



Play-based Somatics Skill Building

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

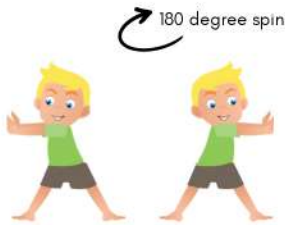
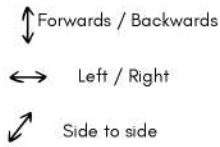


Game Setup examples:

Move Skills:



Counter balance



Pendulum Swing

Hands, Toes/Feet

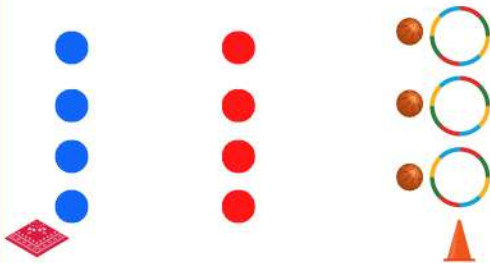


Arms / Legs

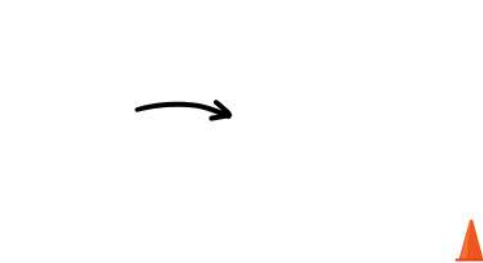


Shake Out

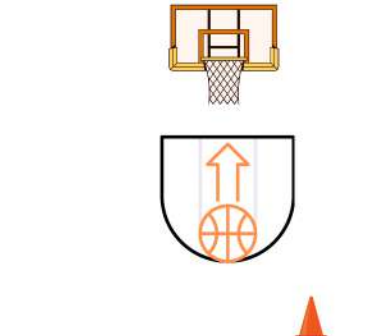
Stretch Game:



Handkerchiefs - Stretch & Stop

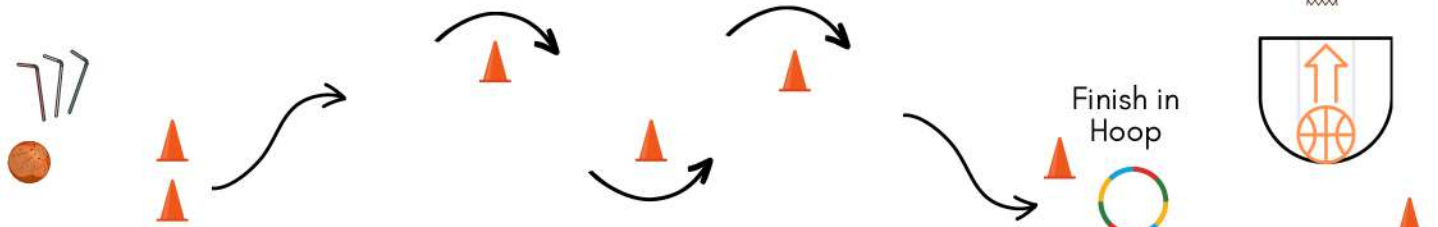


Hula Dribble - Moving Stretch



Points - Reaching Stretch

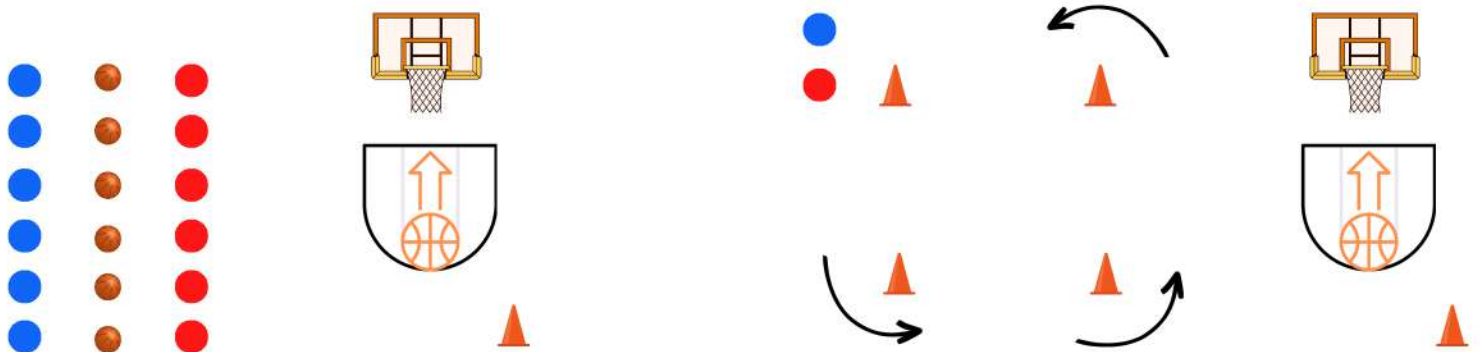
Breathing Game:



