



BEACH BALL ACTIVITIES AND GAMES

Beach Ball Activities and Games

Beach balls are excellent pieces of equipment to incorporate into adapted physical education (APE) and inclusive classes and activities. Because of their light, multicolor and soft construction, beach balls are easy to catch and manipulate. These characteristics enhance the success rates of students during ball games. Beach balls are also affordable and fun to play with. Students that practice ball skills can improve overall strength and agility, as well as enhance hand-eye and foot-eye coordination and gross motor skills. The use of beach balls increases the area of contact and requires less finger strength for ball control. Larger balls enable the fingers to be extended, enabling the hand grasp reflex. A study reported that throwing, catching, passing and rolling a ball improves muscle response time in children with disabilities.

Sitting Volleyball



Sitting volleyball is a modified discipline of volleyball that can be played by students with or without disabilities. Sitting volleyball is very similar to traditional volleyball with one main difference. In sitting volleyball, a part of the student's body between the bottom and the shoulder must be touching the court when making or attempting a shot. Students use their hands to play the ball and to move on the floor as well. Teams are allowed three touches of the ball before it must cross over the net into the opposing team's half of the court. The size of the court is reduced from 18 m x 9 m to 10 m x 6 m. The height of the net is lowered to 1.15 m for men and 1.05 m for women. As a result, the game is much faster than traditional volleyball. If you have a regulation sized volleyball court in the gym, you can divide the court in half length-wise by stringing a net or rope down the middle to create 3 sitting volleyball courts using those same lines.

General Adaptations:

- It is important to consider each student's ability level and adapt only when needed and specific to that individual.
- Use smaller or lighter ball (ex: beach ball or foam ball).
- Use a smaller net.
- Place mats on floor to ease in scooting.
- Play on scooter boards to help with movement.
- Play variations of a standard volleyball game: two vs. two, toss and catch, skill building.

Adaptations for Cognitive and Sensory Impairments:

- Minimize background noise during instruction and play.
- Visually demonstrate skills.
- Use flags instead of whistles.
- Catch the ball instead of volleying.
- Move serving line forward.
- Use a larger and bright colored ball.
- Use poly dots to help students find floor position.
- Use a peer assist.

Activities for Toddlers

- Encourage a toddler to play with and practice rolling a large, lightweight ball. Then, place a large cardboard box on its side, with the opening toward the child. Starting with the box very close, challenge the toddler to roll the ball so it goes into the box. Then, help him or move farther and farther away as he or she begins to master this activity.
- Use an indoor or outdoor toddler-sized slide and position one toddler at the top and the other at the bottom. Ask the child at the top to roll a large, lightweight ball down the slide to the other child, who catches it, walks around the slide and returns the ball, and goes back to catch it again. After a while, the children can change places. To make the game more difficult, ask the child at the bottom to move farther away.

Activities for Preschoolers

- Ask children to sit in a circle. Explain that the object of this game is to see how long they can hit a beach ball to each other without letting it touch the ground. As they master the game, add a few challenges, such as: no one can hit the ball twice in a row, children can hit the ball only with the part of their body you call out (e.g., knees, hand).
- Collect clean cans or plastic bottles and label each with a different bright color. Help children stack the cans and then roll, throw or kick a fairly large ball at them. Have experience-chart paper and matching color markers nearby so you can help the children graph the colors and number of cans they knock down according to the technique they use.



Volleyball



Objective: "Volley" the ball over the net to cause the opposing team to mishit or be unable to hit the ball, all while keeping the ball inbounds. It is recommended that the following adaptations be used only when needed to maximize participation and success.

Equipment: Beach ball, volleyball net or boundary.

General Adaptations:

- Allow for multiple hits beyond three for each side.
- Allow the ball to bounce (like in the game of Newcomb).
- Allow the server to serve closer to the net.
- Allow the student to catch the ball first and then put it back up for play.
- Use larger, softer, brightly colored balls for motivation and fun.
- Minimize unnecessary background noises.
- Use a beeping volleyball, or alternative ball, with a noise-making device for students with vision loss.
- Have students throw the ball in for a serve.

Space Invaders



Objective: Students are to push a large ball(s) towards designated players moving within a circle.

Equipment: Large beach ball, large therapy ball.

Students are to create a large outer circle (facing in) and a smaller inner circle (facing out) with one or two large balls (e.g., beach ball, therapy ball) and several students in between. Following a starting signal, students between the two circles try to not be touched by balls, while students making up the inner and outer circles are trying to push the balls towards the students inside. If a student pushing a ball makes contact with a student inside, then those two students switch positions.

The game is over after everyone has had a chance to flee from the balls. Ball size, circle sizes, number of balls, or number of students between the two circles fleeing from the balls will vary the difficulty level. Increasing participation for some students could mean positioning them in the inner circle, having a buddy help them during fleeing and/or allowing them to be touched several times with a ball before having to switch positions.