

THE GROUP GAMES *Guide*



87 WARM-UPS, ICEBREAKERS,
AND 5-MINUTE FILLERS



Venture Team Building

The Group Games Guide

**87 WARM-UPS, ICEBREAKERS AND
5-MINUTE FILERS**



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Introduction

Group games can be a great way to break down barriers between participants of all ages, encourage them to participate in physical exercise, and allow them to breakdown their inhibitions or feelings of embarrassment. Games, such as the ones you find in this guide, are a great way for participants to become acquainted, and are important in building a strong rapport amongst group members. They are a great way to lift the mood of any group and share fun and laughter in a group setting.

The majority of games listed in this guide require little to no equipment, and absolutely no experience from the leader. The ideal length of time for each game in this guide is between 5 to 10 minutes which can, of course, be increased or decreased depending on the response of the group.

There is an amazing level of flexibility with each game, but here are some general guidelines to help you make it a successful experience for your entire group.

Who Is This Book For?

This book is for anyone! Regardless of age or ability, group games are a fun way for participants to work together, take part in physical challenges and interact in a fun environment. Whether you are a team leader, a sports coach or a teacher, this guide will provide some ideas for warm up games, fun fillers and ice breakers to keep your group fully entertained.

The Role of the Leader

Before leading the games, you must make sure that you understand the activity, gather any equipment required, ensure that you have enough space for the game you are playing, and then present the task to the participants in a way they can easily understand.

All the games in this guide can easily be adapted to suit the group and the subject you are teaching. They also have the flexibility to allow you to incorporate certain skills that you are trying to promote as either key phrases or actions during the games. Be creative and adapt the activity to suit you and your own specialist activity or sport.

Leading the Games

- Read the game to make sure you understand it.

- Consider whether you can adapt the game to suit the group you are leading and any learning outcomes that you have.
- Gather any necessary equipment.
- Set up the game ensuring that the area is large enough to lead the game and free of any safety hazards.
- Brief the group and check their understanding of the game.
- Explain any safety points before starting the game (if any).
- Set the time and let the game begin.

Once the game has started, step back and observe. Let the group enjoy themselves and occasionally offer encouragement to participants to keep them motivated. If they are unsure of anything, stop the game and clarify any issues they have.

Leader Notes

Each game should be chosen based upon factors such as age, maturity and the physical ability of your group. Consider each group individually as certain games may not be suitable for older groups, and younger groups may not understand some tasks that are too challenging and complicated.

Games should always be conducted in a fun manner. Physical games are ideal for the start or end of your group's activity when they need to either warm up or cool down.

It is important to think about what you are trying to achieve for each game – fun, ice breaking, warming up, skill development, cooperation, teamwork, etc. Once you have a learning outcome, consider which games would be the most appropriate for the group you have.

Make sure the rules and safety procedures for each game are clear and precise. You are responsible for monitoring the behaviour and safety of the group during your games session.

Your success will depend on your delivery of a game. Games may be delivered in many different ways – choose a style that is most appropriate to you and suitable for the particular group.

Keep a log and write notes and reviews on the games you present. During each game, you will be able to gauge what works and where improvements can be made next time. These improvements should be based on the group's response and your own delivery style.

Part One:

Warm-Up Games

Until now, warming up and cooling down have always been seen as work - a boring start to an activity or class where you struggle to keep the participants' attention. But not anymore! When your group takes part in these games, they will be engaged fully, having fun, and effectively preparing their minds and bodies for the game or activity that lies ahead. These warm-up games are easy to run and require little or no equipment.

Touch Blue

Minimum Group Size: 6

Resources: Random coloured objects

Participants are instructed to find an object or item of clothing pertaining to a specific colour. However, they cannot touch anything on themselves or on another person. The last person to touch the colour is out of the game. To make this game difficult, it's best to only use unusual colours or patterns, making the participants run further to reach the objects. They will be provided an opportunity to use their creative thinking skills.

If there are a lot of participants, it may be difficult to spot which participant is last, and therefore 'out'. Once participants are out, they can be used as judges to help keep track on the game.

Deflector Bomb

Minimum Group Size: 10

Resources: None

Participants pick two people from the group: one person is the bomb and the other the deflector shield. The object is to keep the deflector shield between you and the bomb without revealing which is which to the rest of the group. At the end of a given time (say 1 minute), the game stops and you see at that moment who has their deflector shield in between them and their bomb. If they fail to protect themselves from the bomb, then they sit out the rest of the game.

Vary Your Speed

Minimum Group Size: 10 (depending on venue and space provisions)

Resources: None

Participants pick a spot on the floor some distance away and focus on it. When the game starts, they must walk towards the spot in a straight line. The object is to reach your spot on the floor without coming into contact with any other person. You may not stop or change direction but you may alter speed. This game is great for group awareness.

Buzzy Bees

Minimum Group Size: 15

Resources: None

In this game, participants get into pairs. They then run around separately, buzzing and pretending to be bees. The person nominated to be 'it' shouts, "Buzzy bee, buzzy bee, touch [body part]". After this phrase is said, the participants run back and find their partners. Whichever body part has been called out, they must touch together. For example, for "touch knees", they have to touch their knees together.

Cat and Mouse

Minimum Group Size: 12

Resources: Numbered paper

One person is the cat and the rest are mice. The mice run around in the meadow until the cat meows. When this happens, the mice must run and get on a piece of numbered newspaper to be safe. The numbers of that piece of newspaper indicate the maximum number of mice allowed to stand on the paper. Any mouse with no home becomes a cat.

Ladders

Minimum Group Size: 10 (even number)

Resources: None

First, pair up the group members and sit them down, with legs flat, leaving space between pairs to prevent injury from occurring. Now give each pair a number, starting from the number one. Once all pairs have a number, you then call a number and that pair will jump up, step over the other pairs legs one at a time then run around the whole of their team and sit back down in their original place. The first one to sit back in place is the winner. Alternatively, you can play as a team. After the first pair has completed their turn, the next person gets up and runs, until the whole team has run, and the leader declares a winning team.

Stuck in the Mud

Minimum Group Size: 10

Resources: None

In a boundary area, one person is 'it'. They must then run around trying to tag as many people as they can. Once a person has been caught, they then have to stand with their feet shoulder-width apart and can only be freed if someone crawls between their legs.

