



Play-based Somatics Skill Building

Games that teach kids how their body responds to big emotions.

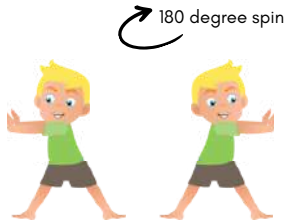
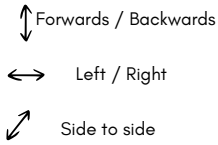


Game Setup examples:

Move Skills:



Counter balance



Pendulum Swing

Hands, Toes/Feet



Arms / Legs



Shake Out

Stretch Game:



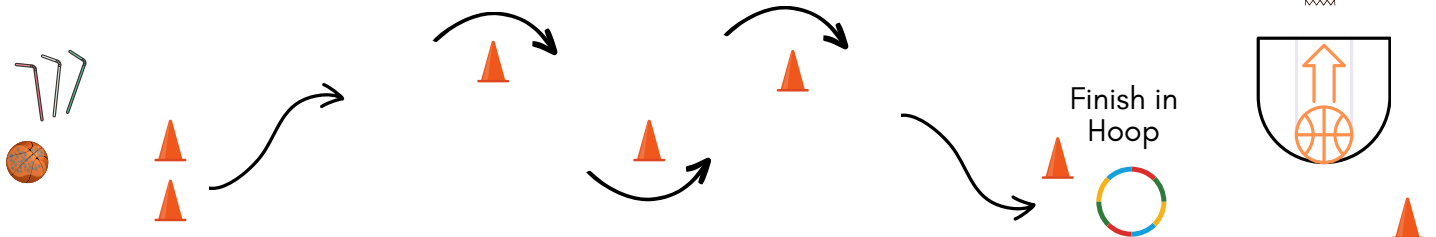
Handkerchiefs - Stretch & Stop

Hula Dribble - Moving Stretch



Points - Reaching Stretch

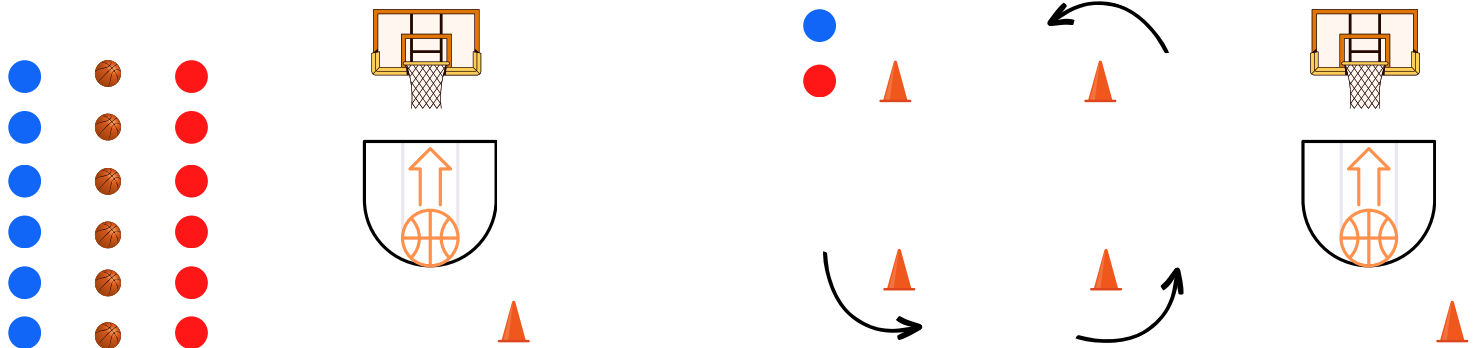
Breathing Game:



Foam Basketball - Obstacle Course

Points

Anger Games:



The Fastest Squeeze

The opposite Hand - aka Pacman

Important Statements:

These are the key educational points per program segment.

Move:

- Shaking or tremors is the way the body release stress hormones, calms itself down or readjusts to a normal state. You can help it along when you feel stress.
- When you balance or focus on coordination you have to pay close attention to what is going on internally, while also giving your body info about where you are physically in your environment. This focus is a quick and easy way to force your brain back to a logical state (the prefrontal cortex) using proprioception/interception.
- Slow movements like the pendulum swing help you connect your mind and body. Doing it fast is a quick way to release stress from anger and anxiety.

