

Striking

with the Hand(s)

Description

Striking an object with the hand(s) includes controlling a ball in an upward motion, which is involved in skills like the overhead volley in volleyball, and controlling a ball in a downward (hand bounce) direction, which is associated with hand dribbling in basketball or handball. Striking the ball with the hand(s) is a more advanced skill and requires coordination of the hands and eyes, being able to track an incoming ball and strike that ball in one motion. Younger children can enjoy this skill if it is learned in a developmentally appropriate manner, starting with the use of lightweight objects like balloons.



Applying movement principles

Stability: Balance or stability is achieved when your feet and/or legs are comfortably spread to provide a wide, stable base of support. Bending your knees will lower the centre of gravity, further increasing stability.

Accuracy: If you strike a ball in line with its centre of gravity (middle), the ball will travel in a straight line. If you hit a ball above or below its centre of gravity, the ball will spin away, losing distance and speed.

Inertia: When an object like a ball is not moving, it has its greatest inertia. To keep the ball bouncing, a force needs to be applied, (e.g. continuous pushing motion/bouncing).

Learning cues

Volleying with the hands

- keep eyes on the ball
- position body directly underneath and in line with the ball
- strike the ball by extending the arms and legs
- striking surface should be flat – like a pancake
- follow through in the direction the ball is to go

Hand dribbling

- fingers are spread and relaxed
- push the ball down, with the wrist and fingers controlling the bounce
- follow through
- push the ball slightly forward
- keep the ball below the waist

Learning phases

Discovering phase

Children in this phase find it difficult to contact the ball in one motion, and need to explore striking a variety of lightweight objects that are easy to track and strike. Characteristics of this phase are described below.

Volleying with the hands

- children find it difficult to track or judge the path of the ball/balloon
- they find it difficult to move underneath the line of the ball
- they tend to slap the ball on contact

Hand dribbling

- children use both hands to hold the ball at the sides, with their palms facing each other
- they bounce the ball with both hands, keeping their fingers stiff with a downward push
- they have little control of the ball, bouncing it at varied heights
- they use a 'bounce, catch' action

Developing phase

Children in this phase are able to consistently control the direction as well as the force of the strike. Activities in this phase focus on practising striking in a range of contexts, working with a partner or striking a ball after it rebounds from a wall. Characteristics of this phase are described below.

Volleying with the hands

- children still find it difficult to track the ball
- they move to the line of the ball
- the striking action is mainly from the arms and hands, with little follow-through from the legs
- they have little control over the direction of the flight of the ball

Hand dribbling

- children hold the ball with one hand on top and one hand underneath
- top hand pushes the ball down
- hand slaps the ball when bouncing
- eyes are on the ball
- bounce of the dribble is inconsistent and not greatly controlled

Consolidating phase

Children in this phase can control the ball with consistency in more unpredictable environments. They are able to judge the flight path of the ball, and position their body to hit the ball and to pass accurately. Characteristics of performance in this phase are described below.

Volleying with the hands

- children move consistently underneath and to the line of the ball
- good contact with fingertips or hand
- effective use of extension of legs and arms – force summation
- control the direction of the flight of the ball

Hand dribbling

- children hold the ball at waist height
- they push the ball down, following through with arm, wrist and fingers
- relaxed fingertips control the dribble