Horses and Jockeys

Minimum Group Size: 10

Resources: None

Group members need to get into pairs: one person is the horse and the other is the jockey. All pairs stand around in a circle, with the horses on the inside and the jockey on the outside. When the leader calls out "horses", all of the horses have to run clockwise around the circle, back to their partner, under their legs and then the jockeys have to jump on their back. The last pair to do this is out and has to 'neigh'. If the leader calls out "jockeys", the jockeys do the running around the circle and on their return to their partner, jump on their backs (in this case they don't crawl through their partner's legs).

Clumps

Minimum Group Size: 10

Resources: None

This is a very simple run around game. Participants start by running around. The leader then calls out a number and the participants have to form a clump of that many people. You do not necessarily have to penalise anyone who does not find a group – it's just for fun!

Jack in the Box

Minimum Group Size: 8

Resources: None

Choose one person to be the leader; everyone else must stand in a circle around them. When the leader shouts, "Jack in the box", participants must squat down. When the leader shouts "Jack out of the box" participants must all jump up. The leader can repeat the commands, or say them fast or slow in an attempt to confuse the participants. Anyone who does the wrong action is then out of the game.

Fruit Salad

Minimum Group Size: 10 (even number)

Resources: None

Participants pair up and each pair chooses a different type of fruit. They then stand opposite each other in two lines (similar to line dancing) and make a tunnel with their hands. The leader then calls out fruit names randomly.

Once a pair's fruit has been called, they run through the tunnel, then back round the outside and race back to their original places. This can be made more interesting by using animals and making the noise of the animal rather than calling out just the name. You can also make it competitive by making each line one team and scoring the winning participant from each race.

Under, Over Race

Minimum Group Size: 8

Resources: 2 balls

The group is split into two equal teams and each team should form a straight line. Each team is given a ball. The person at the front of the line passes the ball over their head, followed by the person behind them taking the ball and passing it through their own legs to the next person. The ball continues going over then under, until it reaches the person at the back of the line. The person at the back takes the ball and runs to the front of the line where the process starts again. In order to complete the challenge, all team members must have a turn. The team that returns to their starting order the quickest wins the game.

A variation on this game is called Tunnel Ball. In this game, the ball is rolled through the legs of all the team members until the person at the back catches it and runs to the front of the line, where the process begins again.

Traffic Lights

Minimum Group Size: 6

Resources: None

An easy warm-up game for participants to play which is ideal for younger participants. On the word "red", the participants must stand very still. On the word "amber", they can walk around. On the word "green", they should run. If any of the participants do the wrong thing at the wrong time, they are out of the game and act as a judge for the remainder of the game. The leader of the game can make things confusing by shouting "Speed camera", "slow motion", "roundabout", "sit and spin", etc.

Penguin Race

Minimum Group Size: 6

Resources: None

Participants start by slapping their hands against their thighs and running on the spot mimicking how a penguin runs. The leader should get participants to do this slowly to start with, so they become accustomed to it and have them to speed up at a later stage. Leaders can introduce further commands such as left bends, right bends and double bends, which all include speeding sound effects and actions whilst still running on the spot.

Other actions to include:

Penguin going through a tunnel

Penguin on ice

Penguin at the disco

Penguin over a ski jump

Giants, Wizards and Dwarfs

Minimum Group Size: 10

Resources: Markers (to define boundaries)

This is a giant team game of rock, paper, scissors. Divide the group into two teams. Define a playing area with two end safety zones and a middle line. Each team decides their character and approaches the middle line. On the count of three, the teams perform the action and noise (which signifies their character). The winning team pursues the losing team and tries to tag them before they reach their safety zone. Any person tagged joins the opposite team. This continues until one team has all the players.

As in rock, paper, scissors each character beats one other:

Wizard beats the Dwarf by casting a spell on him

Giant beats the Wizard by crushing him

Dwarf beats the Giant by tickling his feet

Fishy, Fishy, Sharky, Sharky

Minimum Group Size: 10

Resources: Markers (to define boundaries)

The leader selects a shark from the group. Everyone else must then line up at the other end of an allocated area. The shark decides who to call forward. For example,

it could be “*anyone wearing red*” or “*anyone wearing a hat*”. Those chosen run to the opposite end of the allocated space, past the shark who will try to catch them.

If the shark catches them, they then become seaweed. As seaweed, the participants cannot move their feet but they can reach out with their arms and attempt to try to catch others in the group. The game continues in the same way with anyone the shark or seaweed catches becoming seaweed. The last person in becomes the shark in the next game.

Bump Tag

Ideal Group Size: 10

Resources: None

The leader must select a cat and a mouse from the group. The aim of the game is for the cat to chase the mouse. If the cat manages to catch the mouse, they then become the cat and have to do the chasing.

Everyone else in the group pairs up and stands side-by-side spread out in the activity area. The mouse changes throughout the game by the mouse linking to the side of a pair, the person on the opposite side to where the mouse has linked themselves then becomes the mouse and the cat has to chase them instead.

Freeze Tag

Minimum Group Size: 12

Resources: 2 balls (2 different colours)

Similar to the game Stuck in the Mud. During the game, there are two different coloured balls and two ball carriers are selected from the group. The blue ball carrier can freeze people by touching them with the ball. The yellow ball unfreezes. When the yellow ball is handed to someone who is frozen, they defrost and become the yellow ball carrier instead. The blue ball carrier stays the same throughout the game. More than one of the same coloured ball can be added during the game to make this a faster paced game.

Sticky Parts

Minimum Group Size: 8

Resources: Beanbag for each participant

All participants are given a beanbag. When instructed by their leader, all participants have to run, skip or hop around until the leader calls out a body part. Once the leader calls out the body part, all participants have to try to balance the beanbag on that specific body part. The last person to complete this is out of the game. The

winner is the person left after all rounds. They then get to take over from the leader in the next game and give instructions to the rest of the group.

Kung Fu

Minimum Group Size: 8

Resources: None

In this game, the group creates a closed circle around the leader, ensuring that they have enough space between each other. The leader goes through three actions, including stance, kicking, and the chop. The instructor gets the group jumping up and down on the spot and then does a countdown from five to one. When they get down to one, each group member must perform an action. If the action they choose is the same as what the kung-fu master (the leader) chooses, they are out of the game. This game can be adapted to suit a specific sport that the participants are learning by just changing the actions.

Everybody's It

Minimum Group Size: 10

Resources: None

Good warm up game. Everyone in the group is 'it' and they must try and tag each other. If they get caught, they must stand still with both hands in the air. The only way to free them is for another person to give them a high 10 and then the game continues.

