



Falling Sticks™ Challenge

Activity Guide

Falling Sticks were designed to be used as a station, for use with partners, small groups, or an entire classes. Students can also use Falling Sticks individually to practice hand/eye coordination drills. Students love the challenge of the Falling Sticks and will be highly motivated to work hard and be successful. Players will develop teamwork skills, balance, explosive speed and hand/eye coordination while participating in these activities.

Safety

There are a few safety considerations to be aware of while using the Falling Sticks. **1)** Do not allow students to bend, toss or throw the sticks unless specified for a particular activity. **2)** When using the sticks, always have students start on opposite sides of the sticks from each other, so they are moving in different lanes. **3)** Always set this activity up in a place where balls, or other equipment will not enter the game area.

Activities

Partners

Partner Catch: Two students will work together as a team in this activity. Set up an area and mark off a center line. Lay down small tape markers every 2', running in opposite directions from the line. Each partner will start on the first line out from the center. Each student will hold a Falling Stick with one end on the ground, while facing each other. Make sure students are on opposite sides of the sticks so they avoid a collision. When both students are ready, one partner will shout, "GO". Both students will then release their stick, leaving it as upright as possible, and run to grab their partner's stick before it hits the ground. If both partners make the catch, each student takes one step back to the next floor marker. If one or both partners drop the stick they must stay at that distance until they make the catch. They may then back up to the next line. Partners will take turns shouting "GO". The activity continues until the partners can advance no further.

Partner Number Challenge: This game is played like Partner Catch, but partners will use the numbers on the sticks in an attempt to attain the highest score possible. The sticks are labeled area 1, 2, and 3, from top to bottom. Students will try to catch the stick on the highest number area possible. As they move through the game, they will keep

score. Other partners or teams may then try to beat any previous scores, or partners can try to beat their own score.

Body Balance Challenge: Partners, or any 2 students may challenge each other to a balance contest. See who can balance the stick the longest, on end, in a hand, elbow, shoulder, head, knee, foot, chin, etc.

Groups

Group Circle Number Call: Form a circle with cones, placed at an age appropriate distance from the center. Have students line up around them and number off. Place one student in the middle with one Falling Stick. The center student will call out a number and release the stick. The student whose number was called must race to the center and grab the stick before it hits the ground. If the "chaser" catches the stick before hitting, they will become the center person. If the "chaser" misses, they must return to the circle.

Team Games

Team Line Number Call: Place one team on one side of a volleyball court sideline and another team on the other side. Have each team send out one team member to hold their stick in the center, between the lines. Keep both center stick holders at least 10' apart. Have each team number off. The teacher will call a number. The holders will release the sticks and the students who have that number will run for their team's stick. If they catch it before it drops they will earn one point for their team. Make sure all numbers are called evenly. Pick a number that will end the game. When one team reaches that number the game is over and that team is the winner.

Team Balance Relay: Set up teams in a relay formation behind a starting line. Pick a line farther down the floor as a "touch and turn around" line. The teacher will ask teams to balance the stick in a different way for each relay. Teams will go down and back until all students have gone, or for a given time frame. If a student lets the stick hit the floor, they must stop, put it back into position and then continue. Have teams try balancing the stick on their palm, forearm, head, or shoulder. Change the balancing spot for each relay.

No Hands Partner Relay: Set students into relay formation. Have students go down and back with a partner in this activity. Have them try different ways of getting the stick down and back without using the hands. For example, have partners carry it down and back on their shoulders, elbows, back of hand, etc. If it falls to the floor, students must get it back into position before continuing. Go until all students have gone, or for a specified time limit.

Class Activities: With multiple sets of Falling Sticks on hand (6 sets works best), an entire class can participate. Break the class into teams. One team for each pair of Falling Sticks. Set teams up in a manner that keeps them separated, whether they are in circle,

line, or other formation. Have teams work independently, or have them compete against each other in the relay activities and any other activity where they can keep score.

Individual Activities

Timed Balance Competition: Pick a balance position and have students see how long they can hold the stick up before it hits the floor. Students will compete in an effort to get the best score. Try balancing on the head, forearm, shoulder, hand, knee, foot, etc.

Individual Hand/Eye Drills: Have students make up tricks to attempt with the Falling Sticks. Or make up a routine for them to try. The following are examples of some tricks to perform.

Tricks that start with the stick standing upright on the floor:

- Release stick , turn around and catch
- Release stick, clap several times and catch
- Release stick, drop for one push up and catch
- Release stick, bounce a ball several times and catch

Tricks that start with the stick in your hand:

- Toss straight up 3', turn one circle and catch
- Toss up, and catch other end.
- Toss up, clap 3 times and catch.
- Drop the stick onto one foot, pull it back up and over with that foot and catch it with the other foot.
- Balance the stick on one hand. Make a short pass over to your other hand, while keeping it balanced.

