

FLAGHOUSE Activity Guide

Skill Trac

Item #11209

What Are the Educational Applications?

The Skill Trac builds upon the joy young children experience while learning traditional parachute games and makes cooperative play both challenging and age appropriate. Cooperation and teamwork are the focal points of Skill Trac lessons. However, the activities also develop hand/eye coordination while strengthening the muscles of the upper body.

How Can I Use This Equipment With My Students?

The Skill Trac Activity Set is a class management dream come true. Setup is simple; all students are engaged in activity; evaluation can take place; and objectives are met.

The activities outlined in this guide should be used as models for your own ideas. Be creative and have fun.

The Equipment (Figure 1)

Each Skill Trac is packaged with six nylon pathways. The pathways can be connected to one of the four connector shapes to form large-group courses. For the purpose of lead-up activities, it is helpful to keep the pathways separate to foster small-group cooperation and skill development.

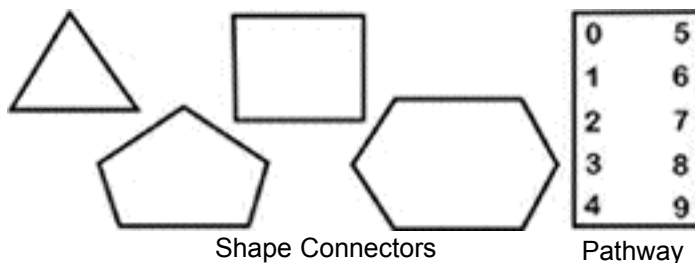


Figure 1

There should be a minimum of 6 students per pathway during any activity, three on each side. The maximum number should be 10. It is important to have each pathway balanced with the same number of students on both sides.

A variety of balls can be manipulated using the Skill Trac, from small foam balls to large rubber playground balls. For beginning groups, medium-sized playground balls work the best. They are heavy enough to roll in a predictable manner without jumping or skipping easily, and light enough to encourage success for all fitness levels.

The shape connectors should be used according to class size. The triangle connector can accommodate 18 to 30 students, while the hexagon connector can be used with 36 to 60. Again, keep all activities balanced with a minimum of six students on each pathway.

Safety

Skill Trac activities are safe for students to enjoy in small or large groups. However, there are a few safety tips you can follow to promote a healthy and incident-free experience for your students.

1. Students should shake the Skill Trac only when instructed to by the teacher.
2. When students are rotating from spot to spot during an activity, they should only travel in a specified direction (clockwise or counter-clockwise) to avoid collisions.
3. Hard balls such as baseballs or lacrosse balls should never be used with the Skill Trac.
4. Students should not be allowed to wrap themselves in the Skill Trac's pathways.

How Do I Make Activities Developmentally Appropriate For My Students?

Skill Trac activities are the perfect developmental steps for upper-elementary and Junior High students who enjoy parachute activities but need to be challenged in new and exciting ways.

When first teaching Skill Trac activities, begin with smallgroup lead-up games that are challenging but require the cooperation of only 6 to 10 students. This will foster the development of the coordination needed to manipulate the pathways as well as introduce the students to the level of cooperation needed for success.

It is time to build and connect the Skill Trac components when students have gained experience and competence with the pathways. When first connecting the pathways, begin with simple activities using only one or two balls. However, monitor the group's success carefully and add elements of difficulty only as soon as the students are ready. The ways to use the Skill Trac are only limited by creativity and imagination; allowing students to work at an activity too long can create unnecessary boredom.

Skill Trac Teaching Cues

The following list of teaching cues should be given during the introductory lesson and revisited as often as necessary:

1. There are three types of hand grips that can be used with the Skill Trac—overhand (palms face down), underhand (palms face up), mixed (one palm face up and one palm face down). In general, the mixed hand position is preferred.
2. The Skill Trac should be gripped with two hands at all times.
3. While in ready position, the students should have their feet shoulder-width apart with knees slightly bent. The pathway should be gripped at waist level and the student's attention should be on the ball.
4. Group rotation should be done in either a clockwise or counter-clockwise manner. Movement can be from one number to the next or between pathways. See *Making Activities More Dynamic* for more on rotation and movement.

Lead-Up Activities

Single Tracs with 6 to 10 students per Trac:

A. Stay-On-Trac

Goal: the students will move a medium-size ball from one end of the pathway to the other, resting the ball on the floor upon completion.

1. The ball must leave the pathway via the narrow ends.
2. Skill Progression—place a plastic hoop on the floor at the end of the pathway. The ball must stay in the hoop at the end of the trial (Figure 2).

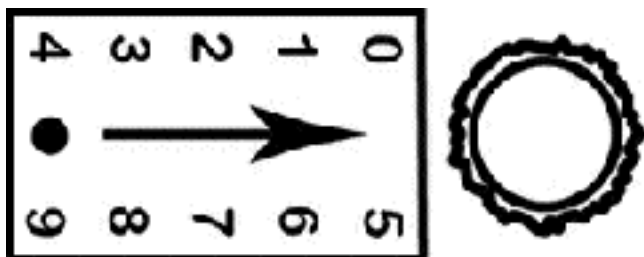


Figure 2

B. Seesaw

Goal: the students will move the ball from end to end as many times as they can in 60 seconds.