Band Game

Minimum Group Size: 10

Resources: Bands for each participant

Everyone starts with a band tucked into their shorts or trousers. The idea of the game is to get as many bands as possible from the other participants. Participants can only steal if they have a band tucked in to their own shorts or trousers. When a participant loses their band, they continue jogging until the time is up.

Knee Slaps

Minimum Group Size: 10

Resources: None

Participants are paired up and they bend down facing each other. The object of the exercise is to try and slap each other's knees. Participants defend their own knees by fending off attacks with their hands. After each successful 'strike', they break

contact and prepare to start again. The contest ends when someone has scored three strikes and the contestants find new partners to start again. Before the game starts, remind participants to not hit hard and stick to light slaps.

Man the Lifeboats

Minimum Group Size: 10

Resources: None

A fun and energetic game for younger participants. The leader shouts commands in which the group has to react to as quickly as possible. The last person to complete the action is out of the game.

To play the game, name four sides of the room bow (front of the room), stern (back of the room), starboard (right side) and port (left side). The leader shouts these commands out in any order and the group has to run to side called out. If you say, “man the lifeboats”, everyone must sit on the floor. Other commands that can be used include:

- “Boom coming over” – Participants lie flat on the floor, hand clasping their heads.
- “Captain coming” – Stand to attention and salute.
- “Climb the rigging” – Mime climbing ropes.
- “Man overboard” – Grab a partner.
- “2, 3 or 4 in a boat” – In groups of 2,3 or 4 the participants sit down and mime rowing a boat.

Set the boundaries about a metre from the wall to prevent participants from into the walls.

Mirroring

Minimum Group Size: 10

Resources: None

Split the group into pairs and organise them so they are standing opposite each other. One person makes a movement, the other tries to mirror them as well as they can. They then continue this for the time allocated (say a minute). Swap roles. When both have played both roles, they can try to coordinate movements with each other, so that both become player and mirror at the same time. This works best with slow movements and needs a lot of concentration.

Body Parts

Minimum Group Size: 10

Resources: None

Have the group walk (or run, if a warm-up) around the space and then call out a number and body part. For example, if the leader says "5 elbows", participants have to get into groups of 5 and touch elbows. Repeat with different numbers and body parts. Whatever number you want in each group, call out that number for the final clump.

Share a Stretch

Minimum Group Size: 10

Resources: None

Simple to do but still effective as an end-of-session cooldown. Form a circle and invite participants to do a physical stretch and the rest of the group copies. People can go randomly or you can work around the circle.

Categories

Minimum Group Size: 10

Resources: None

A fast paced way of getting to know commonalities among group members. Ask the group to divide into smaller groups according to a category, i.e. yell out eye colour or shoe size, clothing colour, type of pet or toothbrush colour, favourite colour, hair colour, people with number of brothers or sisters, etc. The leader can use any category (excluding any that could be deemed discriminatory in any way). Make it quick and fast paced to get everyone moving.

Dog and Bone

Minimum Group Size: 10

Resources: 1 ball/beanbag

Split the group in two with one group on each side of the playing area along a line. Place a ball/beanbag (the bone) in the middle of the playing area. Each team must be numbered 1 to 10 (change this depending on group size). The leader shouts a number and the two people with that number (on opposite teams) must try to get the bone before the other one. When one gets the bone, the other can try to tag them before they get back to their team line. The team scores points depending on how many times they manage to get the bone. You can mix it up by choosing different numbers on each team to go against each other.

Donkey Tails

Minimum Group Size: 10

Resources: None

Everyone tucks a piece of scrap material in the back of their shorts or ,trousers so it is hanging out like a tail. Next, set a boundary for the game. In this game, everyone is out for themselves and trying to steal as many tails as possible. Participants are not allowed to hold onto their own tail. There must be a sufficient amount of material hanging out so that others can grab it. Once someone wins a tail they must tuck it into their trousers. At the end of the game the winner is the person with the most tails.

NB: you will need enough bits of scrap material for everyone (sports bibs work well).

Part Two:

Five Minute Filler Games

If you have time left at the end of the day or you need to fill time at the end of your coaching session, try a few of these games! Five-minute filler games are fun and energising activities that can be played at any time and require little equipment and no planning.

Duck, Duck, Goose

Minimum Group Size: 10

Resources: None

In this game, the participants sit in a circle. One person is selected to be the player by the leader in the game. This player walks around the outside of the circle, touching everyone on the head as they go around. As they touch a person's head, they must say either 'duck' or 'goose'. If they say 'duck', the participant sitting remains seated, if they say 'goose', the participant sitting has to get up and then chase them around the circle. The participant who chased the player must try to get back to their place before the player takes it. The last one to run back and sit in the space within the circle becomes the next player.

Head It, Catch It

Minimum Group Size: 8

Resources: Soft play ball

The group forms a circle, with the leader standing in the middle. The leader throws the ball to one of the participants in the circle. The leader has to shout either, "head it" or "catch it", with the participant in the circle doing the opposite. If they get it wrong, then they are then out of the game. You can also include the three-strike rule in this game.

Number Ball

Minimum Group Size: 8

Resources: Soft play ball

Everyone stands in a circle with one person in the centre to start. Each participant is given a number. The person in the middle throws the ball up high in the air and shouts a number. The participant, whose number is called out has to run into the

circle and catch the ball. They then throw the ball again and shout another number. If anyone drops the ball, they are out of the game.

Butt Off

Minimum Group Size: 8

Resources: Chairs

Everybody sits on chairs around the circle. Ask for a volunteer to stand in the middle, leaving just one chair empty. The person in the circle has to try and regain a seat. The group prevents this by moving clockwise, one place at a time to constantly fill the space. If the centre person gets a seat, the person who let them have it (to the left) takes the middle.

Time Bomb

Minimum Group Size: 8

Resources: Soft play ball

Participants have to stand in a circle and throw the ball (bomb) to each other. The bomb is safe until it's activated, but as soon as it is dropped, it starts a countdown to explosion (from 10 or 20). Once the countdown has started, it cannot be stopped and the participants must continue to throw the ball to one another. Whoever has the ball when it explodes is out of the game.

Sharks

Minimum Group Size: 12

Resources: Hoops (Chalk indoors)

Lay out a few hoops or draw chalk circles as the islands. The area around the hoops is known as the shark-infested sea. The participants must walk around the hoops, with no one standing still or hanging around only one hoop, etc. The leader then shouts "Sharks" and gives chase.