Overview

Learning phase	Activity name	Movement skills/concept	Suggested group size	Suggested space	Page
Developing	The Bouncing Ball	Bouncing, dribbling, space awareness and moving at different speeds.	1	Level hard area	234
	Clock Dribble	Bouncing a ball in a stationary position, throwing a large ball in different directions.	4-6	Hard or grass area	236
	What is Volleying?	Striking upwards with the hands, space awareness, relationships, body awareness and time and energy.	1	Hard or grass area	237
	Look, I am Volleying!	Two-handed overarm pass (volley), underhand pass (serve, bump), personal space, body awareness.	1	Hard or grass area	238
Developing	Underhand Striking	Underhand strike, space and body awareness.	1	Hard or grass area	239
	Underhand Striking Against the Wall	Volleying a rebound ball, judging speed and direction of rebound, and using body parts.	1	Hard or grass area	240
	Over it Goes	Underhand volleying over a line/net, space awareness, and judging flight path, speed and direction.	2	Hard or grass area	241
	Overhead Volleying	Overhead volleying (set), space and body awareness.	1	Hard or grass area	243
	Tyrannosaurus	Dribbling a ball with the hands while moving, space awareness and evading a tagger.	5-8	Hard or grass area	244
	Brooms and Brushes	Dribbling a ball with the hands while stationary or moving, running, evading and dodging taggers.	8+	Hard area	245
Consolidating	Burglars	Dribbling a ball with the hands, throwing or passing, space or body awareness.	4	Hard area	246
	Circle Volley	Volleying to a stationary target, moving into space, changing direction and speed.	4-5	Hard or grass area	247
	Four Square Volleyball	Underhand strike (bump, or hand bounce) to an area, judging speed and direction, and moving into position to play the ball.	2 or 4	Hard area	248
	Keep It Up	Striking a ball in the air (volley, serve, bump), body awareness and judging flight path.	5-6	Hard area	249

Discovering Striking with the Hand(s)

The Bouncing Ball

Movement skills/concepts

Bouncing, dribbling, space awareness and moving at different speeds.

Set-up

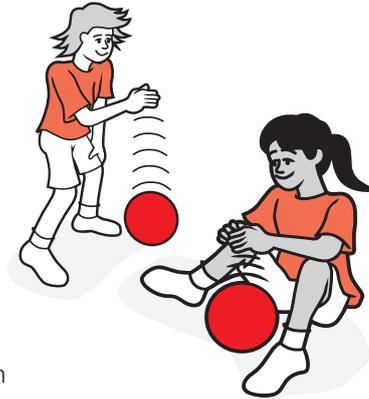
Large balls, markers, hoops, music.

Children, each with a large ball, are spread out in a defined level, hard surface area.

Activity

Can you ...?

- feel the ball, run your fingers over it, push the ball with your hands, try to squash it out of shape
- roll the ball with your hand, foot, knee, shoulder, elbow, head, nose
- roll the ball over your body, head to toe, make your body into the shape of a ball
- bounce the ball while sitting – holding the ball in both hands, push it down using a pushing motion with relaxed fingers and catch return
- progress to bouncing the ball while kneeling then standing, maintaining eye contact with the ball



*Children learn
by exploring*

Holding the ball in both hands at waist height and placing your feet a shoulder width apart, can you bounce the ball ...?

- continuously from a stationary position
- while stepping side to side, then while turning
- with one hand only – change to the other hand
- with one hand, varying the height
- around your body
- through your legs front to back, then back to front
- while walking/jogging/running
- with alternate hands while travelling
- along a line, then inside hoops
- in a restricted space with others
- to music/rhyme/song
- and move with a fast dribble and slow feet
- and move with a slow dribble and fast feet

Can you see ...?

- relaxed fingers
- a pushing action with the finger pads
- head up, looking around
- meeting the ball with the fingers, not chasing it

You could ask ...

Which ways of bouncing did you enjoy the most?

Which was the easiest or most effective way of dribbling? Why was this?

Variations

Create a sequence: Make up your own bouncing sequence individually or with a partner.

Clock Dribble

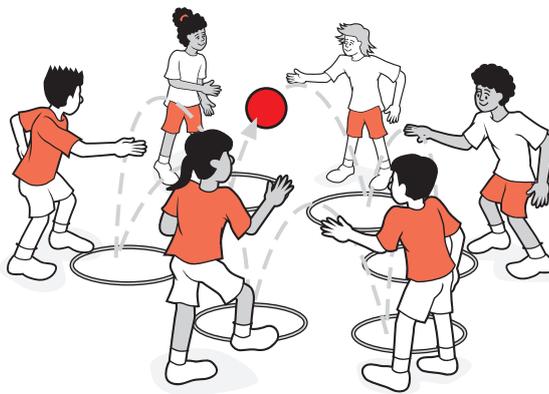
Movement skills/concepts

Bouncing a ball in a stationary position, throwing a large ball in different directions.

