



UNIT 6

AGES 2-4

STRIKING

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Striking is a term used to describe an action of either hitting a ball or object with one's hand, stick, bat, paddle, or racket. Striking or even tapping a stationary ball with a fist or open hand encourages development of the skills necessary for sports such as tennis, golf, softball, volleyball, and hockey.

Striking requires many skills learned in previous units:

- Eye-hand coordination
- Spatial awareness
- Strength and flexibility
- Balance

This unit allows for a lot of modifications and adaptations depending on the skill level of your students. Use different implements such as rackets, pool noodles, or paddles to make these activities easier or harder depending on the level of your students.

Skills

MOTOR SKILLS:

- Visual tracking
- Eye-hand coordination
- Balance and stability
- Strength
- Body coordination

COGNITIVE SKILLS:

- Direction following
- Remembering cues
- Remembering proper grip

SOCIAL SKILLS:

- Teamwork

Equipment

• Implements:

- » Paddles
- » Paper plates
- » Pool noodles
- » Rackets
- » Bowling pins

- Balls
- Cone or ball tee
- Floor markers

Classroom materials

- A balloon for each student
- A way to play music
- A line of tape or chalk

Books

- *Pete the Cat and the New Guy*
by Kimberly and James Dean
- *Can I Join Your Club?*
by John Kelly



Striking

BASIC:

- Faces the direction of the object
- No trunk rotation
- Feet stationary
- Force is applied by extending the arms and not from the core or from the rotation

PROFICIENT:

- Some preparation by using back swing
- Trunk faces side-on in anticipation of the strike
- Some trunk rotation
- Weight shifts prior to strike
- Force is applied from extending the arms and from the rotation

ADVANCED:

- Full preparation by using a back swing
- Trunk faces side in anticipation of strike
- Rotation is in the hips and then torso
- Weight shifts to the back foot during the backswing and to the forward foot at contact

STANDARDS FOR SEL



Head Start

- Goal P-SE 1. Child engages in and maintains positive relationships and interactions with adults.
- Goal P-SE 2. Child engages in prosocial and cooperative behavior with adults.
- Goal P-SE 3. Child engages in and maintains positive interactions and relationships with other children.
- Goal P-SE 4. Child engages in cooperative play with other children.
- Goal P-SE 5. Child uses basic problem-solving skills to resolve conflicts with other children.
- Goal P-SE 6. Child expresses a broad range of emotions and recognizes these emotions in self and others.
- Goal P-SE 7. Child expresses care and concern toward others.
- Goal P-SE 8. Child manages emotions with increasing independence.
- Goal P-SE 9. Child recognizes self as a unique individual having own abilities, characteristics, emotions, and interests.
- Goal P-SE 10. Child expresses confidence in own skills and positive feelings about self.
- Goal P-SE 11. Child has sense of belonging to family, community, and other groups.

SOCIETY OF HEALTH AND PHYSICAL EDUCATORS (SHAPE) STANDARDS

1.2.12 Demonstrates striking with hands in a variety of practice tasks.

1.2.13 Demonstrates striking with short-handled implement in a non-dynamic environment.

1.2.14 Demonstrates striking with a long-handled implement in a variety of practice tasks.



STANDARDS FOR ELA**Kindergarten:**

Use a combination of drawing, dictating, and writing to narrate a single event or several loosely linked events, tell about the events in the order in which they occurred, and provide a reaction to what happened. (W.K.3)

With prompting & support, ask & answer questions about key details in a text. (RL.K.1)

With prompting & support, retell familiar stories, including key details. (RL.K.2)

With prompting & support, identify characters, settings & major events in a story. (RL.K.3)

With prompting and support, name the author and illustrator of a story and define the role of each in telling the story. (RL.K.6)

With prompting and support, describe the relationship between illustrations and the story in which they appear. (RL.K.7)

Actively engage in group reading activities with purpose and understanding. (RL.K.10)

