



Initiative Exercises

Session Guidelines

The following activities will challenge participants' communication, lateral thinking and teamwork:

- Complete the sporting session card in this pack before moving to the activities below
- Use riddles when moving in-between elements to keep all participants engaged - see last page for details
- For initiative exercises that don't require equipment, ensure a flat area is used

The Mineshaft

Time: 10 minutes

Objective

The group are stuck in the collapsing mineshaft and must work out a way to get all the participants out using only a wooden plank and without touching the walls or bungee wires.

The solution

Participants must safely create a "bridge" over the bungee wires using as many hands, knees and shoulders as they can.

Too easy?

- Adjust the number of wires that are active (1 = easy, 3 = hard)
- Adjust how many times the plank can be used

Safety rules

- Participants are not to climb through the bungee wires
- The plank can only be lifted out and into the shaft by a supervising adult
- Participants are not permitted behind the mineshaft area

Review

- Was this activity more challenging physically or mentally? Why?



Horizontal Shuffle

Time: 10 minutes

Objective

Divide the group into two teams. The group must cross a ravine of lava by balancing their way across the horizontal shuffle poles without falling off.

Safety rules

- No running on the beam

Review

- What did your group do well to assist each other?
- What would you do differently next time?



Giant's Finger

Time: 10 minutes

Objective

The group must find a way to safely get the tyre over the pole. Once the tyre has been placed over the pole, participants can attempt to remove it.

The solution

Participants must support each other to create a tower of people that the tyre can be passed up and over. Anyone not directly involved in the lift should be supporting/spotting others.

Safety rules

- Participants must spot each other
- The tyre must not be thrown

Review

- Out of 10, score how well the group worked together as a team. Why did you give that score?



Across the River

Time: 10 minutes

Objective

Participants must cross the river using the planks, without falling in.

Too easy?

- Adjust the number of planks being used (3 = easy, 1 = hard)

Safety rules

- No jumping or running on the planks
- Planks must be lifted by two people

Review

- What strategies did the group put in place to help one another? Did they work? Why/why not?



Challenge Wall

Time: 10 minutes

Objective

All participants must make their way over the top of the wall without anyone being left behind.

Safety rules

- No jumping onto or off the wall
- One participant at a time
- All available group members must be spotting/supporting the participant

Review

- If a member of the team struggled, do you think you helped them well enough? Why/why not?



The Horse

Time: 5 minutes

Objective

All participants must climb onto the horse and stay on for 20 seconds without falling off. Start at the lower horse (blue) and once completed, move to the higher horse (red).

Safety rules

- Participants must assist each other when mounting and dismounting the horse
- Only one participant to mount the horse at a time

Review

- What challenges did the group encounter? Why were they challenges?



Shrinking Island

Time: 5 minutes

Objective

The group must fit all participants onto the wooden stump at the same time. Once all aboard, participants must remain there for 20 seconds without touching the ground.

Too easy?

- Create an area on the island that cannot be used, by adding wood chip on top

Safety rules

- Only one participant to step onto the stump at a time
- No lying down
- Avoid leaning off the edges of the stump



Caterpillar Crawl

Time: 5 minutes

Objective

In pairs, participants step onto two caterpillar crawl boards, pick up the ropes and complete the course set out by the leader in charge. Participants must keep their feet on the wooden planks at all times.

Too easy?

- Use the larger planks and have larger teams

Safety rules

- Participants are not to lift boards off the ground unless their feet are on top
- No pushing or bumping into other teams whilst on the course
- No running in activity area



No Equipment Initiative Exercises

Human Knot

Time: 10 minutes

Objective

The group join hands with others in the group but not directly next to or opposite each other. Participants must then untangle themselves without letting go to form 1 main circle or 2 small ones. There cannot be an odd number in the group; if there is, they can help from the outside.

Too hard?

- Allow one pair to let their grip go and form a line

Review

- How important was it to allow everyone a chance to give their ideas to complete the activity?
- As a group, did you listen well to all ideas?

Circle Sitting

Time: 5-10 minutes

Objective

The group form a circle, shoulder to shoulder. Instruct all participants to turn 90 degrees to the left so that everyone is facing the back of the person in front of them. Participants place their hands on the shoulders of the person in front of them. On a countdown from 3, all participants then sit on the lap of the person behind them. Assuming no one gives up, the participants should be able to support one another. Once completed give the group a challenge to hold for 30 seconds.

Too hard?