All the participants must take refuge in a hoop, with as many as possible in each hoop. Any participant caught by the shark (the leader) is out of the game. Once the leader shouts "all clear", the participants start to walk around again. Repeat, and remove hoops after each round so that the participants have to crowd into fewer and fewer hoops. The idea of the game is for the participants to help each other stay in the hoops.

Guess Who

Minimum Group Size: 15

Resources: Cover

This only works if you have a large group of participants (at least 15). Before you start to play, it's important that everyone knows one another's names. Someone is chosen to do the guessing and has to stand away from everyone else with their eyes closed. Everyone else has to crouch down. The leader then has to put a blanket/cover over someone and then invite the guesser to come back and guess who is underneath the blanket. They only get three guesses.

Pass the Expression

Minimum Group Size: 8

Resources: None

This game is similar to Chinese Whispers. One person starts off by pulling an expression and shows it to the next person in line. They then pass it on to the next person in the group. This continues until it gets to the end of the line.

Sleeping Lions

Minimum Group Size: 10

Resources: None

After a lively session, this is the perfect way to calm down a group of participants. Everyone has to lie on the floor and be still and quiet. If they move or laugh, they are out. Depending on how long the leader wants it to last, just watch them for a while, or they can go around and pull silly faces at them, getting the participants who are out of the game to help.

Flinch Ball

Minimum Group Size: 8

Resources: Soft play ball

The participants stand in a circle with their hands behind their backs. The leader stands in the middle with a ball. They have to pretend to throw the ball at the participant to see if they flinch. If they flinch and the leader hasn't thrown the ball, they are out. If the leader does throw the ball and they fail to catch it, they are also out.

Pass a Different Mime

Minimum Group Size: 8

Resources: None

Choose a participant (person #1) to start off with an obvious mime (e.g. brushing teeth); the next person (when they know what they are doing) says, "What are you doing?". Person #1 says, "I am riding a horse." Person #2 then has to mime riding a horse and person #3 asks "what are you doing?". This continues with the rest of the group. Reverse after one round to allow for revenge.

Pass Shape/Object Mime

Minimum Group Size: 8

Resources: None

Form a circle. First person passes an imaginary object to the person next to them. They do this in the style of the imaginary object. It is collected by the recipient and transformed into something else before being passed on again. An imaginary football for example would be kicked to the next person. They might catch it, turn it into a bowling ball and roll it to the next person.

Use the Chair as a Prop

Minimum Group Size: 4

Resources: Chair

Form a standing circle with a chair in middle. Someone in the group goes to the middle and uses the chair as a prop. People on the outside have to guess what the prop is. They call out their guesses. If correct, that person goes to the middle and invents a new prop. Examples could be using the chair as a bicycle or trumpet or hat etc.

Opposite Game

Minimum Group Size: 10

Resources: None

The participants sit in a circle with one person chosen to sit in the middle. The person in the middle has to make a gesture (i.e. lift their left leg) and the others have to do the opposite (i.e. lift their right leg). Let the participant in the middle go for a minute or so and then switch over.

To make it harder: the group stands in a circle, the leader is in the centre with a ball. The group is told that when the following instructions are called out, they must pass the ball back in a certain way.

Head= they must kick the ball back.

Foot= they must head the ball back.

Knees= they must catch the ball and throw it back.

When a participant makes a mistake, either they can be out straight away or the leader can operate a lives system.

I Went on Holiday

Minimum Group Size: 10

Resources: None

Participants sit in a circle. The first person to start has to say "I went on holiday and I packed my anorak". The second person has to say "I went on holiday and I packed my anorak and my balloons". The third person has to say "I went on holiday and I packed my anorak, my balloons and my cap". This continues through the alphabet. With younger participants, it may be easier to forego the repetition of previous letters.

Wink Murder

Minimum Group Size: 10

Resources: None

Have the group sit or stand in a circle with one person appointed as the detective. The detective has to leave the group and shut their eyes while the leader gets the participants to shut their eyes while he chooses the murderer. When the murderer is chosen, the detective is called back to solve the crime. The murderer will kill their victims by winking at them when the detective is not looking. Anyone who is winked at has to die spectacularly! Can the detective guess who the murderer is before everyone is killed?

Rhythm

Minimum Group Size: 10

Resources: None

Participants stand or sit in a circle with one person appointed as the investigator. The investigator has to leave the group and close their eyes while the rhythm leader is chosen. The chosen leader then starts clapping their hands or clicking their

fingers. Everyone copies whatever they do. The investigator returns and has to try to find out who is leading the change of action. Remind the participants not to stare at the leader.

Animal Farm

Minimum Group Size: 12

Resources: None

Each of the participants has to come up to the leader in turn and the leader whispers the name of an animal in their ear. Once everyone knows what they are, they have to find the other people with the same animal. They have to do this by running around making their animal's noise and listening to see who else is making the same noise. As an alternative, you can make the participants do actions instead of noises, or combine the two.

Snakes

Minimum Group Size: 12

Resources: None

Starting with pairs, each player lies on their stomach with arms outstretched, holding the ankles of the player in front. The aim is to move along the floor as a snake without letting go of the ankles. When this has been mastered in pairs, increase to fours, eights and so on. The longer the snake, the more fun and the greater cooperation needed. For a variation, form two or more snakes to race over a set course, with obstacles if they are good enough.

What Time Is It Mr Wolf?

Minimum Group Size: 10

Resources: Markers (to define boundaries)

In a boundary area, one person is 'Mr Wolf' who stands with his back to the group. Everyone else stands in a line, side-by-side facing Mr Wolf. Everyone in the line shouts "What time is it Mr Wolf" and then Mr Wolf will give a time. For example, should Mr Wolf shout "5 o'clock", then everyone in the line can take five equal steps. This is repeated until the line gets very close to Mr Wolf. When Mr Wolf decides they are close enough to be tagged, he shouts "dinner time" instead and attempts to tag anyone running back to the starting line. Any participant who is tagged joins Mr Wolf.

Steeple Chase

Minimum Group Size: 4

Resources: None

The group forms a circle. They then practise slapping hands on thighs to make a galloping horse sound. Brief the group that it is the Grand National and that on the word “go”, the horse race will start. There will be a commentary that will describe the hazards and jumps.

A jump is tackled by lifting the hands off the thighs to symbolize flight over a fence. A triple, for example, would be shown by gallop flight gallop flight gallop flight gallop. Water jumps will be gallop flight splash gallop. The group leans to go round corners and body swerves to avoid animal rights protesters. Include any other obstacles you feel like. Constant commentary is essential.