Set-up

One ball and one hoop per child. A hard or grass surface.

Groups of approximately four–six: children stand outside a circle of hoops, one at each hoop.



Activity

Each child bounces the ball continuously in their hoop. On the call of a number and 'left' or 'right', (e.g. 'Three right') they pass the balls around the circle, person to person, for the number of places and in the direction called. Then they continue to bounce in their own hoop.

Can you see ...?

- fingers spread and relaxed
- balanced body position

Variations

Add music: Bounce the ball to a musical rhythm, then pass it when the music stops.

Vary rules: Bounce the number of times called, then pass in the identified direction, (e.g. for 'Three left', bounce the ball three times and then pass to the left).

What is Volleying?

Movement skills/concepts

Striking upwards with the hands, space awareness (directions and levels), relationships (with objects), body awareness, and time and energy.

Set-up

Soft, large balls, balloons, or lightweight objects; rope; net.

Children, each with a ball, are spread out in a defined grass or hard surface area.

Activity

Can you volley the ball ...?

- very hard/softly, high/low
- from a seated/kneeling/lying position
- so that it goes above your head and as high as possible
- forward/backwards/to the side/in a circle
- alternating hard and soft
- with different body parts, e.g. head, knees, feet
- and relax/tense your fingers
- 'giving'/without 'giving' with the ball
- so that it drops inside/outside your personal space
- from directly underneath it/off to one side
- over a line/rope/net
- as many times as you can in 30 seconds
- as few times as you can in 30 seconds



Can you see ...?

- enjoyment and participation
- safe control of the ball or object

You could ask ...

Which type of volley did you find the easiest? Why?

Did any of the volleys hurt your hands or arms? Why do you think this happened?

Look, I am Volleying!

Movement skills/concepts

Two-handed overarm pass, underarm serve, two handed forearm pass (bump), space and body awareness.

Set-up

Balloons, large soft balls or light volleyballs, coloured discs/bases.

Children, each with their own space, are scattered in a grass or hard surface area.

Activity

Can you ...?

- strike the balloon/ball up with open palm so it stays in the air – try to prevent it from touching the floor without leaving your spot
- strike the balloon/ball high above your head – practise striking with both left and right hands so you can be equally good with each hand
- volley the balloon/ball above your head and jump up in the air and meet it as it drops – as if you are giving it a 'high five'
- volley the balloon/ball with your hand once and catch it, then twice and catch it
- see if you can volley the balloon/ball 10 times without letting it touch the floor



Can you see ...?

- body underneath the balloon/ball
- flat volleying surface
- upward follow through

You could ask ...

What do you need to do to keep your balloon/ball in the air?

Where do you have to place your body to keep your balloon/ball in the air?

Variations

Strike while travelling: Children volley the balloon/ball above their heads while moving around the defined area.

Use different body parts: For example, strike with the head, elbow or foot. Try a combination of body parts.

Are the children enjoying themselves?

Developing Striking with the Hand(s)

Underhand Striking

Movement skills/concepts

Underhand strike, space and body awareness.

Set-up

A variety of large light balls.

Children are spread out in a designated area, each with a lightweight ball.

Activity

Can you ...?

- strike the ball upward using a flat palm
- strike the ball directly upward so that you can catch it without moving from your own space
- volley underhand five times, never leaving your space
- volley underhand continuously, moving your feet to get in position if you need to – how many volleys can you do without making a mistake?
- repeat the above sequence, but this time volley the ball with your forearms (bump) – to do this, straighten both your arms and bring your forearms together to form a flat surface



Can you see ...?

- flat volleying surface
- body underneath the ball
- upward follow through

You could ask ...

Where will you need to strike the ball to ensure that the ball travels in a straight pathway upward?

What do you need to do with your body to hit the ball upward?

Variations

Work with a partner: One partner tosses the ball to the other, who then volleys underhand back; partners volley to each other.