Participate in collaborative conversations with diverse partners about kindergarten topics and texts with peers and adults in small and larger groups. (SL.K.1)

Follow agreed-upon rules for discussions such as listening to others and taking turns speaking about the topics and texts under discussion. (SL.K.1a)

Continue a conversation through multiple exchanges. (SL.K.1b)

Confirm understanding of a text read aloud or information presented orally or through other media by asking and answering questions about key details and requesting clarification if something is not understood. (SL.K.2)

Ask and answer questions in order to seek help, get information, or clarify something that is not understood. (SL.K.3)

Leadership Time

- There's a new guy in town in the book, *Pete the Cat and the New Guy* by Kimberly and James Dean and Pete the Cat can't wait to meet him! When they meet, they realize that they are very different from each other. In the end, Pete realizes that everyone has their own special things, and that being different is cool.

Skills & Games

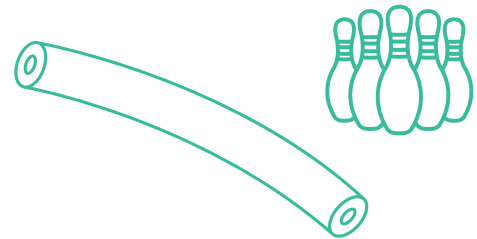
- Balloon Striking
- Group Balloon Striking
- Striking Stations
- Coach Says
- Keep It Up

Equipment

- *Pete the Cat and the New Guy* by Kimberly and James Dean
- A balloon for each student
- Implements:
 - » Paddles
 - » Paper plates
 - » Pool noodles
 - » Rackets
 - » Bowling pins
- Line of tape or chalk
- Balloon or beach ball

Alternative Material Ideas

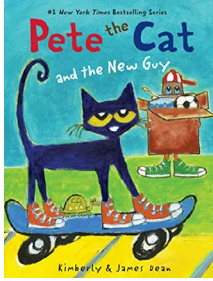
- Be creative with what you use for implements during this unit. This could be a fun opportunity for students to also share ideas. Some ideas include paddles, paper plates, pool noodles, or bowling pins.



Things to Note

These lessons include multiple games with balloons. Blow up enough balloons for the class plus extras, and keep them for the whole week. If you cannot use balloons for this unit, make sure you get enough beach balls for each student to have their own or to share with a partner. There are fewer games and activities this week to allow plenty of time for repetition and practice with using multiple implements to strike.

LEADERSHIP TIME (5 MIN.)



[Pete the Cat and the New Guy by James Dean and Kimberly Dean](#)
(page 43 of link)¹

- Lesson 1: Read the book**
- Lesson 2: Review book and answer questions
- Lesson 3: Review book and pick one activity

STRENGTH & ENDURANCE (5 MIN.)

“Today our warmup is going to be a chant. I’ll do it once and you can join along with me and do the actions!”

CHANT: Wiggle Your Fingers, Stomp Your Feet

Wiggle your fingers in the air.
 Wiggle them, wiggle them everywhere!
 Stomp your feet upon the ground.
 Stomp them, stomp them all around.

Now sit down and cross your feet.
 Hands in lap, nice and neat.
 Now we are ready to start our day.
 We’ll listen first, and then we’ll play!



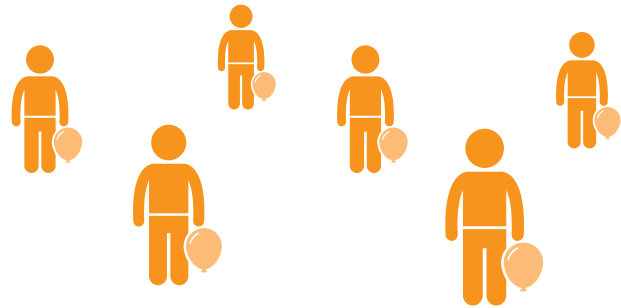
BALLOON STRIKING (5 MIN.)

