

Conclusion – Cool-down and Stretching



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Conclusion – Cool-down and Stretching

Physical activity sessions should be concluded in a positive way by spending a little time to round off.

Conclusion time can be used for several purposes:

1. To cool down and return the heart rate to normal.
2. To perform flexibility physical activities while muscles are warm.
3. To relax the children.
4. To review points from the lesson.

Cool-down

Cooling down is the reverse of warming up and is intended to assist the body to return to its normal resting state.

Activity should be continued but at a lower intensity – very light jogging, walking, walking on the spot, stepping from side to side – gentle rhythmic arm circles and swings could be included. Quiet, gentle background music is appropriate.

Concentrate on breathing. By the end of the cool-down all children should be breathing normally.

Older children can be taught to monitor their pulse rate.

Stretching

Stretching is a valuable part of the conclusion.

Children of all ages can be taught correct stretching techniques.

Take the time at the beginning of each year to show children the basic stretches and discuss with them the benefits of stretching, which are:

- Increases flexibility of muscles and joints.
- Increases range of motion of joints.
- Helps co-ordination by allowing freer and easier movement.
- Helps prevent injuries such as muscle strains and pulls.
- Helps develop body awareness.

Basic No Frills Cool-down

Equipment

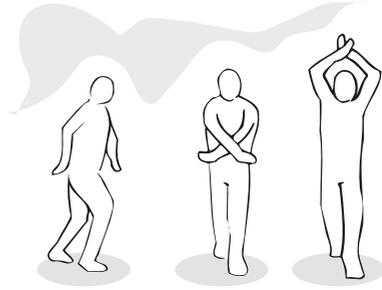
None.

Area

Hall, grass, hard surface.

Formation

Children freely spaced.



Instructions

- Children walk slowly 2 widths or lengths of the area.
- Walk for 2 widths swinging arms overhead and down by sides.
- Repeat the arm movements several times.
- Walk for 2 widths breathing in deeply to the count of 4 and exhaling to the count of 4.
- Stretch the following groups of muscles, hold each for 10-20 seconds (see stretching diagrams):
 - calf muscles
 - quads
 - hamstrings
 - hip flexors

Variation

1. Change the walking activities to a circular walk or a long walk to the boundary and back or similar.

Teaching Points

- If time permits, do 2 sets of stretches for each muscle group.
- Take time to teach the correct positions for the stretching.

Puppets

Equipment

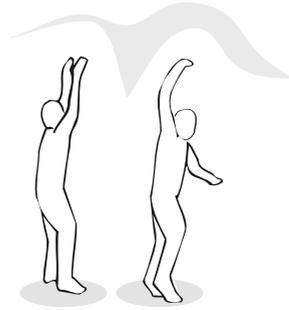
None.

Area

Any.

Formation

Free spacing.



Instructions

- Children stand with feet apart, knees slightly bent, 1 arm extended straight over head, hand floppy.
- Extend the other arm over head, both hands floppy.
- Relax both arms and let them fall back down beside body.
- Repeat several times.
- Stretch the calf muscles – hold for 10-20 seconds on each leg – repeat a second time (see Appendix 4).

Variations

1. Extend arms, one at a time out to side of body then let them fall back.
2. Stand like a puppet – slowly bend at the knees and sink to the ground as if the strings have been released. Stand up again as if the strings are being pulled.

Teaching Point

- Encourage deep, even breathing as the arms lift and fall.

Sleeping Cats

Equipment

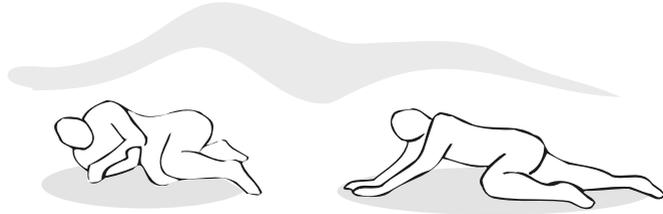
None.

Area

Any.

Formation

Free spacing.



Instructions

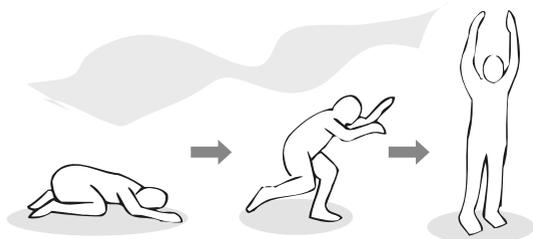
- Ask children to demonstrate how a cat might sleep in the sun or in front of the fire.
- Have children slowly wake and stretch.

Variations

1. Have the cat change positions and go back to sleep – then stretch again.
2. Have children lie in their favourite sleeping position then slowly stretch each limb in turn – move slowly to a sitting position, then to a standing position and stretch.