1. Moving the ball from 0-5 position to 4-9 position is a successful “seesaw”.
2. Skill Progression—set up two or more groups to compete against each other for the 60-second duration.

C. Pitch Back

Goal: starting with the ball at 0-5 position, the students will “toss” the ball down to the opposite end of the pathway.

1. When the ball is successfully caught, the students then roll it back to the 0-5 position and rotate.
2. Skill Progression—students work to successfully complete as many Pitch Backs as they can with no errors.

D. Telephone

Goal: starting with the ball in the center of the pathway, the students will roll the ball from number to number, sequentially, according to an imaginary 7-digit telephone number displayed by the instructor.

1. Digits should not repeat within the sequence given.
2. Upon completion, the ball must return and come to rest in the center of the pathway.
3. Skill Progression—set up two or more groups to compete against each other as they speed-dial the imaginary number.

Basic Large-Group Activities

Static activities are organized with an appropriate shape connector creating a large-group course. Some of the Lead-Up Activities can be used with the following modifications:

A. Stay-On-Trac (Large-Group Modification)

Goal: the students will move a medium-size ball from one end of a designated starting pathway to the end of another, moving across all pathways and numbers on the course (Figure 3)

1. Skill Progression—add additional balls to the course to be manipulated in the same manner as described above.

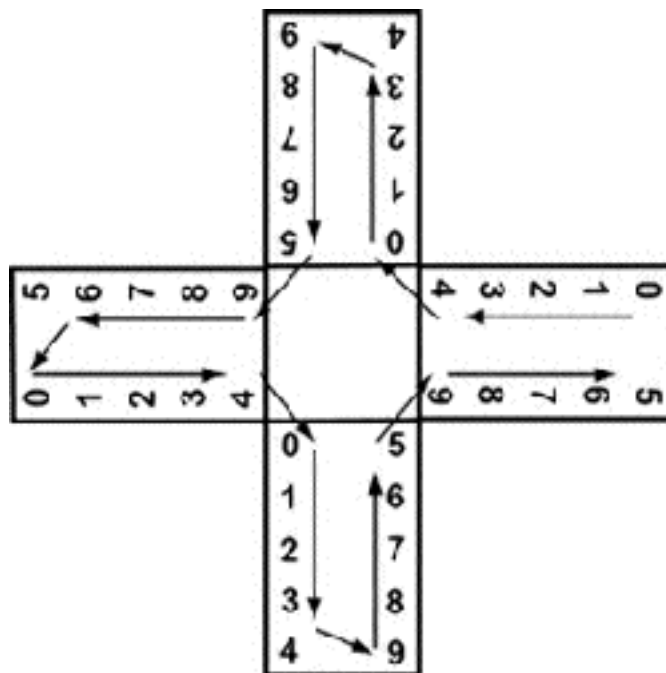


Figure 3

B. Pitch Back (Large-Group Modification)

Goal: starting with a ball at the end of each pathway, the students will “toss” the ball down to the opposite end and roll the ball into the center of the shape connector.

1. Each pathway’s movement should be coordinated with the other so that the balls are caught and gathered at the same time.
2. When the ball is successfully caught, the students then roll it back to the 0-5 position and rotate.

C. Telephone (Large-Group Modification)

Goal: display a phone number with colors assigned to each digit to correspond with each pathway on the course. Starting with the ball in the center of the pathway that corresponds with the color of the first digit, the students will roll the ball from number to number sequentially, according to an imaginary 7-digit telephone number displayed by the instructor.

1. Skill Progression—add additional balls with different telephone numbers associated with them. Keep in mind, each ball used must be a different color and should start and end on pathways separate from the other balls.
2. Digits and colors should not be repeated back-to-back within the sequence given.
3. Upon completion, the ball must come to rest in the center of the pathway that corresponds with the last digit of the telephone number.
4. For large groups, “1-800” or area codes can be utilized to ensure full group participation.

Making Activities More Dynamic

This section outlines two ways to create dynamic activities with the Skill Trac:

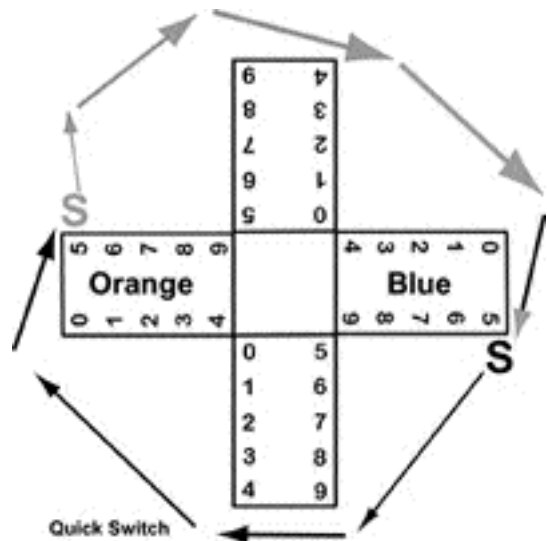
1. rotating students during an activity and,
2. moving the entire course across an activity area.

