

Top Sportsability Tennis: Catch it!

This card suggests some simple sending and receiving (throwing and catching) activities to develop co-ordination and reaction.

What you need

- A ball for every player
- Different size or density balls; or alternatives, such as bean bags

How to play

Catch it' activities

- Working individually
- Roll and pick up; roll ball in any direction, follow and collect.
- Bounce and catch; off floor, off wall
- Toss and catch; catch with two hands, then either hand
- Side-to-side; player is positioned between two marker discs (or tall cones); facing forward, players move from side to side to collect ball from one disc and place it on the other

With partner

- Rolling; roll ball to partner who collects and returns
- Bounce and catch; floor, wall
- Toss and catch; partner lobs an easy throw to partner who catches and returns; gradually increase difficulty; for example, players alternate high toss and low bounce to challenge each other

Group

Relay versions of all the above skills can be developed; for example, roll and pick up; teams divide into two groups facing each other; first player rolls a ball towards the other group then moves to rear; first player in opposite group collects and rolls ball back to next player in line – and so on until everyone has rolled and collected.

See **STEP** for variations to challenge skilled players and support those developing their skills.



Think about

- Getting into position to catch the ball successfully; for example, moving feet (or angling chair) to get into a good position to receive

Top Sportsability Tennis: Catch it!



Use the STEP model to modify this game

Space

- When working with a partner, vary the distance between players; closer together aids accuracy, further apart gives players more reaction time

Task

- Note that for some players throwing and catching are two different skills and need to be introduced separately (see 'How to improve')
- Add challenge by imposing a time limit; for example, how many successful catches in 20 seconds?

Equipment

- Use bean bags, small juggling balls, paper balls or similar to practise tossing and catching
- A small, soft cushion can be a good start point for some players who have coordination and control issues when catching
- Larger, slower-moving balls can give players more reaction time

People

- Players can work in pairs; for example, when balancing, transfer the ball from their bat to a partner's; or using a circle or hoop on the floor as a target, partners can bounce the ball to each other, first by hand, then using bats

Extension game

Wall Tennis

- This game helps players to react to different deflections of a ball bounced off a wall
- Initially, play cooperatively; in pairs, one player bounces the ball off a wall for their partner to catch (bounce the ball before it hits the wall)
- Create a zone using two lines or marks on the wall; the ball must always bounce between these points.
- Add challenges; for example, how many successful catches in a row
- Players can progress to playing competitively; the catch and throw must be 'continuous'

Safety

- Make sure players remain aware of each other; attention can become focused on the ball and not surroundings

How to improve

- Initially some players may need to use a large ball for catching and a smaller ball for throwing

Integrity

Whatever modifications are used, maintain the integrity of the game. Avoid modifying a game to the point where it no longer resembles the original.

Links

For more information about schools tennis, including teacher training, resources and equipment, please visit www.schoolstennis.org