hooks or posts for anchoring it

***Purpose***

This activity teaches students how to stabilize their core in a twist pattern using tubing for resistance.

***Instructions***

1. Attach an exercise tube around a hook or post at ankle height. Simply wrap the tube around the post or hook, place one handle through the other, and pull tight.
2. Have students stand sideways to the tube, holding the tube in their hands with the hand furthest away from the tube on the handle first and the closer hand overlapping it. Be sure they are standing far enough away so that there is some tension in the tube. Ask students to rotate the tube from low to high, ending above the shoulders and pivoting the trailing leg.
3. Ensure that students maintain control of the tube and don’t let it slingshot on the return.

***Teacher Points***

* Be sure that students are facing straight ahead when doing the exercise.
* Notice whether students turn evenly or move more in one part of the spine than in another. Do they include their hips when they turn? It is ideal to see equal contribution from the thoracic spine and hips (roughly 45-50 degrees each).

***Reflection***

In which sports do you need to twist?

# Fitness Activities

# 1. Crab Soccer

***Fitness Components***

Stability, muscular strength and endurance

***Equipment***

Four cones; two or three stability balls (or soccer balls, or beach balls)

***Student Numbers***

Eight or more

***Space***

Gymnasium

***Setup and Formation***

Place the game balls in the centre of the playing area and use cones to establish a goal line for each team.

***Instructions***

1. Students assume the crab position on their team’s goal line.
2. Upon your command or whistle, the members of each team crab-walk to the centre line and try to kick the balls to the opposing team’s goal line.
3. A goal is awarded for each ball that crosses the line between the markers.
4. After a goal is scored, both teams walk back to their goal line, and the balls are returned to the centre of the playing area.
5. Play continues until one of the teams scores a designated number of points.
6. If a ball goes out of bounds, the player who retrieves it returns it to the centre of the playing area; the ball is then considered back in play.

***Variation***

* Move the cones farther apart to make scoring easier or closer together to make it harder.
* You can use open goals (for K-1 students) or designate two students to serve as goalies.

***Assessment***

Check that students do not let their rear end touch the ground during play. If they do, you may add a point for the other team.

***Safety***

Ensure proper spacing between the balls in the centre area in order to avoid foot contact between players.

# 2. ABSS Circuit

***Fitness Components***

Agility, balance, speed, and strength

***Equipment***

Bouncing balls, beanbags, tape, medicine balls, stability balls, skipping ropes

***Student numbers***

20

***Space***

Gymnasium

***Setup and Formation***

Set up 10 stations with the appropriate equipment at each station. Ensure that there is enough room for students to perform the activities safely.

***Instructions***

Students rotate through the stations in partners, spending one minute at each station and having 10 seconds to transition from one station to the next. For each station, call out the 30-second interval, which is needed for stations that involve switching limbs. Each circuit takes 12 minutes, and the circuit can be completed three times for a total of 36 minutes of fitness fun!

**Station 1: Single-Leg Partner Ball Bounces (Balance)**

1. Stand on one leg 1.5 meters from your partner while facing each other.
2. Bounce the ball back and forth to each other.
3. Switch legs at the 30-second mark.

**Station 2: Zombie Stork Stand (Balance)**

1. Stand on one leg 1.5 meters from your partner while facing each other and holding your arms in zombie position (elbows straight with arms out in front at shoulder level).
2. Shift your body weight onto your left leg while raising your right leg off the ground so that its hip and knee are bent at 90 degrees.
3. Switch legs at the 30 second mark.

**Station 3: Beanbag Shuffle (Agility)**

Set up two hoops 1.5 to 3 meters apart and place several beanbags in one of them.

1. Take turns moving all of the beanbags from one hoop to the next.
2. While one player moves the bags, the other rests.
3. Keep alternating until the end of the designated time period.

**Station 4: Dance Dance Dot Revolution (Agility and Reaction Ability)**

Place five pieces of tape on the floor in the formation of dots on a die indicating the number five (two on top, one in the middle, two on the bottom). Label the top two dots 1 and 2, the middle dot 3, and the bottom two dots 4 and 5. Set up one such “tape die” for each student.

