

Sock Ball Scramble

In this cooperative activity, students learn the importance of being physically active (moderate to vigorous intensity) for at least 60 minutes every day of the week.

MATERIALS:

1. 1 soft "sock ball" per 2 players (one sock placed inside its match with the end of the outer sock loosely knotted)
2. Upbeat music and player, whistle, or other signal
3. Cones or lines on playing surface to mark the center
4. Whiteboard or chart paper (optional)

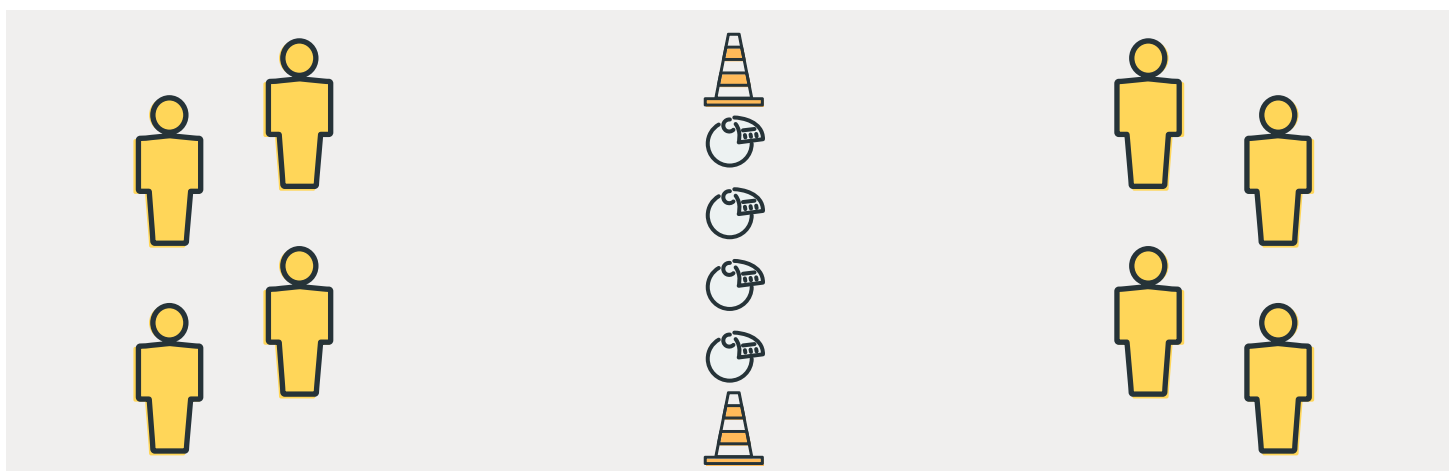


SETUP:

Create one play space per 8–12 players (5 students per team is ideal). Place one sock ball for every two players in the middle of each play space. Use playground cones to indicate the center line if necessary.

PLAY:

1. Brainstorm with students a list of benefits of regular physical activity (e.g., strengthens bones, reduces blood pressure, decreases stress, improves mood, can increase feelings of closeness to friends, increases good feelings about self, promotes better sleep, helps manage weight, helps the brain work better, improves coordination and sports performance, improves heart and lung health).
2. Explain as follows: "You need to be physically active at a medium to high effort (moderate to vigorous intensity) at least 60 minutes every day."
3. Brainstorm ways to become more physically active (for example, walk faster, play sports, jump rope, swim, play tag). Explain to students, "Today, we are going to learn to play a game that keeps everyone moving all the time."
4. Select eight students to demonstrate the game. Divide these students into two teams of four. Place one team on each side of a center line. Give each pair one sock ball. Direct teams to throw the sock balls at each other. Whenever someone is touched by a ball, that person must run across the center line to join the other team. Play continues with players moving back and forth between teams. No one is eliminated or sent to the sidelines to watch. (Caution students to avoid collisions and to aim sock balls below the shoulders.)



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5. Ask your students, “How does this game do more to improve health than a game that requires students who have been tagged to sit out?” (They are always moving to avoid getting hit and to run to the other side, and they never get “out.”)
6. After reminding students of safety rules, divide students into teams of four to six students to play the game. Allow play to continue as long as students have stamina to play actively. Give students one- to two-minute rest breaks as needed, and remind them to aim sock balls below the shoulders.
7. Stop play to discuss how the game is increasing students’ physical activity levels and also improving their health. Share this conclusion with students: “Next time you’re playing a physically active game, be creative and find ways to move your body even more. Get the most out of exercise and challenge yourself every day!” Finally, brainstorm ways to get more out of students’ favorite physical activities, including those in your upcoming lesson plans.



*Challenge
yourself
everyday!*

FOR YOUNGER STUDENTS:

1. Reserve at least one student per team to retrieve stray sock balls and keep them in play by tossing them into the playing area, but not at opponents. Rotate these students into the games.
2. Reduce the size of teams to as few as two per team.
3. Increase the number of sock balls in play to one per child.

FOR OLDER STUDENTS:

1. Challenge teams to end up on the side where they started.
2. Challenge students on each pair of teams to all end up on one side of the play space. They will really have to move to do this!
3. Allow teams to adjust the rules to increase the amount and intensity of physical activity even more.