Underhand Striking Against a Wall

Movement skills/concepts

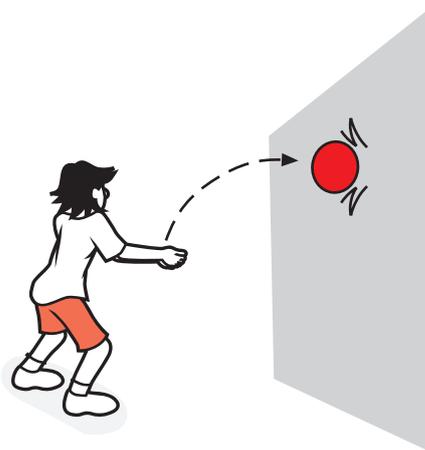
Volleying a rebound ball, judging speed and direction of rebound, and using body parts.

Set-up

Lightweight balls.

Gymnasium or hall, or an outside area that has a wall.

Children, each with a ball, spread out, facing the wall approximately 2 metres (two of a child's giant steps) away from it.



Are all the children succeeding?

Activity

Using a one-handed underarm action, can you ...?

- bounce the ball and volley it against the wall, when the ball returns from the wall, let it bounce and then catch it
- repeat this sequence five times – bounce, volley, bounce, catch
- practise the sequence without catching the ball (i.e. bounce, volley, bounce, volley) as many times as you can without making a mistake (i.e. without letting it bounce twice in a row or hit the wall)
- practise striking the ball with either hand – so, if the ball comes to your right side, strike it with your right hand; if the ball rebounds on your left side, use your left hand
- repeat all of the above activities, but this time with the bump (two forearms) pattern

Can you see ...?

- staying behind the line of the ball
- using quick feet to get into position
- striking with the palm of the hand
- extending legs and arms, and following through to the target

You could ask ...

Where do you need to strike the ball for it to travel forwards to the wall?

How should you have your hand/arm when striking the ball?

Why do you need to keep behind the line of the ball?

Was it easier to volley the ball with one arm or two arms?

Variations

Work with a partner: Practise underhand striking to the wall, alternating the volley and bounce (i.e. your partner will volley the ball to the wall and, once the ball has bounced, the next volley is yours).

Over it Goes

Movement skills/concepts

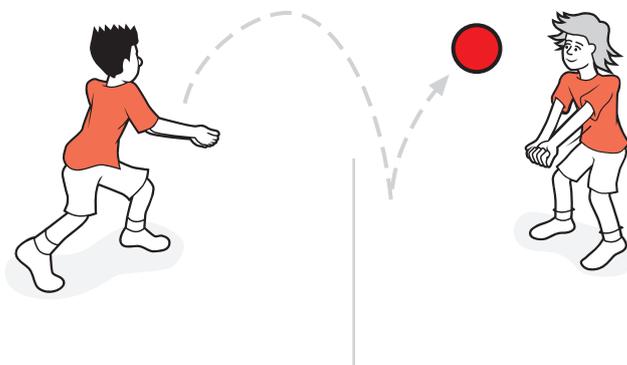
Underhand striking over a line/net, space awareness, and judging flight path, speed and direction.

Set-up

Ropes, elastic, chairs, cones, lightweight balls, tape.

Lines are taped on the floor or indicated with ropes.

Children in pairs, with one line per pair. Partners begin by standing on either side of their line, approximately two of a child's giant steps away from it and facing each other across the line.



*Children
modify activity
to increase
challenge*

Activity

Can you ...?

- practise one-handed strike with your partner – hit the ball with the underhand striking pattern so that it crosses over the line and bounces on the other side, then your partner returns the ball to you so that it bounces on your side of the line
- practise striking with either hand over the line
- see how many times you and your partner can strike the ball back and forth over the line – the ball bounces once each time before you volley it back over
- repeat the activities above, but this time with the bump (two forearms) pattern

With a low net

(The low net could be elastic tied between two chairs, two pole uprights or two tall cones with a rope drawn between them).