Equipment

- 1 balloon for each student

Setup

Students should spread out throughout the space with a balloon



- *“This week we are going to work on a skill called striking.”*
- *“When we are striking, we use something such as our hand or a bat or racket to hit an object such as a ball or balloon.”*
- *“It is important to keep your eye on the object while you are striking to help you concentrate on what you are doing.”*
- *“Today we will start by striking a balloon.”*
- *“Using an open hand, try to hit the balloon up into the air as high as you can.”*
- *“See how many times you can do this without the balloon falling on the ground.”*

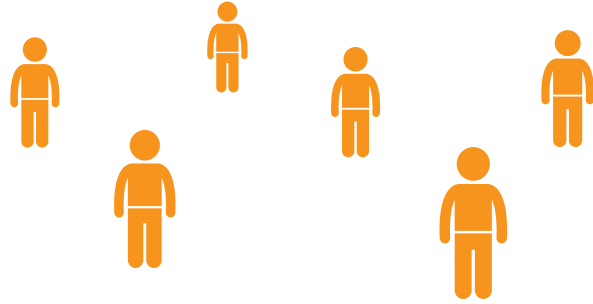
GROUP BALLOON STRIKING (5 MIN.)

Equipment

- Balloon or beach ball

Setup

Students should spread out throughout the space



- *“Now that we have had practice with striking a balloon on our own, we are going to work as a team to keep multiple balloons off of the ground.”*
- *“This will involve communication and teamwork.”*
- *“I am going to start off by throwing one balloon into the group and I will keep adding balloons.”*
- *“Let's see how many we can keep them all off of the ground.”*

COOL DOWN/FLEXIBILITY (5 MIN.)

"Let's end Young Athletes with a few cool down stretches to work on our flexibility."

[Fit 5 Flexibility Level 2 Video](#)¹

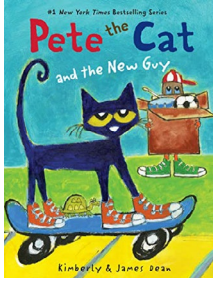
OR

[Fit 5 Flexibility Level 2 Cards](#) (pages 26-28 of link)²

- Quadriceps Stretch
- Modified Hurdler's Stretch
- Chest Stretch



LEADERSHIP TIME (5 MIN.)



[Pete the Cat and the New Guy by James Dean and Kimberly Dean](#)
(page 43 of link)¹

Lesson 1: Read the book

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Wiggle them, wiggle them everywhere!

Stomp your feet upon the ground.

Stomp them, stomp them all around.

Now sit down and cross your feet.

Hands in lap, nice and neat.

Now we are ready to start our day.

We'll listen first, and then we'll play!



STRIKING STATIONS (10 MIN.)

Equipment

- Balloons
- 4 different types of implements: paddles, paper plates, noodles, rackets, bowling pins, etc.

Setup

Place the 4 different implements in each corner of the room: a corner of paddles; a corner of rackets; a corner of bowling pins; a corner of paper plates



- *“Today we get to practice striking the balloon with different objects.”*
- *“You will take your balloon to one corner of the room and practice striking the balloon into the air using the object provided.”*
- *“For example, I might start at the racket corner and try to hit my balloon up in the air using the racket.”*
- *“The goal is to hit the balloon 25 times before moving to the next station.”*
- *“You will complete all 4 stations today.”*
- You can let the students choose an order or assign them to a station to start and have them move around the space in a specific direction.

COOL DOWN/FLEXIBILITY (5 MIN.)

"Let's end Young Athletes with a few cool down stretches to work on our flexibility."