Teaching Point

- Not a suitable activity if the ground is wet.



Stretching Shapes

Equipment

None.

Area

Any.

Formation

Free spacing.



Instructions

- Teacher nominates a shape – children give their interpretation of that shape.
- Have children hold each shape for 5-10 seconds.
- Make the shapes or examples appropriate for that age level.
- Examples
 - short like a ball
 - wide like the letter “T”
 - long like a banana
 - curved like the letter “S”
 - twisted like an ice cream
 - round like a lollipop.

Variation

1. Have children in pairs or 3s – each group works together to make the shape suggested.

Teaching Point

- Have children extend their stretch fully. Movements should all be slow and controlled.

Arm Swing

Equipment

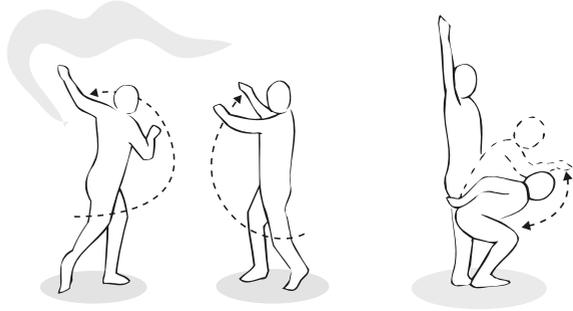
None.

Area

Any.

Formation

Free spacing.



Instructions

- Stand with feet apart and knees slightly bent.
- Swing both arms relaxed across body and upwards at shoulder height – body twists in the direction of the swing.
- Swing both arms relaxed down in front of body then up to the other side.

Variations

1. Swing 1 arm in a curve across body and back then swing the other arm.
2. Stretch both arms above head and gently wave arms from side to side, keeping arms straight and close to the side of head.
3. Butterfly Swing: Swing both arms from above head – down to the ground and up behind body – swing arms forward again. Knees bend on the down swing then straighten as arms go behind body – knees bend again as the arms are brought forward again.

Circle and Roll

Equipment

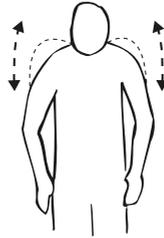
None.

Area

Any.

Formation

Free spacing.



Instructions

- Stand with feet apart, knees slightly bent – both arms extended to the front.
- Circle 1 arm forward then back again.
- Circle the other arm forward and back again.
- Circle both forward then back.
- Drop arms down beside body.
- Lift both shoulders upwards to touch ears, then push them down.
- Lift 1 shoulder up and down – then the other shoulder up and down.
- Circle both arms relaxed across the body – circle forwards and backwards.

Variation

1. In pairs facing each other – 1 person is the leader. Leader lifts shoulders in combinations of single and doubles; forward and back, up and down – partner follows. Change over.

Teaching Point

- Emphasise movement of the shoulders, not the neck.

Surrounded

Equipment

None.

Area

Any.

Formation

In groups of 5-7, with child in the centre who stands straight and rigid with arms across their chest and feet together. Other children form a close circle around the centre child and hold both hands up at chest height.



Instructions

- Middle child leans forward, backwards or to the side and is gently pushed back into the centre by the other children.
- Change the middle person after several pushes.

Variation

1. Children in 3s standing in a line with the 2 children facing the middle child – middle child leans backwards or forwards and is caught and gently pushed to the back to the centre.

Teaching Point

- Care is needed with this activity with very tall or heavy children – make sure the others in the group are big enough to support them.

Statues/Mirrors

Equipment

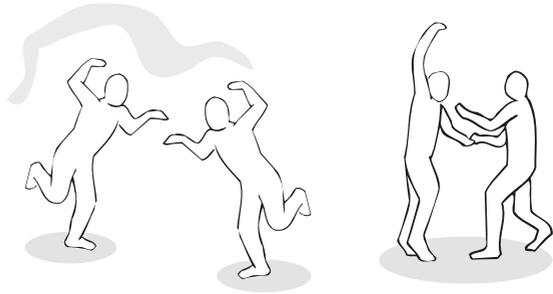
None.

Area

Any.

Formation

Children in 2s – 1 person is the statue, the other is the sculptor.



Instructions

- The sculptor has a time limit (1 minute maximum) to arrange the statue into a pose or shape which they must hold.
- Change over.

Variations

1. Same as above but once the sculptor has arranged the statue he tries to put himself into the same position.
2. In 3s – the 3rd person is the twin and tries to copy the shape on their own.
3. In 3s – 1 sculptor arranges both children into a complementary shape.
4. Mirrors: In pairs facing each other.
 - One partner leads with slow motion movements of arms or legs or both.
 - Other partner mirrors the movement. Change over after 1-2 minutes.
 - Partners may move about.