Repeat the sequence of tasks described above, and:

- slant your net from high to low, so that you are practising volleying the ball over the net at differing heights
- practise varying the force and the angles at which you volley the ball to your partner – let the ball bounce once on each side of the court before contact
- see how many volleys you and your partner can achieve without making a mistake (i.e. without letting the ball bounce twice in a row or hit the ceiling)

Can you see ...?

- eyes on the ball
- arms straight – flat surface
- body in the path of the ball
- following through in the direction of the strike

You could ask ...

What happened to the speed of the ball when you used more or less force?

Why was this?

What happened to the direction of the ball when it was struck at different angles?

Why was this?

Variations

Vary skills and equipment: Use a soccer ball and kicking.

Overhead Volleying

Movement skills/concepts

Overhead volleying, space and body awareness.

Set-up

Lightweight balls (balloons/foam balls/volleyballs).

Children, each with a lightweight ball, are spread out in a defined grass or hard area.

Activity

Can you ...?

- toss the ball up in the air and, using the pads of your fingers, volley the ball upward above your head so that the ball returns directly to you, then catch the ball after each volley
- repeat and see if you can volley the ball upward twice in the air and then catch the ball; try volleying three times and catch, then gradually increase the number of times you volley the ball in the air and catch it – how many times can you volley the ball before it touches the ground?
- stand facing a wall, toss the ball above your head and volley it upward to the wall using both hands, then catch it after it rebounds from the wall; repeat, this time with two volleys in a row and catch, then gradually increase the number of times you volley in a row before you catch it
- with a partner standing one metre away, pass the ball back and forth with the overhead volley pattern – each person gets two strikes on each side
- still with your partner, see if you can keep the ball going with only one strike on each side



Can you see ...?

- eyes on the ball
- bending knees to get underneath the line of the ball
- following through with arms and legs in an upward motion
- contacting the ball using the finger pads

You could ask ...

Where should your body be when you volley the ball?

How do you have your fingers when you contact the ball in the overhead volley?

Variations

Introduce a net: Children toss a ball up and volley over a net to a partner on the other side, who catches it. Partner repeats the sequence. Children gradually build up to volleying the ball back and forth over the net as many times as possible without making a mistake.

Tyrannosaurus

Movement skills/concepts

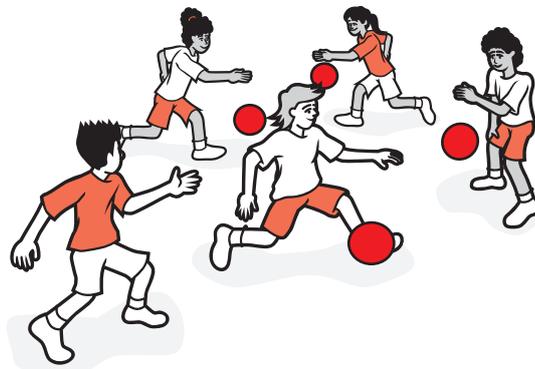
Dribbling a ball with hands stationary or moving, space awareness and evading a tagger.

Set-up

Large round bouncy balls.

Children are spread out in a defined grass or hard surface area with a safe line. All children have a ball except one child, who is the tyrannosaurus.

Are all
children
involved?



Activity

Children, move around the area, dribbling the ball for as long as possible. If a child loses control of the ball, they call, 'Tyrannosaurus'. All then run holding their ball and trying to cross the safe line before being tagged by the tyrannosaurus. Choose a new tyrannosaurus and the game continues.

Can you see ...?

- relaxed dribbling
- head up looking around
- not touching others

You could ask ...

How can you avoid losing control of the ball while dribbling?

What can you do to evade the tyrannosaurus?

Variations

Vary action of tyrannosaurus: The tyrannosaurus tries to steal the ball from dribblers while they are dribbling.

Vary action of dribblers: On the call of 'Tyrannosaurus', dribblers continue to dribble the ball while evading the tyrannosaurus.