[Fit 5 Flexibility Level 2 Video](#)¹

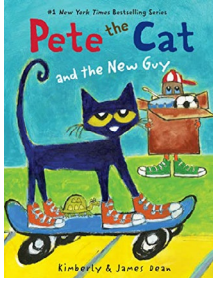
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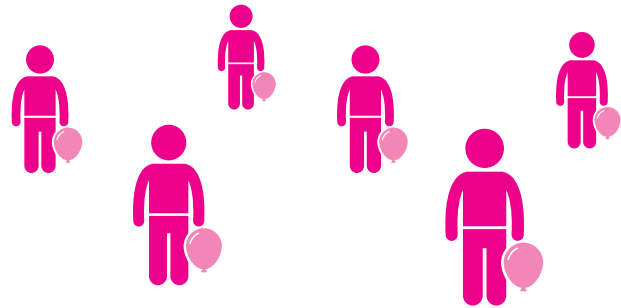
COACH SAYS (5 MIN.)

Equipment

- 1 balloon for each student

Setup

Students should spread out throughout the space with a balloon



- *“For our warm up activity today we are going to play ‘Coach Says.’”*
- *“I am going to call out a different body part and you are going to practice striking your balloon with that body part.”*
- *“For example, we will start off by striking the balloon into the air with our hand.”*
- *“Now switch to striking the balloon with your elbow.”*
- Other ideas:
 - » Finger
 - » Knee
 - » Foot
 - » Head
 - » Ear
 - » Heel
 - » Shoulder

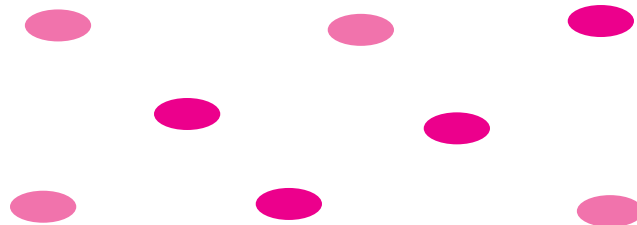
KEEP IT UP (5 MIN.)

Equipment

- Balloons
- Floor markers

Setup

Scatter floor markers around the space



- *"Today we are going to play a game called 'Keep It Up.'"*
- *"In this game, we are going to be working on striking the balloon into the air as many times as we can before it hits the floor."*
- *"You will stand on your floor marker and hit the balloon straight up into the air."*
- *"Try not to take your foot off of the marker."*
- *"Count to see how many times you can hit your balloon before it hits the floor."*
- *"Start now!"*

COOL DOWN/FLEXIBILITY (5 MIN.)

"Let's end Young Athletes with a few cool down stretches to work on our flexibility."

[Fit 5 Flexibility Level 2 Video¹](#)

OR

[Fit 5 Flexibility Level 2 Cards \(pages 26-28 of link\)²](#)

- Quadriceps Stretch
- Modified Hurdler's Stretch
- Chest Stretch



Leadership Time

- In *Can I Join Your Club?* by John Kelly, Duck really wants to join a club — any club. Even though he tries hard to fit in, it just doesn't work. Duck decides to start his own club where everyone is welcome! When it comes to making friends, being yourself is what counts.

Skills & Games

- Handball
- Beginning Softball
- Beginning Volleyball
- Musical Balloon Bop
- Coach Says
- Keep It Up
- Air Ball

Equipment

- *Can I Join Your Club?* by John Kelly
- Balls
- Cones
- Ball tee
- Paddle, racket or bat
- Balloon or beach ball
- Line on the floor
- Floor markers
- A way to play music

Alternative Material Ideas

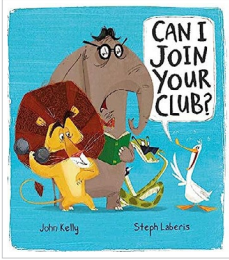
- Instead of a balloon, use a beachball



Things to Note

These lessons include multiple games with balloons. Blow up enough balloons for the class plus extra and keep them for the whole week. Beach balls may also be used.

LEADERSHIP TIME (5 MIN.)



[Can I Join Your Club? by John Kelly](#) (page 44 of link)¹

Lesson 1: Read the book

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Lesson 3: Review book and pick one activity

STRENGTH & ENDURANCE (5 MIN.)

