

7 PRIME activity: Cooperation

Twin Sticks – a cooperative fun warm-up assisting learners to develop fundamental movement and martial arts-specific skills

What do you need?

- Two long poles, such as broomstick handles, hockey sticks, belts, or martial arts sticks for each pair of learners.

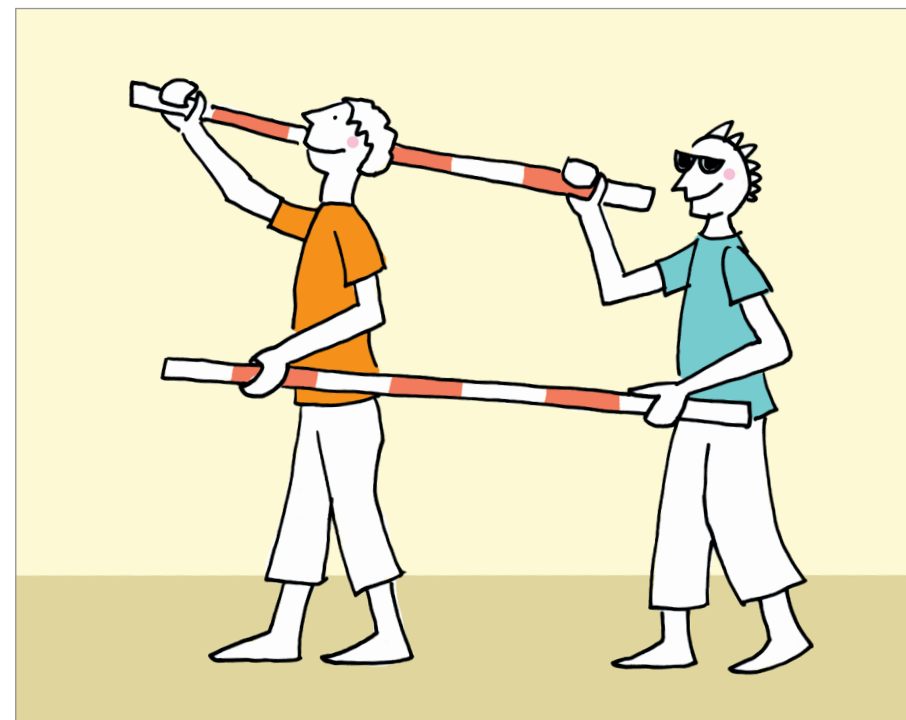
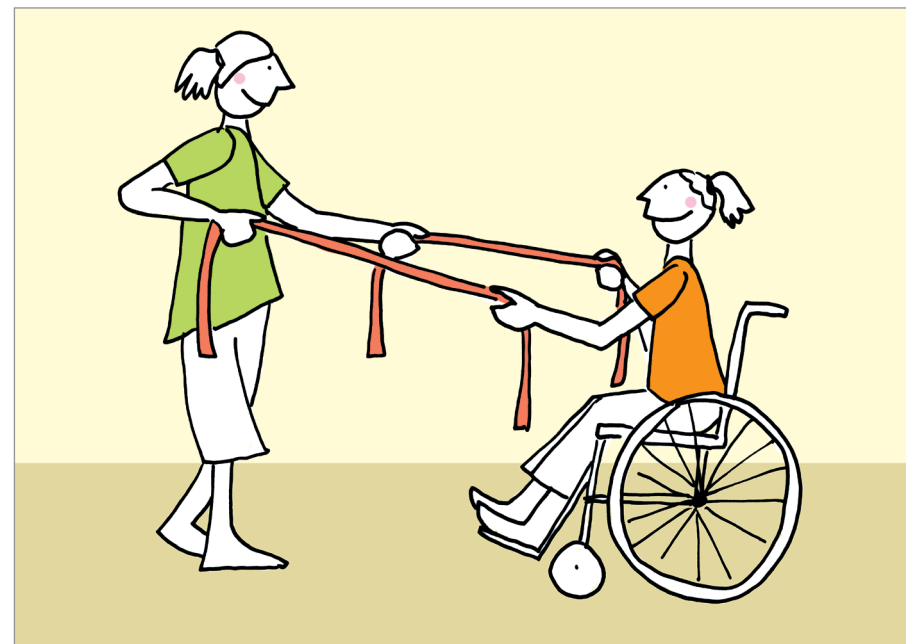
How do you play?

- With or without music, the partners work together holding either end of the sticks (see photos).
- They can face each other, or both face the same way.
- Begin with static movements in unison – arms swinging upwards, outwards, pushing up above the shoulders.
- Movement can be introduced gradually; e.g., marching on the spot; walking forwards (partners face the same way) and backwards swinging the arms in joint rhythm.
- Introduce rhythmic music with an even tempo (e.g. 8 beats to the bar) to stimulate and motivate.

Who is Twin Sticks for?

The activity can be adapted for a wide range of disabled and non-disabled people, but may be particularly effective:

- for a vision impaired person working with a sighted partner – or with another vision impaired person;
- with young people who are affected by autism and additionally have issues with direct contact, either with another young person or with a supporting partner;
- for people who have coordination or control impairments; practise with a non-disabled partner may help movement skills to be developed;
- as part of an active ageing programme.



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Cooperation

Use the **STEP** adaptation tool to adapt these activities – four parts of any activity that can be modified in order to include a wider range of abilities – **S**pace, **T**ask, **E**quipment, **P**eople

STEP	Examples
Space S	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Progress from static to moving; however, ensure there is space for pairs to explore forward and backward marching in safety; work in straight lines with pairs moving in the same direction. Make sure that pairs have enough space between them to swing arms outwards without clashing.
Task T	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Basic movements – pushing the sticks vertically up and down, out to the side and back, or forward and back (alternately and symmetrically) can progress towards combination movements or where either side of the body is doing something different. Enable learners to develop their own movements.
Equipment E	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Alternative sticks can be used – whatever is available and safe; e.g., Nordic walking poles, walking sticks or elbow crutches. Belts can be used if folded or twisted, but using these requires good coordination between the partners.
People P	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Try pairing someone who is confident with a good vocabulary of movement with a partner who is still developing skills. Counting a steady beat together (movements in 8s) can help some young people learn individual movements.

Extension activity: incorporating martial arts movements

- Learners can explore simultaneous hand and arm movements, gripping the sticks; one can lead and the other follows (then change).
- For example, punches can be simulated by holding the sticks at a higher (e.g. chest) level, then ‘punching’, on one side then the other, alternating turns between the partners.
- Blocking movements can be simulated by bringing the arm across the body shielding the head – again alternating between partners.
- Music can provide rhythm and motivation.
- Use the sticks to mirror other form-specific arm and body movements.

This activity is based upon ‘Twin Sticks’, developed by Niina Makela when a PhD student at Satakunta University of Applied Sciences, Finland.