With both strategies, students should be informed of the task’s details before starting the activity. The degree of cooperation and concentration needed during advanced activities makes it nearly impossible for engaged students to listen to and comprehend directions within the course of an activity.

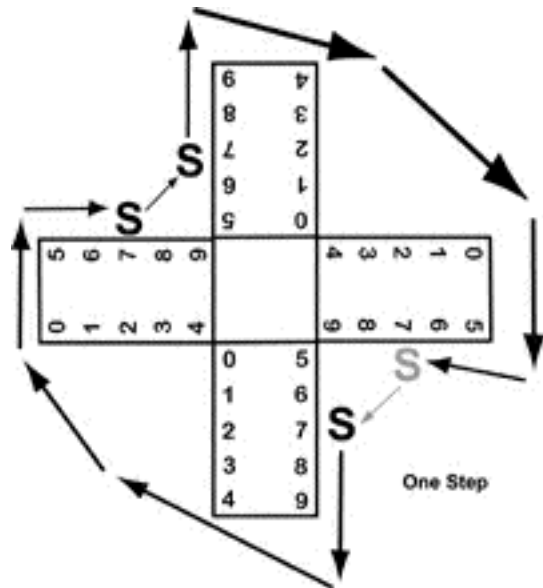
In addition, you may find it helpful to practice the movements and rotations without the added task of manipulating a ball. Run through at least one trial of the movements to be sure that all of the students understand what will happen.

A. Examples Of Student Rotation

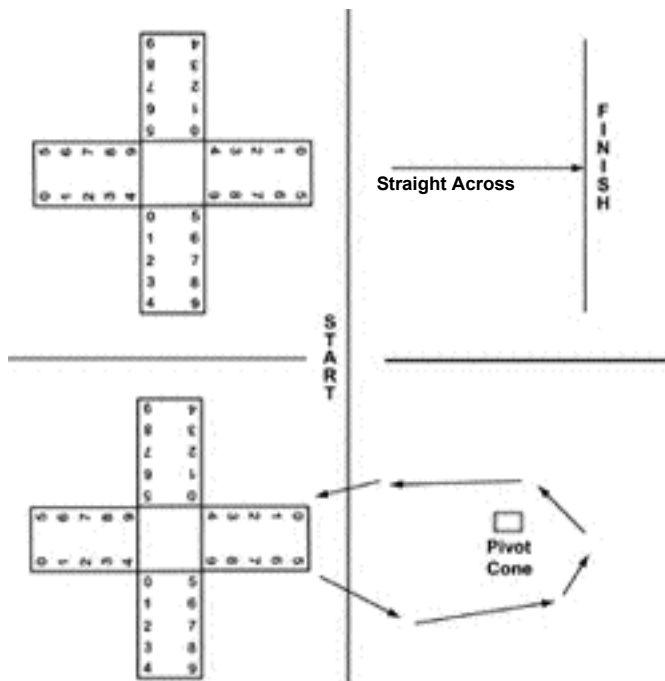
1. **Quick Switch:** the instructor calls out colors and numbers for specified students to trade places. For example, "Blue 5 and Orange 5 switch!"



2. **One Step:** when a number is called out, all students with that number rotate clockwise around the course to the same number on the next pathway.



3. **Everybody Move:** on a given signal, all of the students rotate clockwise to the next number. Those students at the connecting end of the line will move to the next pathway in the clockwise direction.



The above examples can be modified to create additional methods of student rotation.

B. Moving The Activity Course

While it may be easy to explain how an activity course should be moved, actually doing so adds an exciting element of challenge to any Skill Trac activity.

1. **Straight Across:** set up cones or lay floor tape to mark both a starting line and a finish line. The group then works to complete a set activity such as "Stay On Trac" while physically moving from the starting line across the finish line.

2. **Around and Back:** set up a starting cone with a pivot cone approximately 15 to 20 yards away. While completing a set activity such as "Telephone", the group physically moves down and around the pivot cone and eventually continues back to the start.

How Does This Product Relate to Current Educational Thinking?

In relation to the National Content Standards for Physical Education, lessons designed for the Skill Trac Activity Set help students become physically educated individuals by:

1. Developing coordination competency that can be used in other skills needed for success in physical activity and daily life.
2. Encouraging responsible personal and social behavior in a physical activity setting.
3. Fostering cooperation and shared success within activity settings, which can lead to the development of productive relationships in the classroom and in the larger community.
4. Offering unique learning opportunities that demonstrate positive differences among people in physical activity settings.
5. Offering students opportunities to enjoy and appreciate movement that is both challenging and beneficial to their levels of skill-related and health-related fitness.



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In the US: FlagHouse, 601 FlagHouse Drive, Hasbrouck Heights, New Jersey 07604-3116 Phone 800.793.7900 201.288.7600 Fax 800.793.7922

In Canada: FlagHouse Canada, 235 Yorkland Blvd., Suite 105, North York, Ontario M2J 4Y8 Phone 800.265.6900 416.495.8262 Fax 800.265.6922

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