

move to improve

These move to improve activity guidelines are designed to be used in conjunction with the move to improve website. Please go to www.movetoimprove.org.uk for full guidelines and information for parents and carers.

Balloon games



Suitable for:

- 1 or more players
- Outdoor or large indoor area
- Main skills: Multi movement
- Age appropriate: 3-7years



Make it happen

If you give a child a balloon then they will quickly work out how to have fun with it. The suggestions here are to help you add a bit of structure to encourage more exercise. See **Make it fun** below.

For 3-5 yrs

- **Chase it:** Blow up a balloon and then let go of it so it flies around as the air comes out. The child/children should try and catch it before it lands. To avoid collisions only let one child chase the balloon at a time.
- **Keepie Up:** With an inflated balloon, children can try and keep it in the air for at least 30 seconds using as many different body parts as possible. Any time it touches the ground they have to start the 30 seconds again (adjust time period to suit level of individual).

For 5-7yrs

- **Rallies:** In pairs or more, try and keep the balloon in the air taking alternate touches. To begin with they can take as many touches as they need to propel the balloon sufficiently into the air so their partner(s) can have a turn. Once they get more advanced they can try to propel it back and forth to each other using fewer and fewer touches.
- **Rallies over a net:** Place a line on the ground to indicate a net (e.g. use marker spots, a piece of string, chalk line, etc) so the children can play rallies across it like tennis (if trying this with younger children it will be helpful to partner them with an older child to increase their chances of a successful rally).
- **Move it:** Make a simple obstacle course so the children can pat the ball around/over/under/through things. Depending on age, allow them a certain amount of times it can touch the ground before they have to go back to the start and try again. As they become more successful, decrease the amount.

Make it safe

*We provide this list only as a guide of what parents/carers may wish to consider. Please also read our general guidelines on the **Parents/carers information** page.*

- Set clear rules about the activity and the area which is to be used.
- **Indoors or outdoors** - ensure a safe playing area is available to prevent collisions with others or any objects or obstacles. Consider any items that may need to be removed or made safe to prevent accidents or breakages.
- **Outdoors** - make sure there are no areas balloons may stray into that would be dangerous if the children followed. Consider setting up boundaries.

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Please see our sections below to help you make more of this activity and keep your children coming back to it over time.

Make it fun

- Pretend the balloon is something imaginative.
Some ideas: a jelly ball that will explode if it touches the ground, an alien spacecraft, a magic bubble full of spells, etc.
- **Leaper's theme:** pretend the balloon is Flippy the tortoise curled up safely in her shell with her spring on her back, try and keep her in the air.

Please also read our general guidelines on the [Parents/carers information page](#).

Make it a challenge

- **Make it harder:** introduce rules for the rallies that restrict how many touches each player may take before it is returned to their partner (they may each be set different targets to match their age/skill level).
- **Make it easier:** allow the balloon to bounce a certain number of times before it is returned to their partner (they may each be set different targets to match their age/skill level).

Please also read our general guidelines on the [Parents/carers information page](#).

Make your equipment suitable

- Always make sure whatever equipment you are using is safe and appropriate for that use.
- Find objects that can be safely used to propel the balloons into the air.
Some ideas: empty plastic bottle, kitchen roll tube, wrapping paper tube, rolled up newspaper, etc. Ensure the children take care not to swing the equipment near anyone else or any obstructions/household ornaments, etc.

Please also read our general guidelines on the [Parents/carers information page](#).

Make it more energetic

- Encourage the use of feet, knees, thighs, heels, backs of legs, head, shoulders, chest as well as hands and arms to propel the balloon so the whole body gets used. Every time the body has to work harder to bear or balance its own weight e.g. *to lift a knee into the air, landing after a jump*; then it will use more energy.
- To develop muscles in the legs and core of the body, try and balance on one leg whilst keeping the balloon in the air with the hands/other leg.
- Pat the balloon high into the air and then perform an exercise before it touches the ground.

Some ideas:

- * *2x star jumps*
- * *lie on tummy then jump up*
- * *turn around, touch the ground, jump in the air*
- * *two footed jumps (feet together and jump forwards/backwards/side to side)*

Please also read our general guidelines on the [Parents/carers information page](#).

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This **move to improve** resource is provided as a guideline only for parents and carers who wish to supervise physical activities for their children.

Users of this resource have a duty of care to ensure the safety of their participants. We do not endorse the use of any content in this resource that a user feels may present a risk to the safety or well being of the children in their care. Please refer to www.movetoimprove.org.uk for more details.