Teaching Point

- Encourage creativity. All movements should be slow and rhythmical.



Statues / Mirrors

Knots

Equipment

None.

Area

Any.

Formation

Groups of 7-9 children in a circle.

Instructions

- All children hold out their left hands and take hold of the left hand of someone else in the group but not the person beside them.
- All children hold out right hands and take hold of the right hand of someone else – NOT their neighbour and NOT the person whose left hand they are holding.
- Without letting go of their hands children attempt to unknot themselves by going over, around and under each other.

Variation

1. Have a whole-class knot – this may take a long time to untangle.

Teaching Point

- A great co-operative activity that is quiet and settles children well.

Lap Sit

Equipment

None.

Area

Any.

Formation

Whole class in a tight, close circle with everyone facing the same direction.



Instructions

- Children hold the waist of the person in front and position themselves so their knees are directly behind the bottom of the person in front.
- When everyone is ready teacher calls "1, 2, 3 sit down please".
- If the sit-in collapses Try again.

Variation

1. In pairs facing each other – hold hands – bend knees and both assume a sitting position – leaning backwards slightly and pulling on each other's arms.

Teaching Point

- Perseverance!

Squeeze It

Equipment

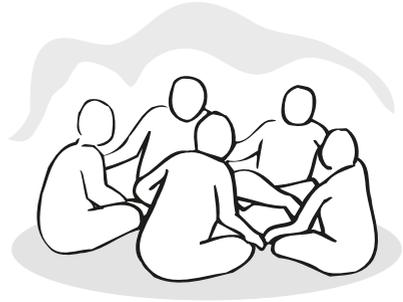
None.

Area

Any.

Formation

Whole class or small groups.



Instructions

- Class sits in a circle all holding hands.
- One person begins and squeezes the hand of 1 neighbour to the left or the right.
- As the second person feels the squeeze she passes it on in the same direction to her neighbour around the circle.
- Continue until the squeeze has gone right around the circle.
- Repeat but pass the squeeze in the other direction.

Variations

1. Same as above but have everyone close their eyes.
2. Same as above but the squeeze can change direction – to the left or right.

Teaching Point

- An excellent quietening down activity.

Stretching

- Static stretch at the end of each session.
- Stretch slowly and gradually so a comfortable tension is felt, but no pain.
- Do not bounce while stretching.
- Hold each stretch for 10-20 seconds.
- Relax and repeat once or twice more.
- Check that the body positions are correct.
- Stretch both sides.

Cool-downs

TRUNK SIDE FLEXORS



Stand with feet comfortably apart. Fold arms above head. Bend to the side slowly. Stretch up with upper elbow.

HAMSTRING



Kneel on one leg with other leg out in front with the foot flexed. Keep back straight and bend forward at the hips to feel the stretch down the back of the legs.

LONG CALF MUSCLE

Place hands on wall with one leg to rear. Keep the rear leg locked straight and foot flat. Turn rear foot slightly inwards. Bend front leg taking calf stretch through rear calf.

SHOULDER / CHEST

Stand with head up, chin in, hands clasped behind back. Pull shoulders down and back. Press shoulder blades together and down. Pull the stomach in to prevent arching of the lower back.

TRICEPS STRETCH

Place one hand between shoulder blades. Place the other on your elbow and use it to pull the elbow towards midline.

FRONT THIGH

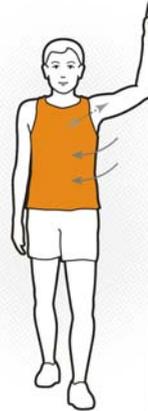
Pull heel towards buttock. Keep back straight and knees together in line with hip and ankle.

BUTTOCK

Gluteals – Lie on back with both hands around one knee. Pull knee towards opposite shoulder. Keep head, shoulder and opposite leg relaxed.



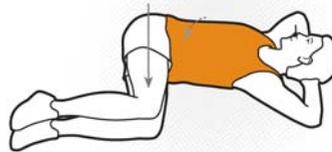
Piriformis – Lie on back and hold knee to chest. Pull knee and ankle towards opposite shoulder.

PECTORALS

Stand side-on to a wall or pole with closest leg forward. Place forearm on wall with shoulder slightly above 90°. Turn upper body away from wall or pole.

HIP FLEXORS

Kneel on ground with front knee at 90°. With the back straight, tilt the pelvis back by tucking the abdomen up and in and squeezing buttocks. Keep head up.

LOWER BACK

Lie with hands behind head, arms flat. Bend hips and knees at 90°, feet together. Roll knees over to ground. Upper knee should be directly above lower knee.