

Hot Mats



Aim of the activity

- To encourage working together.
- To learn from experience to solve a problem.



Logistics

- A floor space between 10 and 20m long e.g. half a badminton court.
- Can be done with as little as 6 people and as many as you have the equipment for.
- Will need cones to set up the start and finish lines.
- Something people have to stand on so they do not touch the floor e.g. carpet tiles, sheets of broadsheet newspapers, sport spots, a cut up gym mat - referred to now as mats.



Directions

- Divide the group into teams of between 6 and 10 people. Then give each team either 2 or three of the mats.
- The idea is to get your whole team from the start point to the finish without any feet, hands, legs etc from touching the floor.
- You can tell a story that the area is now hot lava and the only thing that can save them from being hurt is to stand on the mats provided.
- If anyone touches the 'lava' the whole team has to start again.
- The winner is the first team to get everyone and the mats across the 'lava'.
- To make it harder, all the team has to go at the same time i.e. you cannot make more than one journey across the lava.
- If more than one team, you can make this a race.



Delivery Tips and Risks

- Allow practice time, many groups will naturally start the task as a way of figuring out how best to achieve it.
- Encourage teams to talk to each other to see how they can improve their performance.
- Many groups start by throwing the mats too far apart, allow this to happen but watch out from a safety perspective when people try and jump from mat to mat. This is exacerbated if the floor is slippery.

Adaptations

- You can use blindfolds to even out competition e.g. if one team keeps winning, they have to have a couple of people blindfolded.
- After a while introduce blindfolds to all the teams, or make the teams compete in silence.

Similar Activities

- This builds on 'Penguins'.
- Outdoor centres do a similar activity with old tyres.

Hula Hoop / Rope Circle



Aim of the activity

- To encourage working together.
- To learn from experience.



Logistics

- Any space big enough for the group.
- Groups of around 6-10 people (if more, make more circles).
- A hula hoop or a knotted section of thick rope about 1m in diameter.
- Stopwatch/phone with a timer function (optional).



Delivery Tips and Risks

- With any team building/problem solving game, it is tempting for adults to help too soon. Don't be afraid to let them not do well at first, if this happens encourage them to think how they can improve their own and the group performance.
- If a competition is happening and one team keeps losing, you can go back to timing each group, and then the winner is the group who improves their time the most - often this is the team that loses the most.

Adaptations

You can blindfold one or more members of the group.

Directions

- Ask everyone to stand in a large circle holding hands with the person next to them.
- Introduce a hula hoop (or rope) into the circle so that the hands of two people go through the hoop.
- Explain that the group need to pass the hoop around the circle to get it back to its starting position, without letting go of each other's hands (this means the whole group will have to go through the hoop).
- The group will need to work together to pass the hoop over people's heads and around the circle.
- They may not realise this at first and think it's an individual effort but they should pick up on the teamwork aspect without too much prompting.
- The idea is to try and get quicker, which will require helping each other.
- After some practice you can time the group, and then let them discuss improvements and then time once more to see if they can get better.
- If more than 1 circle, you can have races to see who get the hoop round first.



Human Knot

Aim of the activity

- To encourage problem solving.
- To bring people together.



Logistics

- Any space big enough for the group to stand.
- Can be done in a big group but works best in groups of 10-15 people.
- No other equipment needed.



Delivery Tips and Risks

- Once they have had a few minutes trying to solve it, the group will naturally come to a stop so encourage talking to each other to solve the next steps.
- It may be appropriate to get the group or for you to identify a leader.
- Be aware of people twisting limbs, encourage light holding of hands so that people can twist and move without breaking hands.

Adaptations

- If someone does not feel comfortable taking part, then they can be appointed the observer leader, helping the group to spot where they can untangle.
- For a larger group you could split into two teams and get them to race each other, or if you don't have enough space, you could time each group and encourage them to beat the other team's time.

Similar Activities

This activity builds on Circle of Trust (see Icebreakers).

Directions

- Get everyone to stand in a circle facing inwards with their arms by their sides.
- In turns, ask each person to step forward and take the hand of someone else in the circle until everyone is holding another person's hand. Repeat this for the other hand, but make sure everyone is holding the hand of two different people.
- The group should now be in a large knot. They need to work together to untangle the knot without letting go of each other's hands – this might involve stepping over other people or crouching down to go underneath other people's joined arms.
- Eventually the team should be able to untangle the knot so that they are stood in a circle holding hands.



Splat

Aim of the activity

- To have fun together.
- To laugh with each other.