[GoNoodle: Level 1 Endurance](#)²

OR

[Two Foot Jump](#) (page 10 of link)³

1. "Stand with your feet together."
2. "Jump up and down on two feet and land softly."



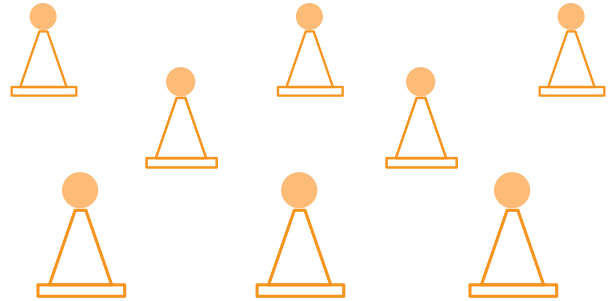
HANDBALL (5 MIN.)

Equipment

- Balls
- Cones

Setup

Place a ball on top of a cone for each student



- *“Today we are going to work on skills you need to play the game of handball.”*
- *“We will continue to practice the skill of striking.”*
- *“Place the ball on top of the cone.”*
- *“We are going to practice keeping your hand open and striking the ball off of the cone as far as you can hit it.”*
- *“Try to do this 10 times.”*
- *“Now make a fist and hit the ball off of the cone.”*
- *“Try to do this 10 times.”*



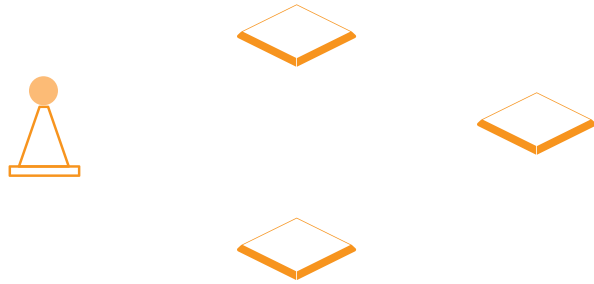
BEGINNING SOFTBALL (5 MIN.)

Equipment

- Ball
- Cone or ball tee
- Paddle, bat, or racket
- Bases

Setup

Place a ball on a cone or tee. Create bases for students to run around after they hit the ball.



- *"Another sport that uses striking is softball."*
- *"You use a bat to hit a ball off of a tee, and then run the bases."*
- *"We are going to practice this skill today."*
- *"Everyone is going to line up behind the cone/tee and use the racket/bat to hit the ball off of the tee."*
- *"Once you hit the ball, you will run to the first base and stop."*
- *"The next student will hit the ball off of the tee and run to first base. The student at first will run to second."*
- *"Each time someone hits the ball, you will run to the next base until you make it back to home plate."*
- *"Let's play ball!"*

Literacy Connection

Introducing a new sport is a great time to talk about sequencing. Use [this print out](#) to help students practice putting the steps to play softball in order. Cut apart the pictures and have students arrange them in the correct sequence.



COOL DOWN/FLEXIBILITY (5 MIN.)

“Let’s end our time together with a cool down song. I’ll start singing and you can do the actions. Join in when you are ready.”

Wheels on the Bus melody:

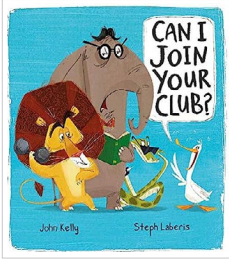
The athletes in our class touch their toes (bend and stretch), touch their toes, touch their toes. The athletes in our class touch their toes—all through the day.

The runner on the team goes run run run, run run run, run run run. The runner on the team goes run run run—all through the town. (Run in place.)

The swimmer in the water goes swim swim swim, swim swim swim, swim swim swim.

The swimmer in the water goes swim swim swim—all through the pool. (Use your arms to pretend to swim.)

LEADERSHIP TIME (5 MIN.)



[Can I Join Your Club? by John Kelly](#) (page 44 of link)¹

Lesson 1: Read the book

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STRENGTH & ENDURANCE (5 MIN.)