Fizz Buzz

Minimum Group Size: 8

Resources: None

Participants stand in a circle and have to count clockwise around the circle, taking a number each. Whenever a number contains two, they have to say “fizz” and whenever it contains a four they have to say “buzz”. To make it more complicated, the leader can substitute more words for numbers or have a key word that you would say to change the direction of the game.

Chinese Dragon

Minimum Group Size: 12

Resources: Scarfs (or bibs, old t shirts, etc.)

Split the group into two smaller groups. Each group forms a line, one behind the other, facing the same way and facing the other team. Participants place their hands on the waist of the person in front of them. The last person in each team has a scarf tucked into the waistband of their trousers. The object is for the front person of each team to grab the scarf of the other team without the chain letting go.

Splat

Minimum Group Size: 12

Resources: None

The group stands in a circle with the ‘splat master’ in the middle. If the splat master points at you and says “splat”, you must duck down quickly. The people on either

side of the splatted person must put their arm out and shout “splat”. Whoever out of the three people is the slowest is out of the game.

When only two people are remaining, they stand in the centre of the circle back-to-back for the final ‘Splat off’. Every time the splat master says a word (these can be themed such as cars, chocolate etc), they step forward. However, when the splat master says “splat”, they turn round and try to say “splat” before their opponent does. The winner becomes splat master next game.

Oogly Boogly Bop

Minimum Group Size: 12

Resources: None

Similar to Splat. The group stands in a circle with the leader in the middle. The leader has several instructions; if at any point a participant is too slow or does the wrong thing, they are then out of the game.

If the leader points at a participant and says “oogly boogly bop”, they have to say “bop” before the leaders does.

If the leader points at a participant and says “kangaroo”, the participant must make a pouch with their hands, with the people on either side jumping up and down.

If the leader points at a participant and says “elephant”, that participant must make a trunk, with the people either side making an ear shape with their arms.

If the leader points at a participant and says “Homer”, that participant and the people on either side must say “doh” and hit their palms against their forehead.

When only two people remain they stand in the middle of the circle back to back. As the leader says “oogly”, they walk forward. When the instructor finishes the word “boogly”, they must turn round and say “bop” as quickly as possible (before the other person does) to win.

Pulse

Minimum Group Size: 10

Resources: None

The group lies on their fronts in a circle. Each person puts their left arm underneath the right arm of the person on their left. One group member then starts a pulse going round the circle. They tap the floor once with their hand. This continues around the circle.

If the person gives two taps instead of one the direction of the pulse is reversed. If anyone taps out of turn or forgets to tap they lose the hand that made the mistake, giving them in effect two lives (once they lose both hands they are then out of the

game). When playing with a big group, to complicate the game further, try to add more than one pulse in the circle at the same time.

Monkey Football

Minimum Group Size: 10

Resources: Soft play ball

The group stands in a circle with their legs apart and feet touching the feet of the people on either side of them. Each person bends forward and has to defend the space between their legs. This is their 'goal'. A ball is added to the circle and everyone must try to push the ball through another group member's legs, whilst defending their own goal.

If the ball passes between your legs, you lose a life and you can only defend your goal with one hand. If another life is lost, you lose both hands. When a third life is lost you have to turn around with your back to the circle and defend looking through your legs. Fourth life lost, you go down to backwards with only one hand, then no hands, then finally you are out. Last person in is the winner.

Buy Me a Monkey

Minimum Group Size: 10

Resources: None

The group makes a circle. Two participants are chosen to stand in the centre of it. One of them is acting as a monkey, the other is trying to sell the monkey. They walk up to someone in the circle and the seller says "*would you like to buy my monkey?*". The person in the circle answers by saying "*what can your monkey do?*". The seller says something the monkey can do and the monkey demonstrates. If the person laughs, then they become the monkey and the monkey becomes the seller. If they hold a straight face, the pair must try to sell the monkey to someone else in the circle instead.

1,2,3... Look Up

Minimum Group Size: 8

Resources: None

Get the group to form a circle, either sitting or standing. On the count of three, each member of the group is to look at someone. If two people in the group look at each other than they are out of the game.

Keep Your Distance

Minimum Group Size: 8

Resources: None

Each person mentally selects two people and thinks of a distance for each of them. The object is to walk around the room while maintaining the chosen distance from each of the two people, e.g. stay two feet from one person and seven feet from the other.

Evolution

Minimum Group Size: 8

Resources: None

Group members wobble round as eggs. The eggs must meet another egg and play rock, paper, scissors. The winner of the match then evolves into a chicken and the loser stays an egg. Chickens then have to find another chicken to play; the winner then moves up the ladder to being a prince/princess, then a king or queen, then a champion. The loser always goes back to being an egg.

Rock beats scissors by blunting them

Paper beats the rock by wrapping around it

Scissors beat paper by cutting it

Action Murder

Minimum Group Size: 10

Resources: None

Similar to Wink Murder but the chosen person starts an action which everyone in the circle must copy. They could change this action regularly. The detective has three guesses to identify who is leading the action.

Hidden Numbers

Minimum Group Size: 10

Resources: 1 shoestring

Participants sit down and form an inward-facing semi-circle facing the leader. The leader will then place a shoestring on the ground and lay out a shape. The group then has to guess which number (between one and ten) it represents.

Once the leader has laid the shoestring on the ground, he puts his hands on his thighs and asks the group, “what number is this?”. The group will then review the shape created and try to guess what number it represents. Give the group a couple of guesses and then tell them the answer.

The catch is the leader must show the ‘number’ with his fingers which are placed on his thighs. For example, if the number is five, the leader has only five fingers out. If it’s one, then the leader has one finger on his thighs, with the others folded.

When organising a shape with the shoestring, make it fun and use some theatrics (by doing this, you are distracting them as they think this links to the number – in reality, the shape makes no difference to the number).

Body Part Twister

Minimum Group Size: 10

Resources: None

Body Part Twister is great for getting people working together and energised. It is physical and needs participants to be comfortable leaning on each other. Call out different body parts. These are the only parts of the body the whole group can have touching the floor.

Encourage everyone to work together to find a solution and balance on each other if they need to. For example, to a group of nine people you could call out four bums, two feet, one head, two hands, four knees. Call out the next set of instructions as soon as everyone is in position.

Just remember to think before you call out combinations or you could call out something that is physically or numerically impossible!