Logistics

- Need at least 5 people.
- Any large space that can fit the group.
- No other equipment needed.



Delivery Tips and Risks

- This is supposed to be a quick, fun game so keep it moving. The person in the middle has to be enthusiastic and loud for this game to really work.
- Encourage the young people to take responsibility for when they get it wrong, and sit down themselves.
- There should be lots of laughs and silliness.

Similar Activities

This game is a precursor to the fabulous game of Oogly Boogly Bop.

Directions



- Ask everyone to stand in a circle facing inwards, with a bit of space between them and the people next to them.
- Pick one person to start in the middle (this needs to be the group leader if the young people haven't played the game before).
- The person in the middle puts their hand flat out in front of them (as if you have a custard pie in your hand) and targets someone around the circle by pointing the 'pie' at them and shouting 'splat'.
- The target should duck down and the two people on either side of them have to turn to face each other and 'splat' each other using their hands as 'pies' and shouting 'splat'.
- The winner (the first person to shout 'splat') stays in but the loser sits down still in the circle, they are now out.
- If the person in the middle does not duck down they are also out and must sit down.
- If anyone else in the circle shouts 'splat', or turns to 'splat', or ducks down, they are also out and must sit down in the circle.
- By sitting in the circle, this allows everyone to remain engaged and also causes confusion as people are no longer exactly stood next to each other and so may have to 'splat' someone several people away.
- Eventually you will be left with only two players. They stand back-to-back like in the Western movies for a 'quick draw'. The leader says a word and for each word spoken, they have to take slow steps away from each other until the leader shouts 'splat'.
- At which point they turn around and try to 'splat' their opponent before being 'splatted' themselves.
- The winner is the person who gets there first or who does not make a mistake.

Towers

Team Building
Games

Aim of the activity



- To solve a problem together.
- To describe a vision and work to it.

Logistics



This can be done one of two ways -
Big or Small

- **For Small** - you will need packs of spaghetti and bags of marshmallows
- **For Big** - you will need bamboo canes and ball of string (cut up into about 20 cm lengths)
- The space will depend on whether you go Big or Small - if you go Big, you will need to be outside or a sports hall type space. If you go Small, you can do this anywhere.
- Each group should be about 4 - 8 people. You need enough equipment to for each group.

Directions



- Ensure the equipment is divided evenly between the groups.
- The task is to build the tallest free-standing structure using only the equipment given.
- Get the group to plan, do and review what they are proposing to build.
- Get the group to discuss what shapes, structures and buildings are. The group will inevitably suggest square shapes as that is what surrounds them in modern life. Try and get them to think historically. Try asking 'what structures are still around today centuries after they were originally built?' One answer might be 'the pyramids'. Give other clues Egypt, deserts, Sphinx etc. Get them to think more recent examples - Paris 'Eiffel Tower'
- The best (but no means only) solution to this task is to build a pyramid base that will support lengths of cane/spaghetti that can extend 20m/50cm from the ground/table. The canes will need to be tied together, the marshmallows hold the spaghetti together (put the length of spaghetti into the marshmallow).

Delivery Tips and Risks

- Set out the rules from the start particularly with the Big version: No canes can be thrown, used as swords, hit, poke or whack one another.
- If more string is required, you, the instructor, will cut it for them
- You have 10 minutes for planning, 30 minutes for construction, 5 minutes for photographs and 15 minutes for deconstruction if doing the "Big" version.. Make these times shorter for the 'Small' version.
- The task is only completed when all materials are returned and the area is as it was at the start of the challenge.
- Allow the discussion to happen but manage it to ensure that people have their say and are listened to.
- Some groups will find the 'production line' element difficult and may become disengaged. Keep an eye on the group(s) and be prepared to get involved.

Delivery Tips and Risks

- As leader, it may be necessary to observe covertly by just tying canes together and often young people will replicate this behaviour and ask you for specific help e.g. tie four canes together for me then tie them to this...
- This challenge needs to be managed carefully to the time available. There tends to be a rush to complete as time is running out. As leader you have to keep the pot simmering, 20-30 minutes into the task and the young people will recognise what needs to be done and a sense of urgency will ensue.
- The feeling of success and accomplishment is clear to be seen and why a photo must be taken to capture the achievement.

Adaptations

- You can use straws instead of spaghetti.
- You can use newspapers and tape

Similar Activities

Bridge building - make a bridge across two points, such as two chair seats, that is strong enough to roll a small ball from one side to another