[GoNoodle: Level 1 Endurance](#)²

OR

[Two Foot Jump](#) (page 10 of link)³

1. "Stand with your feet together."
2. "Jump up and down on two feet and land softly."



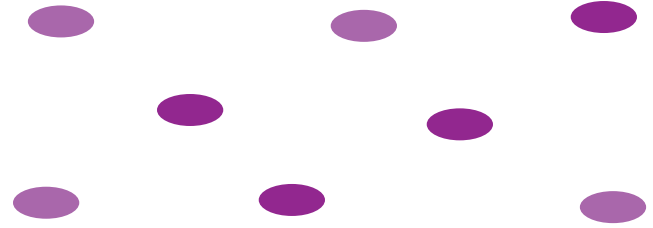
MUSICAL BALLOON BOP (5 MIN.)

Equipment

- Balloons
- Floor markers
- A way to play music

Setup

Scatter floor markers out throughout the space



- *"Next we are going to play 'Balloon Bop.'"*
- *"I am going to play music, and while the music is playing, you are going to strike the balloon straight up so it goes over your head."*
- *"Strike it up as many times as you can before the music stops."*
- *"When the music stops, put the balloon on the spot and then quickly walk to a new spot to find a new balloon."*
- *"When the music starts again, start hitting your new balloon."*

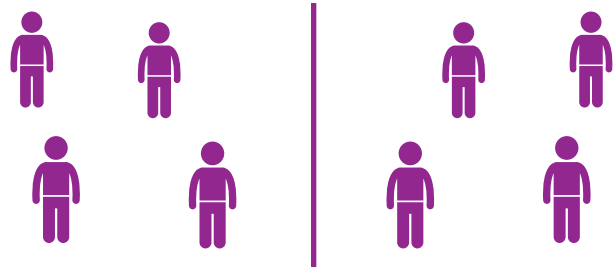
BEGINNING VOLLEYBALL (10 MIN.)

Equipment

- Balloon or beach ball
- A line in the middle of the room

Setup

Make sure there is a line dividing the room in half, and divide students into two groups



- *"We have been practicing striking this week and we are going to practice this skill while learning a new sport."*
- *"Today we are going to play the game of volleyball."*
- *"You are going to be divided into two teams."*
- *"There will be a line separating both of the teams."*
- *"The goal is to get the ball over the line to the other team."*
- *"You can work together to hit the ball/balloon multiple times to get it over."*
- *"First we will practice using a open hand."*
- *"Let's try to do it 10 times."*
- *"Now we will practice using a fist to hit it."*
- *"Let's try to do it 10 times."*
- If you have a large group, divide into smaller games so that all students can participate.



COOL DOWN/FLEXIBILITY (5 MIN.)

“Let’s end our time together with a cool down song. I’ll start singing and you can do the actions. Join in when you are ready.”

Wheels on the Bus melody:

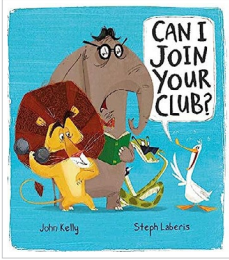
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LEADERSHIP TIME (5 MIN.)



[Can I Join Your Club? by John Kelly](#) (page 44 of link)¹

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STRENGTH & ENDURANCE (5 MIN.)

[GoNoodle: Level 1 Endurance](#)²

OR

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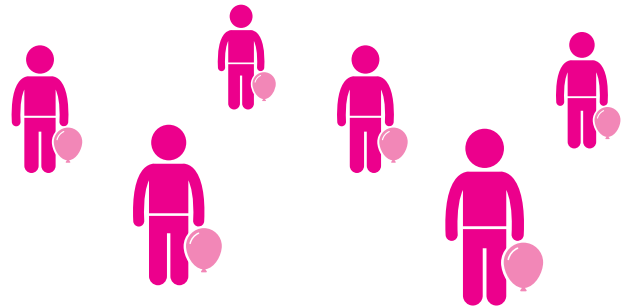
COACH SAYS (5 MIN.)