Brooms and Brushes

Movement skills/concepts

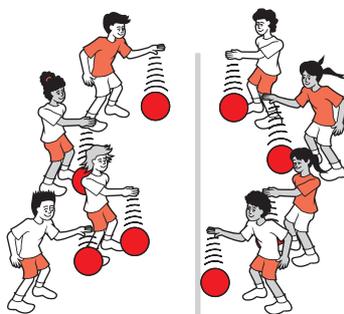
Dribbling a ball with the hands while stationary or moving, running, evading and dodging taggers.

Set-up

Large balls.

A defined hard surface area is divided in two with a safe line at each end.

Two even teams, one in each half of the area: one team is Brooms and the other is Brushes. Everyone has a ball.



Activity

All players on each team dribble the ball within their area. On the call of 'Brooms' or 'Brushes', each player on the team named stops bouncing, gathers their ball and runs over their end safe line before the opposing team can tag them. When a player is caught, they join the opposing team. The pursuers can drop their own ball to chase.

Can you see ...?

- safety when chasing
- head up looking around
- pushing action with fingers when dribbling

You could ask ...

How can you best keep control of the ball?

How will you evade the taggers in the other team?

Variations

Modify game: Players move around while bouncing then, on the call of 'Brushes' or 'Brooms', both teams continue to dribble while running away or chasing.

Consolidating Striking with the Hand(s)

Burglars

Movement skills/concepts

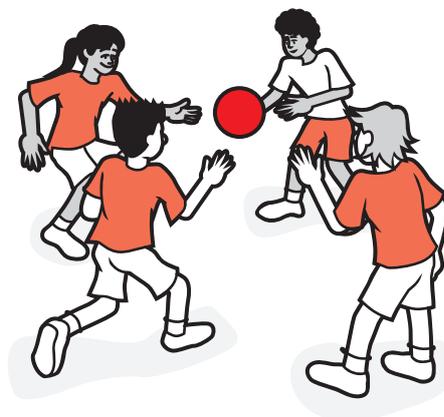
Dribbling a ball with the hands, throwing or passing, space and body awareness.

Set-up

Large balls.

Groups of four (three dribblers and a burglar), with one ball per group, in a defined grass or hard surface area.

Are children thinking and playing?



Activity

The three dribblers dribble and pass the ball to see how long they can keep it away from the burglar, who tries to steal it. If the ball is stolen, the person who lost the ball becomes the new burglar. No body contact is allowed.

Can you see ...?

- head up looking around
- low dribbling – ball no higher than waist height
- relaxed fingertips control the dribble

You could ask ...

Dribblers: When will you decide to dribble and when will you decide to pass the ball?

How were you able to keep the ball away from the burglar?

Burglar: When was a good time to try to steal the ball?

Variations

Modify rules: Play two on two, or three on three.

Vary size of area: Decrease or enlarge the area.

Add goals: Place several markers about 1 metre apart as gates. See how many gates the dribblers can get through in a set time.

Vary skill and equipment: Use soccer or hockey dribbling skills.

Circle Volley

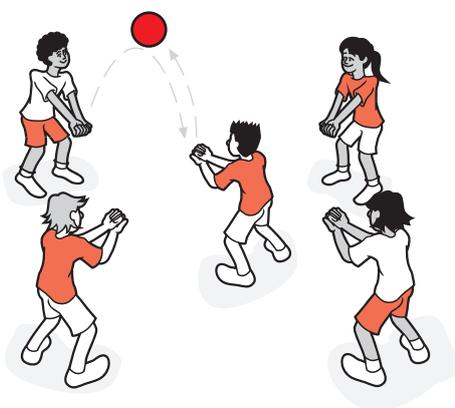
Movement skills/concepts

Volleying ball to a stationary target, moving into space, changing direction and speed.

Set-up

Lightweight balls.

Groups of four–five, with one ball per group, are spread out in a circle in a grass or hard surface area, with about 2 metres between each child. One child stands in the centre of the circle and has the ball.



Activity

The child in the middle throws a high lob to one child in the circle, who volleys it back to the first child. This is repeated until each child has had a turn. The child in the middle is replaced by another child.

Can you see ...?

- moving the body under the ball
- fingers spread – contact with pads of fingers
- bending and extending – bending knees to receive, and extending legs and arms upward on contact
- following through

You could ask ...