Hockey by Numbers

Minimum Group Size: 10

Resources: 2 chairs, 1 table, 1 balloon, and rolled-up newspaper

Divide your group into two teams who sit on opposite sides of the room. Each team member is numbered. At each end of the room, there is a goal (can be two chairs and a table). In the centre is a balloon and two hockey sticks made up of rolled-up newspaper.

The leader shouts a number and the numbered player from each side runs up, picks up a stick and tries to propel the balloon through the opponent’s goal. After a goal, or at any time during play, the leader can shout another number. The current players

immediately drop their sticks and two new players enter the game and take over. The team with the most goals wins.

Shoeing Horses

Minimum Group Size: 10

Resources: 2 chairs

Two chairs are placed opposite each other and about five metres apart in the middle of the circle of viewers. Two people are chosen from the group to be 'jockeys' and they sit on the chairs. Both are blindfolded. Six or seven shoes are placed around the floor near the chairs. When told to begin, the jockeys must hunt for the 'horse shoes' and put them on the legs of their 'horses' (the chairs). The jockey to have shoes on all four legs is declared the winner.

- Only one shoe can be carried at a time
- Either player may rob horse shoes from the other's horse, unless the other jockey is sitting on the horse

Big Races

Minimum Group Size: 10

Resources: Pile of clothes

Organise the group into two or three separate teams (depending on the size of the group – the larger the better!) and get them to sit in a line facing forwards. In front of them, place a pile of clothes (make these as wacky as possible). The object of the game is that each person must dress up in the clothes and then run to the post or cone, then hop back, undress and tag the next person in to do the same. The team that has all team members complete this and sits down wins the challenge.

Gas Stopping

Minimum Group Size: 10

Resources: None

Get the participants to stand in a spaced circle facing inwards, except one person who is 'on'. The 'on' player walks around the outside of the circle at any time they can touch another person on the back. Once they do, the race is on and they have to run around the circle in opposite directions to return to the gap left. The participant who fails to reach the gap first becomes the 'on'.

Mars Bar Eating

Minimum Group Size: 10

Resources: 1 Mars bar, 1 knife, 1 fork, 1 hat, 1 scarf, 1 coat, 1 shirt, 1 pair of trousers, 1 dice

Get your group to sit in a circle. In the middle of the circle there is: a Mars bar (or any other chocolate bar), knife, fork, hat, scarf, coat, shirt and trousers. You will also need a large dice.

Each person in the group has a turn at rolling the dice. Every time someone in the group rolls a six, they must run into the middle, put on all the clothes, pick up the knife and fork and cut open the Mars bar. They continue to eat it (each piece being no longer than 1cm) until someone else in the group rolls a six. They must then stop and take off all the clothes. The person who rolled the six then comes into the circle, puts on the clothes and attempts to eat as much of the Mars bar as they can until someone else rolls a six and they switch again. Continue until the bar has been eaten.

Pirates Treasure

Minimum Group Size: 10

Resources: 1 blindfold, 1 'treasure', 1 chair

Select a volunteer to be blindfolded and sit them on a chair in the middle of a circle with an item located under the chair. The objective of the game is for someone in the group to capture the treasure from the blindfolded participant without them noticing.

Get the group running around in a circle to begin with and then point to someone in the group to move as silently as possible and try to capture the treasure. If the blindfolded participant points in their direction, they are then out of the game. If they retrieve the treasure, they switch places.

Rain Making

Minimum Group Size: 10

Resources: None

This game is aimed at young participants and involves a lot of cooperation and group togetherness. Divide the group into three smaller teams. Explain that they are going to create a rainstorm by making four simple sounds in a round. The sounds are as follows:

- Drizzle – gently rub your palms together to produce a whispering noise
- Light rain – move your hands up and down in opposite directions, with the palms brushing against each other, as if you are brushing sand off the palms.

- Heavy rain – clap your hands together.
- Hail – cup your palms and clap them against your thighs.

Start off group one with making drizzle. Once that's under way, turn and signal to group two to start with drizzle, then group three. Turn back to group one and get them to start light rain whilst the other maintain their drizzle, then turn to group two and do the same, then group three. Keep the round alive until all segments are making hail. Then work backwards so that group one stop hailing and make heavy rain, then two, then three, until you work back through light rain to drizzle and then silence!

Prohibited Movements

Minimum Group Size: 10

Resources: None

Organise the group into a circle., ensuring enough space between each other (stretched arm length). Stand in the middle of the circle. The aim of the game is for all participants to exactly copy your movements – all except two of them. Instead of these two movements, they must make another movement which has been set by you prior to the game e.g. when put your hands on the back of the head, the players must squat, or when the when you bend forward, the players must clap their hands etc. Anyone that makes a mistake is out of the game.

You can adapt this to suit the sport or subject that you are teaching.

Body Parts

Minimum Group Size: 10

Resources: None

Have the group walk (or run, if a warm-up) around the space and then call out a number and body part (for example 5 elbows). So people get into groups of 5 and touch elbows. Repeat with different numbers and body parts. Whatever number you want in each group, call out that number for the final clump.

Not Worse than a Kangaroo

Minimum Group Size: 10

Resources: 1 small box or tennis ball

A fun game to play with younger groups. Each player must cover the distance set out by jumping with the small box or tennis ball between their knees. The time is noted down. If the player drops either the ball or the small box, they have to retrieve the item as quickly as possible, place it between their knees again and continue to

jump towards the finish line. The player who covers the distance in the shortest time is the winner.

Peruvian Ball

Minimum Group Size: 10

Resources: None

Everyone in the group has an imaginary ball. Each ball has its own special movement pattern, and its own sound which the participant decides. The participants practice 'throwing' or 'bouncing' the invisible balls by themselves, while simultaneously making the sounds ("boi-oi-oing," "zip-zap," "wheeeee"). After everyone has the movements and sounds finalised, they start walking around the space. The leader calls out "freeze," and then instructs everyone to trade balls with someone. There is no talking allowed, only demonstrating the sounds and movements of the balls.

Once everyone has traded, everyone continues walking around the space again, this time with their new balls. The leader again calls out "freeze" again, and instructs everyone to trade with another person. After four to six trades have been made (depending on the size of the group), the leader instructs everyone to find their original balls. Everyone must then move about, demonstrating the balls they are holding, while searching for the ball they originally created. If a participant finds their ball, they trade with the person who has it, and then takes their ball to the side, out of the playing space.

It is rare for everyone to find their original balls in this game. If someone can't find them, use this during the review and ask the participants why. This is a great way to start talking about miscommunication at work, how to give specific instructions, or communicating without words.