Equipment

- 1 balloon for each student

Setup

Students should spread out throughout the space with a balloon



- *“For our warm up activity today we are going to play ‘Coach Says.’”*
- *“I am going to call out a different body part and you are going to practice striking your balloon with that body part.”*
- *“For example, we will start off by striking the balloon into the air with our hand.”*
- *“Now switch to striking the balloon with your elbow.”*
- Other ideas:
 - » Finger
 - » Knee
 - » Foot
 - » Head
 - » Ear
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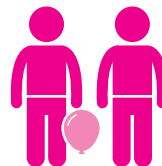
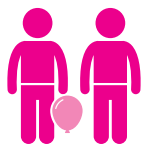
AIR BALL (5 MIN.)

Equipment

- 1 balloon per pair

Setup

Students should partner up and have one balloon per pair



- *This new game is called 'Air Ball.'*
- *"You and your partner will be working together to keep the balloon in the air as long as you can."*
- *"If you want to challenge yourself, try to only hit it two times before it is passed to your partner."*

COOL DOWN/FLEXIBILITY (5 MIN.)

“Let’s end our time together with a cool down song. I’ll start singing and you can do the actions. Join in when you are ready.”

Wheels on the Bus melody:

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STRIKING REVIEW

- *“We have learned a lot of new games and skills throughout this month.”*
- *“Can you remember some of the things we practiced during our Young Athletes time?”*
- *“Today we are going to wrap up our Striking unit.”*
- *“We practiced striking using different objects such as a bat, racket, and bowling pins (or pool noodles or plates).”*
- *“We also used our hands to practice striking a ball or balloon.”*
- *“Let’s complete the book to help remind us of some of our new skills.”*

[Striking Booklet printable](#)

HOME CONNECTIONS

Games and activities to do at home:

Send home the newsletter and include these game ideas they can use at home with their flashcards.

- Handball
- Ball Tap
- Beginning Floorball or Golf
- Beginning Tennis or Softball
- Beginning Volleyball

[Additional Striking Skill Cards for home](#)¹

Want to continue practicing these skills?

Check out [this video](#)² to learn how to do all the activities and more at home!



TEACHING TIPS FOR SUCCESS

- Encourage students to keep their eyes on the ball to learn visual tracking.
- Encourage students to stand side-on to the ball with good balance.
- Using floor markers can help the students stand in the proper position. A side-on stance is important for good balance and rotation.
- Have the students twist their belly button forward when striking the ball to encourage follow through.
- Shifting weight is important to correct striking form. If the student is not shifting their weight, have them rock forward and backward while standing on floor markers.
- Large balls are easier to strike than small ones, and stationary objects are easier to strike than moving ones.
- When the student is first working to strike a moving object, throw the ball slowly and with a small arc.
- Increase the skill level by increasing the distance of the ball from the body. This allows the student to progress from using a hand to striking with a paddle and then to striking with a bat, golf club or hockey stick.
- If a student is unable to make contact with the ball, use a ball suspended at different heights for practice.

UNIT 6 PRINTABLES



Striking Skills

Dear Family,

There is something satisfying about hitting a ball. Many of us have childhood memories of stepping up to a ball, making contact with it, and being thrilled to see that we sent it into the air. I'm excited that your child has the same opportunity for success with Young Athletes activities. We are currently working on **striking skills**, which involve hitting a ball or an object with a hand, stick, bat, paddle or racket.

It's always rewarding to introduce a new skill area to students. One of the most impactful things about Young Athletes activities is that they allow children to experience **challenges** in a **supportive and encouraging environment**. Children learn that trying something new is an **opportunity to grow**. That's a lesson they'll benefit from all their lives. I'm sure your child is eager to share his or her progress in striking skills with you. One way your child can do that is with a popular balloon game. Toss a balloon up in the air and have your child and the rest of the family try to keep it from touching the ground by tapping it upward. It's a fun activity for children and adults alike!