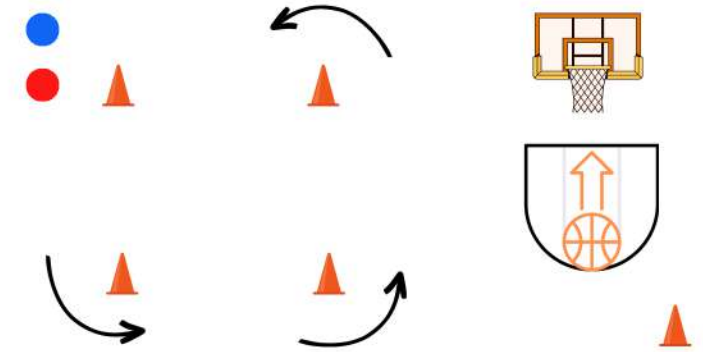
Foam Basketball - Obstacle Course

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).

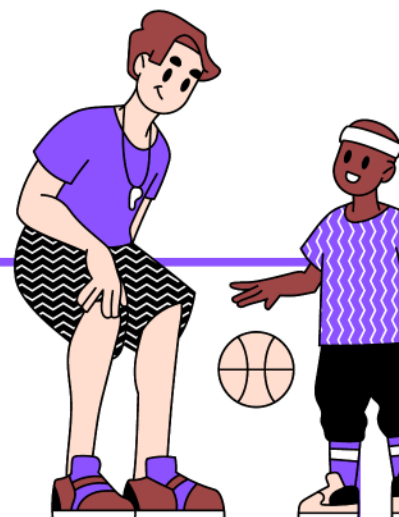
Emotion: Anger, Anxiety

Skill: Non-Dominant Hand

When someone's self control is used up they behave more aggressively but when people use their non-dominant hand they are forced to concentrate. You can help force your brain into thinking logically simply by switching to your non-dominant hand while doing things. After 2 weeks of practice you will have more self control and less impulsiveness when angry. Practicing self control using this way of concentrating with your hands helps you act out less often on angry impulses. It also helps you concentrate so you reach better solutions to the things that have made you angry.

Skill: Instead of using your writing hand, use the opposite one and concentrate on handling the ball well. Keep practicing!

What's happening: Using our non-dominant hand helps us strengthen our self-control muscles.



Let's Play: The "Wrong" Hand

Duration: 10 Minutes **Recommended Ages:** 6+ yrs

Group Size: 4+ Children **Materials:** Basketballs, cone

1. Divide your kids into two groups. One group will run clockwise in around the court while the second group will run counter clockwise around the court. Instruct the kids going clockwise to use their dribbling hand while the kids going counter clockwise to use their non-dominant hand.
2. When they pass each other they need to high-five and say the person's name. (This helps the child keep their eyes up and improve their control of the ball).
3. Players that use the wrong hand, don't high-five or don't look up are out. The coach should shout direction changes, "Switch!", and call kids out of the game as they see them miss the game's goals.
4. The showdown - The last two players bounce using their non-dominant hand and use their dominant hand to push the ball out of the other person's hands.

Teacher's Guide: **The Non-Dominant Hand Skill**

One of the most important automatic body reactions a child can learn is that their hands can be used to grow self control over anger. There are so much harm that can be avoided if a child had better tools to deal with this natural impulse. Teaching a child to use their non-dominant hand for simple activities helps their mind grow self control by forcing the brain out of emotional states into logical ones. Through higher requirements for concentration the mind grows its ability to quiet emotional messaging.

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 anger creates stress and we use our hands to practice self control. We can make better decisions that cause more problems by training our self control. Consciously using our non-dominant hand helps train our mind to be able to interject much faster.