Stretch:

- When we practice consistent active movement, we encourage our brain to regularly release endorphins which helps improve our mood, keep us motivated and happy.
- Active movement activities also helps your body lower stress by promoting the release of hormones like cortisol.
- Most injuries happen in areas where there is a lack of movement so there is built up tension built also from tension that is stored from pent up unprocessed emotions.

Breathe:

- When we are stressed it's normal for us to inhale and hold in air. Unfortunately, by doing this we raise our heart rate and start the release of stress hormones. It's how our body reacts to danger but it also starts a circle of agitation inside you might not notice.
- Every time we inhale we raise our heart rate and increase the force of the heart. When we exhale, we achieve the opposite effect and cause our body to relax. Pursing your lips increases the strength of the calming effect over 30% so we calm our body faster.

Anger:

- When you use your opposite hand you have to pay close attention to what your hand is doing because it doesn't come naturally. This focus is a quick and easy way to force your brain back to a logical state (the prefrontal cortex).
- When you use your opposite hand you have to pay close attention to what your hand is doing because it doesn't come naturally. This focus is a quick and easy way to force your brain back to a logical state (the prefrontal cortex).

Emotion: Fear, Anxiety, Anger**Skill:** Move

Our body has its own memory inside. When we have big feelings and we tense up we remember it in our body's memory. That is bad because the memory we keep inside can make us feel nervous or uncomfortable in the future if we don't help our body release it. One easy way to do that is by looking for the tense spots we feel in our hands, arms, legs and back. When we find a spot that feels stiff and stretch it out our body feels better and doesn't hold on tight to the sadness, anger, or fear.

Skill: Release the tension that negative emotions store in the body with active movements that re-balance, shake and swing retained stress.

What's happening: Active stretches help our body let go of stress it's holding onto.

Let's Play: The Counter Balance

Duration: 10 Minutes**Recommended Ages:** 6+ yrs**Group Size:** Any**Materials:** Basketball

1. Have students stand a part with available space to stretch. Direct them to stand straight with legs shoulder width apart.
2. They will stretch out forwards as far as possible until they feel off balance and practice shifting their body weight so they re-balance while holding the stretch.
3. Walk around checking students that are falling forwards. Help them move their body opposite of the stretch while holding the stretch.
4. Repeat stretching side-ways and reaching backwards with the same goal.

Warm up exercise: The Pendulum Swing

1. Instruct kids to stand with legs shoulder width apart and arms spread out, then swing back and forth like they are "clearing the table." Alternate the speed.

Wind down exercise: The Shake Out

1. Instruct kids to stand with legs shoulder width apart and practice shaking out every part of their body, starting from the bottom (feet, legs) moving upwards (arms, hands).

Teacher's Guide: **The Move Skill**

We're going to learn important body movements that help release stress stuck in the body. Start by reading the top game paragraph. Explain each skill using the description below before beginning the game instructions found on the game page. While playing the games remind children that tension in our body comes from emotional highs like times we are angry, sad, afraid or frustrated. Active movements like the ones in this game help release the tension our body creates.

Skills:

Counter-Balance

Balance weight of the body opposite from side being reached towards to maintain better balance.

Pendulum Swing

With legs shoulder width apart and arms spread out, swing back and forth like you are "clearing the table."

The Shake Out

Shake legs and arms.

What's happening:

Active movement helps our body let go of stress it's holding onto and counter-balance skills help the body gain better balance faster.

The Science: Feldenkrais exercises for balance

Balance is important for basketball and it's also important for everyday life. The Feldenkrais method, an approach that helps people expand movement and increase bodily self-awareness, is a beneficial treatment for chronic back pain. According to a 2017 study. A study of older adults saw improved mobility after only several Feldenkrais movement lessons, while research from 2010 suggests that the use of somatics in dance practices helped improve movement among professional and student dancers.

Pendulum swing and shaking for tension release

Slow, active movements create better body awareness retrain your nervous system to release chronic muscle contraction and stand or move in a new way. The slower you move, the more effectively you can train your body into better balance in these positions. These same movements help dissipate the stress created by strong negative emotions like anger or fear. When changing speed and strength we can release tension as well. The very same applies for shaking actions. Shaking out our legs, arms or jumping place helps our body release tension. That's why athletes or performers do it before getting started!