1. Start with your feet on dots 1 and 2, then jump so that both feet land on dot 3, and then jump again so that your feet land on dots 4 and 5, respectively. Then reverse this sequence.
2. Repeat for the designated amount of time. (Teaching note: You can use fewer dots for younger children.)

**Station 5: Inchworm Walks (Core and Upper Body Strength)**

Ensure that students maintain a neutral spine; if not, have them do bear walks instead.

1. Assume a push-up position.
2. Walk your legs up so that your feet get closer to your hands.
3. Walk your hands out until you are back in a push-up position. (Teaching notes: Older, stronger children can walk farther out than their shoulders in order to challenge their core muscles.)

**Station 6: Medicine Ball Squat Swings (Core and Lower Body Strength)**

1. Hold a medicine ball and stand with your feet shoulder-width apart.
2. Squat down and swing the medicine ball between your legs while keeping your arms straight.
3. Stand back up while swinging the ball up until your arms are in line with your shoulders.
4. Control the rising and falling of the ball. (Teaching note: Younger students can use a lighter object.)

**Station 7: Towel Pulls (Twist and Pull Strength)**

Ensure that partners have roughly equal strength.

1. Face your partner while holding one end of a towel with the opposite hand your partner is usingand standing in the athletic ready position.
2. Pull and twist the towel in a tug-of-war type of action.
3. Switch hands at the 30-second mark.

**Station 8: Stability Ball Roller Coaster (Push Strength)**

1. Crouch behind a stability ball with your chest on the ball and your legs in a squat position.
2. Push gently with your legs to begin rolling over the ball; catch yourself on the other side with your hands on the floor.
3. Use your hands to push yourself back over the ball and land on your feet. Your body should touch the ball at all times.

**Station 9: King Crab (Total Body Integration for Strength)**

Mark a line with masking tape 2 meters on either side of each student pair (or use lines on the gym floor).

1. Set up in crab-walk position with your back against your partner’s back.
2. Try to push your partner toward and over his or her masking tape line.
3. If you or your partner wins before the allotted time is over, go back to the centre and start again.

**Station 10: Rope Skipping (Cardiorespiratory Fitness and Speed)**

Jump rope and keep track of how many times you can jump over the rope without tripping. (Teaching note: If skipping is too challenging for students, they can perform the skipping motion without a rope.)

***Assessment***

Ensure that the designated movement at each station is executed with control.

***Safety***

Spend a good amount of time explaining the stations and demonstrating the exercises before having students perform the circuit.

# 3. Bubble Magic

***Fitness Components***

Cardiorespiratory fitness, agility, speed, and balance (also suitable for learning primal patterns)

***Equipment***

Bubble maker

***Student Numbers***

Two or more (grades K-3)

***Setup and Formation***

Students are spread out in a large open area (e.g., half of a gymnasium or an open field).

***Instructions***

1. Blow as many bubbles as possible and have students chase them and pop or catch them with their hands in a set position of your choice.
2. You can work on primal patterns and have students freeze at the bottom of a primal pattern for squatting, bending, and lunging (or at the end of a twist, push, or pull).
3. You can require students to popthe bubbles while running in order to work on gait.
4. Speed and agility are developed as students chase the bubbles.
5. To work on balance, have students stand on one leg while catching bubbles.
6. To work on cardiorespiratory capacity, keep blowing bubbles so that students keep moving for a specified time without slowing down.

***Variations***

* Use balloons instead of bubbles.
* Have students chase the bubbles or balloons while using patterns of animal motion.

***Assessment***

* Assess students’ execution of primal patterns.
* Assess students’ ability to react to your instructions.

***Safety***

* Depending on the bubble maker, check the floor for slipperiness (grass fields are safer in this regard); have towels ready for mopping if necessary.
* Ensure that students know to watch out for each other when chasing bubbles.
* If possible, designate a few students to be bubble makers so that you can spread the children out farther; this duty can rotate among students.