Skill: Instead of using your writing hand, use the opposite one and concentrate on handling the ball well. Keep practicing!

What's happening: Using our non-dominant hand helps us strengthen our self-control muscles.

The Science

Using our non-dominant hand to grow self control over strong emotions:

Feeling angry and annoyed with others is a daily part of life, but most people don't act on these impulses. What keeps us from punching line-cutters or murdering conniving co-workers? Self-control. It's possible to deplete self-control—or to strengthen it by practice. Many studies have shown that self-control and aggression are tightly linked.

In Dr. Thomas Denson's experiments people try to use their non-dominant hand for two weeks. So, if they're right-handed, they're told to use their left hand for pretty much anything that's safe to do (Using the mouse, stirring your coffee, opening doors.) This requires people to practice self-control because their habitual tendency is to use their dominant hands. After two weeks, people who have practiced self-control control their aggression better. In one experiment, they were mildly insulted by another student and had the option of retaliating with a blast of white noise—but people who have practiced self-control respond less aggressively.

The parts of the brain involved in self-control are actually more active in aggressive people than in less aggressive people. It isn't that they don't want self-control but instead that their self control muscles are weak. Once depleted they give into their impulses. We can help children train their self control easier using this game!

Citations:

Move:

1. Jackson E. *Stress Relief*. ACSM'S Health & Fitness Journal. 2013;17(3):14-19. doi:10.1249/fit.0b013e31828cb1c9. https://journals.lww.com/acsm-healthfitness/fulltext/2013/05000/stress_relief__the_role_of_exercise_in_stress.6.aspx. Accessed May 6, 2022.
2. *Fitness*. www.heart.org. <https://www.heart.org/en/healthy-living/fitness#.VtS6EBh1bYI>. Accessed May 6, 2022.
3. Bushman, Barbara A. Ph.D., FACSM, ACSM-CEP, ACSM-EP, ACSM-CPT; Robinett, Ally B.S., ACSM-EP- *Neuromotor Training- Background and Benefits* - ACSM's Health & Fitness Journal 26(4):p 5-9, 7/8 2022. | DOI: 10.1249/FIT.0000000000000772

Stretch:

- 1.Elizabeth Keohan LCSW-C, MSW, LICSW, LCSW; *How Does Exercise Reduce Stress?* <https://www.talkspace.com/blog/how-does-exercise-reduce-stress/>. Accessed Nov. 2, 2022
2. DeSimone, Grace T. B.A., ACSM-CPT, ACSM-GEI; *Functional Fitness- Strong for life-* ACSM's Health & Fitness Journal 26(4):p 4, 7/8 2022. | DOI: 10.1249/FIT.0000000000000785

Squeeze:

- 1.Propper RE, McGraw SE, Brunyé TT, Weiss M (2013) Getting a Grip on Memory: Unilateral Hand Clenching Alters Episodic Recall. PLoS ONE 8(4): e62474. doi:10.1371/journal.pone.0062474
2. Jürgen Beckmann, Peter Gröpel, Felix Ehrlenspiel. Preventing Motor Skill Failure Through Hemisphere-Specific Priming: Cases From Choking Under Pressure.. Journal of Experimental Psychology: General, 2012; DOI: 10.1037/a0029852

Non-Dominant Hand

- 1.Denson. Thomas F. (2012) Want to Limit Aggression? Practice Self-Control!. Association for Psychological Science: <https://www.psychologicalscience.org/news/releases/want-to-limit-aggression-practice-self-control.html>

Appetite:

1. Dr. Susan Albers “Eat, Drink and Be Mindful” 2012.
2. Alex Picot-Annand, PN2, Holistic Nutritionist. *How to eat until 80% full It builds mindfulness and improves digestion, too.* <https://www.precisionnutrition.com/eat-to-80-percent-full-infographic>.

Breathe:

1. DeSimone, Grace T. B.A., ACSM-CPT, ACSM-GEI *The Power of Breath*. ACSM's Health & Fitness Journal 26(3):p 6-7, 5/6 2022. | DOI: 10.1249/FIT.0000000000000770
2. Xiao Ma, et al *The Effect of Diaphragmatic Breathing on Attention, Negative Affect and Stress in Healthy Adults*. Front Psychol. 2017; 8: 874.