Sincerely,

Teacher



Successfully striking a ball is a pride-boosting achievement.



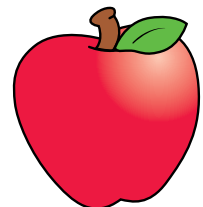
Healthy Habits

Here's a song that encourages children to eat fruit instead of sugary snacks after playtime. For extra fun, invite your child to think of motions to add to the song. Substitute the names of different fruits that grow on trees for additional verses.

Apple, Apple, Way Up High

Sung to "Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star"

Apple, apple, way up high,
I can reach you if I try.
Climb a ladder,
Hold on tight.
Pick you quickly
Take a bite.



Important Interactions

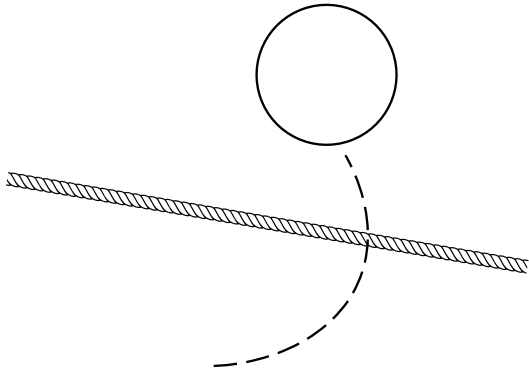
Taking turns and appreciating each other's differences are just two aspects of social awareness that children develop during Young Athletes. These skills play a big part in helping children get along with others during family, school and community activities.



Class News

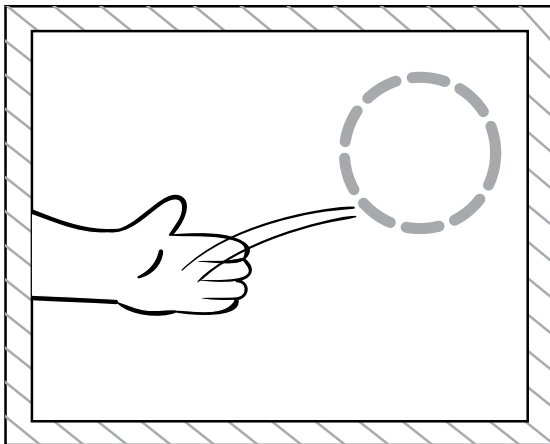
2

I can tap a ball over.



Color.

Trace.

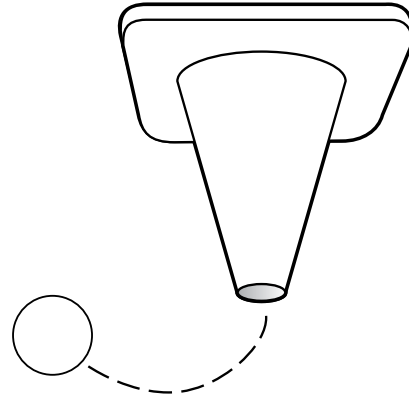


I can tap a ball.

3

1

I can tap a ball off.



Color.

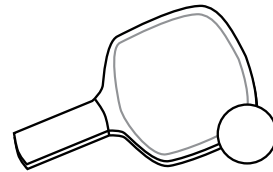
Let's Practice & Play

's

Name

Activities

Striking Skills



Special Olympics
Young Athletes



Directions for families: Cut out the booklet on the bold line. Fold the page on the horizontal dashed line, then on the vertical dashed line so the cover is on the outside. Draw and color with your child to fill in the booklet. As you do, discuss the activities and how much fun they are. Reread the mini-book periodically, especially before or after you've practiced the activities together.



HIT THE BALL OFF OF THE TEE



RUN TO FIRST BASE



RUN TO SECOND BASE



RUN TO THIRD BASE



RUN TO HOME PLATE