How can you keep the ball up in the air?

How effective is your volley? Why is this?

Variations

Pass around the circle: The first child in the circle throws the ball to the child on their left, who then volleys it in the air and catches it before throwing it to the next child on their left.

Increase challenge: Players try to volley around the circle without catching the ball.

Four Square Volleyball

Movement skills/concepts

Underhand strike (serve), two handed forearm pass (bump), judging speed and direction, and moving into position to play the ball.

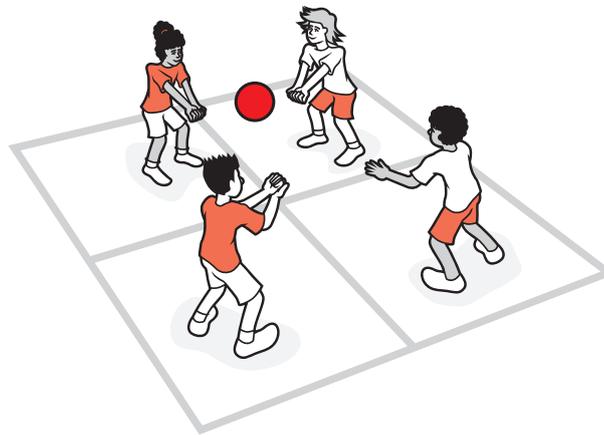
Set-up

Lightweight balls that will bounce.

Hard court area marked out in squares (2 metres wide approximately): some sets of four squares and some sets of two squares.

Groups of either two or four, each group with a ball: a player stands in each square.

Children lead
activity



Activity

Children play Four Square or Two Square.

One player starts the game by serving the ball underhand after one bounce and, for Four Square, hitting it to any player in the other three squares or, for Two Square, hitting it to the other player.

The player receiving the ball must keep it in play by striking the ball with an underhand strike (bump) to any square on the full.

Play continues until a mistake is made, such as where a player is not able to return the ball, hits the ball by sidearm or overarm, or catches the ball and steps into a square occupied by another player.

After each rally, rotate positions and change the server.

Play the game:

- cooperatively, by counting the number of volleys made by your group before a mistake
- competitively, by hitting the ball to others in your group (Four Square) so that it makes it hard for them to return the ball

Can you see ...?

- arms straight – flat surface
- quick feet – to get the body in line with the oncoming ball
- following through to target

You could ask ...

What was different about the way you hit the ball for the cooperative game compared to the competitive game?

How could you modify this game to score points? How will this change the way you play the game?

Variations

Develop game: Children modify the game to include scoring and rules.

Keep it Up

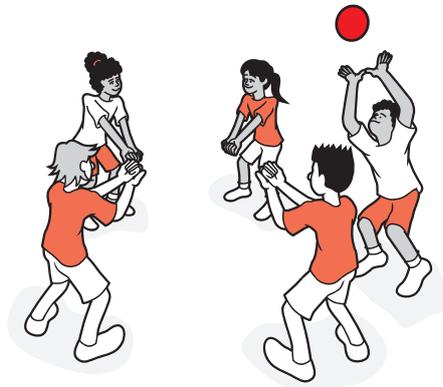
Movement skills/concepts

Striking a ball in the air (volley, serve, bump), body awareness and judging flight path.

Set-up

Lightweight balls.

Teams of five–six, with one ball per group, spread out in circle formation in a hard court area.



Activity

Each team tries to keep its ball in the air by volleying it from player to player. The ball may be hit to any player in the circle. The winners are the team that makes the highest number of volleys in a row without the ball bouncing. Players may use any kind of volley: underarm strike, bump or overhead volley.

Can you see ...?

- communication among team members
- moving feet to get into position
- hitting ball with flat surface upward
- following through

You could ask ...

How can you work as a team to keep the ball in the air?

What do you need to do with your arms/hands to keep the ball in the air?

Variations

Simplify the game: Allow one bounce between each hit. Place a player in the middle.

Extend skills: Allow only one kind of pass.