Dots

Minimum Group Size: 10

Resources: Sticky dots in a range of colours.

Great for organising smaller groups and works well with both adults and kids. Fix a coloured dot onto the forehead of each participant. Ask the participants to stand up and move around the room in silence. Participants must find out what colour their dot is without talking. Once they know what colour their dot is, they find others with the same colour and that will be their group. This is a great game for encouraging non-verbal communication. Don't forget to give some thought to how you want to mix the groups.

The Clapping Game

Minimum Group Size: 10

Resources: None

The Clapping Game is a variation of the game Pulse. Organise your group into a circle on the floor or around a table. Get everyone to place their hands flat on the surface, with their arms crossing over with those of the neighbours. Start the game by clapping one hand on the surface.

Let the clap run around the circle, so that the hand that claps that next to the one that clapped last. After practicing this for a couple of rounds, introduce a complication. If a hand claps twice, the direction of the clap changes direction. Again, practise.

When everyone has understood the rules, start the game proper. Any hand that claps out of turn or doesn't clap should be put behind the person's back. When somebody has both hands out of the game, they have to drop out of the game. Increase the speed of the game as you go along. The more people there are in the group, the less exciting it is for the individual player.

It is a good idea to form two or more groups for the game if there are more than twelve in a group.

Balloon in the Middle

Minimum Group Size: 10

Resources: 1 balloon

Throw a balloon into the middle of the group and get everyone to keep it from touching the ground. You can add rules (for example, participants cannot touch it more than once in a row). You can also do this by having everyone lay on the ground with their feet or heads touching in the centre of a circle and then throw the balloon in the middle. Try and be creative – it's amazing what you can do with a balloon!

Zip Zap Zop

Minimum Group Size: 10

Resources: None

Standing in a circle, participants place their palms together in front of them. Explain that inside their palms is a ball of energy. Next, explain to the group that Zip Zap Zop all refer to different directions that they will point their hands.

- Zip: left
- Zap: right
- Zop: across the circle (or whatever you like)

Whoever starts chooses one of Zip, Zap or Zop, and says it out loud. For example they say “Zip” and then passes/points their hands to the person on their left. It carries on (domino effect) with each person turning to the left with their hands and saying “Zip”, until someone says something different such as “Zap” and then the direction changes to the right. It can just get faster or people who slip up sit down. And you can add different sounds like ‘boing’ that bounce the energy back to the person who sent it to you.

A variation of this game: you have one person quickly clap and point at another, while saying “zip.” The person who received the “zip” then claps and points at another, while saying “zap.” That person then claps and points to someone while saying “zop.” The pattern continues, “zip, zap, zop, zip, zap, zop....” The goal is to pass the words and energy around as quickly as possible, which is harder than it seems.

Many theatre companies use this as a warm-up before going on stage, to establish teamwork and to encourage quick thinking. If you use this with a group that needs several tries to get into the rhythm of the game, keep going! Eventually, the group will begin to go at lightning speed and you’ll find it hard to keep up yourself.

Reactor

Minimum Group Size: 10

Resources: None

Standing or sitting in a circle, get participants to hold their right thumb and index finger in a circle to their right. Next, get them to hold up their left index finger and place inside the hold created by the person on the left. When everyone has done this and fingers are placed inside the circles, the leader shouts “go” or counts to three, and each person has to try to free their finger from the left and catch the finger on their opposite side.

Train Smash

Minimum Group Size: 10

Resources: None

Standing in a circle holding hands, three or so people are nominated as ‘train stations’ (TS) and 2 as ‘junctions’ (J) depending on the size of the group. The leader

squeezes the hand of a person next to them and sends a 'pulse' which is the train around the circle.

When the train reaches a TS they make a sound (i.e.: "toot toot"). When it reaches a J, it can change direction if the J chooses. Then a person has to go into the middle of the circle (train spotter) to guess where the train is by touching the person they think has it. When they are correct, they swap with that person and the game continues.

Everyone With...

Minimum Group Size: 10

Resources: Chairs or cones

Form a circle of chairs (one for each person) and then take one away. One person stands in the middle and calls out something like "Everyone with blue eyes". Everyone with blue eyes then jumps up and moves to a place vacated by someone else who has moved. The last person who is left without a seat remains in middle to call out something else. Instead of using chairs, you can also use cones.

What Are You Doing?

Minimum Group Size: 10

Resources: None

Get the group to form an inward facing circle. One person moves to the centre and begins acting an activity, such as walking the dog (it is important that the people really do the activity). A second person enters the circle and asks, "What are you doing?". The first person then responds, while still doing the original activity: "driving a go-kart". The second person then begins to pretend they are driving a go-kart, and the first person re-joins the circle. A third person enters and asks, "What are you doing?". The person in the centre, while still doing their activity, replies: "Climbing a tree" (or any other activity they can think of). This continues until everyone has been in the centre circle.

It can be suggested that actions link or relate to the content and learning objective of your programme. This is a good game to use once people at least slightly know each other. As the game grows, there are lots of laughs. It is good to encourage people not to think of 'what to do' and just say/do anything. You can also play it and have everyone stay in the circle until everyone is in.

Who's Missing?

Minimum Group Size: 10

Resources: None

An easy to deliver game for groups of any age (ideally with more than 10 participants). Get your group to sit in an inward facing circle with their eyes closed or heads down. Next, tap one of them on the shoulder and remove them from the circle. The first one to guess who is not there wins. This is great as a quick game or an ice breaker when you are trying to get participants to learn each other's names.

Ghost

Minimum Group Size: 10

Resources: None

Three or four players are chosen to be the ghosts. The rest of the group needs to scatter across the playing space and choose a spot to stand in. All players need to close their eyes. The ghosts will roam about the playing space. They will try to eliminate the others by standing close behind the players for 10 seconds without them knowing. If this happens, the ghost will tap them on their head and they will sit down quietly. If a person suspects a person behind them, they would ask, "Is there a ghost behind me?" If they are right, then they become a ghost. If they are wrong, they are out and should sit down. This is a great game to calm the energy of the group.

Fill the Space

Minimum Group Size: 10

Resources: None

All participants, except one, are to sit on chairs spread around the room. The person without the chair stands in the corner of the room. The object of the game is for the person standing to try and reach the empty chair. However, they have to walk as if their legs were tied together (i.e. tiny steps). Everyone else has to try and stop them reaching the empty chair by moving chairs. Once a person has got up from their chair to fill an empty chair, they cannot go back to their own chair. The standing person must try to get into an empty chair before anyone else. If they get into an empty chair before anyone else, the game starts again with the new person left standing. Always start the game with the empty chair far away from the person standing.