- Form a line rather than a circle and get the person at the back to sit on a chair

Safety rules

- Ensure this activity is completed on a flat surface
- When standing up from sitting, all participants stand on a 3 count

Review

- As a group, did your first attempt succeed or fail? Would prior planning make it easier to complete?
- What do you wish you had known before starting the activity that you know now that would have made the activity easier?

Stick Sums

Time: 10-20 minutes

Objective

Find 18 small sticks of a similar size and create the following sum on the ground: $6+4=4$. The participants must move 1 small stick to make the sum correct

Solution

Move the vertical stick from the plus to make it a minus and move it to the 6 to make an 8.

Too easy?

- Split participants into 2 separate groups, give them 5 minutes to make their own sum/s to be presented to the other group

Review

- Were you surprised by the answer?
- Did you find it a simple solution once you knew?



Longest Line

Time: 5-10 minutes

Objective

Participants are split into 2 groups. In their groups they must make the longest line possible using only themselves and any items on them e.g. clothing, within a certain time frame.

Too easy?

- In different groups, try again but with no talking allowed

Review

- Did communicating make the activity easier or harder? Why?
- What is the best resource available that all people have on them but most people don't think of? (Shoe laces!)

Silent Sorting

Time: 10 minutes

Objective

The group must line up in a straight line, preferably along a line marked out on the ground. Once organised, instruct the group to get in height order. The participants must then - in silence - organise themselves into that order.

Other ideas

- Age
- Shoe size
- Number of siblings
- Hair colour (light - dark)

Too hard?

- Allow every second person in line to say 1 word

Review

- What ways did the group use to communicate other than talking?
- How often do you think you use non-verbal communication in a day?

River Crossing

Time: 10 minutes

Objective

On one river bank, there is a farmer, a fox, a chicken and a bag of grain. The farmer must get all three items to the other side using their boat, but only has room for one at a time.

- If the farmer leaves the fox and the chicken together, the fox eats the chicken
- If the farmer leaves the chicken and the grain together, the chicken eats the grain
- Therefore, those items cannot be left alone with one another.

Nominate 1 chicken, 1 fox, 1 bag of grain and the remainder of the group will all be farmers who must work out how to get all items across to the other side ensuring the chicken or grain does not get eaten.

Solution

Take the chicken to the other side. Go back and pick up the grain, drop the grain off, pick up the chicken. Drop the chicken off and pick up the fox, take the fox over and drop it off. Go back for the chicken.

Review

- Identify the person who you think made the biggest difference to your group completing this activity? Why did you identify that person?

Circles - Inside Out, Outside In

Time: 5-10 minutes

Objective

Participants hold hands in a circle facing inwards. Without breaking the chain, participants must work out a way to turn their circle around so all participants are facing out.

Solution

The whole group must either go under or over one person's arm, turning them inside out.

Review

- What was the hardest part of the activity?
- If you could change one thing about the way the group completed the activity, what would it be?



Elevating Stick

Time: 5-10 minutes

Objective

Using a long pole or stick, approximately 1m long, each participant must put their index finger underneath the pole and together, slowly lower the pole to the ground without anyone removing their finger or the pole dropping.

Too easy / hard?

Participants can use a longer or shorter stick or try using a finger from each hand.

Review

- What made the activity easier / harder?

Riddles / Brain Teasers

Time: 10 minutes

A short collection of riddles and brain teasers that can be played with individuals, or with the whole group during the walk between activity bases or at the end of the session for a little bit of fun.

Q: What goes up but never comes down?

A: Age

Q: What gets wetter the more it dries?

A: A towel

Q: What goes up a chimney down but not down a chimney up?

A: An umbrella

Q: One night, a butcher, a baker and a candlestick maker came to town, they stayed 1 night and 4 people left the next day. How is this?

A: One Knight, a butcher, baker and candlestick maker

Q: A man rides into town on Monday, stays 3 days and leaves on Monday, how is this?

A: His horse is called Monday

Q: What belongs to you but other people use it more than you?

A: Your name

Q: Which word, if pronounced right is wrong, but if pronounced wrong is right?

A: Wrong

Q: In which sport do winners move backwards and the losers move forwards?

A: Tug of war

Q: What starts with an E and ends in an E and usually only contains one letter?

A: An envelope

Q: What has a head and a tail but no body?

A: A coin

Q: What can travel around the world while staying in the corner?

A: A stamp

Q: What kind of room has no windows or doors?

A: A mushroom