Tadpole to Superman

Minimum Group Size: 10

Resources: None

Everyone in the group starts the game as a tadpole. In order to move through the ranking, each tadpole challenges another tadpole to a game of rock, paper, scissors. The winner moves up the rankings, becoming a chicken (they must walk around flapping their wings and clucking like a chicken). Chickens can challenge other chickens to rock, paper, scissors. The winner moves up again, becoming a monkey (they must walk like a monkey and make monkey sounds).

- The loser goes back to being a tadpole.
- Monkeys can challenge other monkeys
- The winner becomes Superman
- The loser goes back to being a chicken
- The first person to become Superman wins

Note that tadpoles can only challenge tadpoles, chickens can only challenge chickens and monkeys can only challenge monkeys.

This is a very similar game to Evolution.

Part Three:

Brain Teasers and Riddles

Below is a collection of brain teasers and riddles. They are great to have at hand when you have a couple of minutes spare at the end of your session or even as a fun and interesting way to interact with your team. Give them a go and see how you get on.

Question: A woman is travelling around London. when she passes Trafalgar Square she is sent straight to jail but she has done nothing wrong. Why is this?

Answer: She is playing monopoly.

Question: Forwards I am heavy, backwards I am not.

Answer: Weight.

Question: Brothers and sisters I have none but this man's father is my father's son. Who is the man?

Answer: The man is my son

Question: A cowboy rides into town on Friday and he spends two nights there. Then he leaves on Friday. How is this possible?

Answer: His horse is called Friday.

Question: Two fathers and two sons go fishing. They each catch a fish and return with three fish only. Why?

Answer: There was a grandfather, a father and a son.

Question: A man is travelling towards the centre of a field. He knows that when he gets there he is going to be badly injured. Why does he know this?

Answer: He has jumped from an aeroplane and his parachute has failed to open.

Question: A man lives on the 20th floor of a block of flats. every night when he returns home, he takes the lift up 10 floors and walks the rest of the way but in the morning he takes the lift from the 20th floor to the ground floor. Why does he do this?

Answer: The man is very short and cannot reach the button that takes him to the 20th floor.

Question: There are 20 sick sheep grazing in a field. Overnight, 3 sheep sadly die leaving 17 sheep. How is this possible?

Answer: "20 sick" will be heard as 26.

Question: A man is stuck inside a concrete dome. The dome has no windows and no doors. All he has is a cake and a penknife. How does he escape?

Answer: He cuts the cake into halves. Two halves make a hole and he crawls out though the hole.

Question: Each morning, I appear to lie at your feet. All day, I will follow you no matter how fast you run. Yet I nearly perish in the midday sun.

Answer: Shadow

Question: You can see nothing else when you look in my face. I'll look you in the eye but will never lie.

Answer: Reflection

Question: At the sound of me, men may dream or stamp their feet. At the sound of me, women may laugh or sometimes weep

Answer: Music

Question: Until I am measured, I am not known, yet how you miss me when I have flown away.

Answer: Time

Question: What occurs once in a minute, twice in a moment but never in an hour?

Answer: The letter 'm'

Question: I go up and down stairs without moving.

Answer: A carpet

Question: Give it food and it will live.

Answer: Fire

Optical Illusion



Contributors

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The majority of the content in this book was written by David Priestley. David is a team building and training specialist based in the UK. He began his career as an activity instructor back in 2003 and today offers team development programmes and training consultancy to a number of private and public sector organisations across the UK and Europe.

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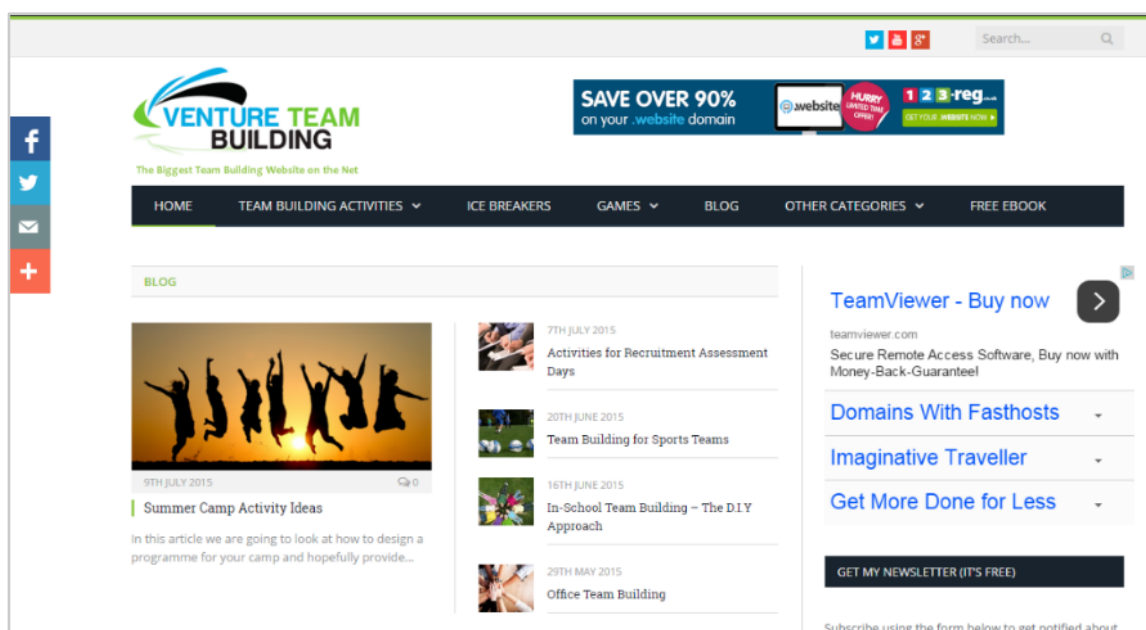
About Venture Team Building

Venture Team Building was created to provide free resources for anyone interested in providing experiential learning and team building activities. The site currently has over seventy team challenges, fifty ice breakers and over a hundred games ideas to try.

Currently the website has the largest collection of team building challenges on the internet, helping teachers, managers, instructors and facilitators from all over the world provide activities to just about anyone.

What you can find on the website:

- Downloadable training tools, exercises and content
- How to video tutorials
- Web-exclusive offers
- Training tips, articles and news



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