

Athletic Activities: Running Challenges for Distance

Pupils should continue to develop and apply a broad range of skills, learning how to use them in different ways and to link them to make actions and sequences of movement. They should enjoy communicating, collaborating and competing with each other. They should develop an understanding of how to improve in different physical activities, learn how to recognise their own success, compare their performances with previous ones and demonstrate improvement to achieve their personal best.

Learning Outcomes/Objectives

- Pupils will be able to sustain pace and steady state running over longer distances.
- Pupils will be able to change pace and run at different tempos.
- Pupils will be able to describe the benefits of aerobic exercise.
- Pupils will be able to explain why endurance is important to other types of activity.
- Pupils will experience running or walking for longer durations and learn to adjust and adapt pace in order to be able to complete a given distance

Duration: 45 minutes

Material/Equipment:

- Cones
- Whistles
- Stop watches
- Pens, paper, clip boards

Environment/Space: School Field/Large Playground

Health and safety

- Do the children's clothing and footwear help their learning and keep them safe?
- Is the space safe and clear enough to work in?
- Are the children aware of others when they are moving and working?
- Have all the children warmed up and cooled down properly?

Description of Activities

Running Challenges: Pacing Skills

There are a series of challenges that focus on 'steady state running' or 'running at a steady pace'. Whilst some children have the ability to 'run all day', others, for a variety of reasons, lack the capacity to run at a steady pace over longer distances or for a prescribed time. Steady runs, or steady state runs are a way to build aerobic strength, which is the foundation for increasing a child's capacity to perform over longer distances/times.

Heart Rates:

- Children should be encouraged to take their heart rate before and after the endurance challenges.
 - Is it beating slow, medium, quick or very fast?
 - Why does the heart rate change with exercise?
- Some children may want to calculate their heart rate in terms of beats per minute. This can be done by counting the beats for 10 seconds and times the number by 6.

Warm Up: North, South, East & West:

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- Use a large area (school field).
- Define the point that represents the centre of the compass. This area should be large enough to accommodate the whole class comfortably.
- Locate areas that represent north, south, east & west.
- On command of a direction children must quickly get to that area of the field.
- Children jog back to the centre and wait for the next command.

Running Challenge 1

- The first challenge is to set the pupils an activity that allows them to experience running at a steady pace. It should be done in an environment that offers plenty of space such as a school field.
- Each pupil is given a cone to use as a starting point. On the command 'go' the pupils run away from their individual starting cone. This could be done on a track or, for variety, in any direction within the clearly defined bounds of the field.
- The pupils are instructed to run at a speed that they find comfortable and are able to maintain over 20 secs.
- As the pupils run away from the cone the teacher announces the time at 5, 10, 15 and 20 sec intervals. On 20 secs they stop and are given 20 secs to recover after which they retrace their route back to their starting cone.
- Again the teacher announces 5 sec intervals with the challenge of arriving back at their starting cone on 20secs to illustrate that the outward and inward runs were completed at the same pace. The fact that time is used as the governing variable allows for the variation of distances covered according to the pupils' running capacity.
- To add more of a challenge, the pupils repeat the task but with the teacher only announcing the completion of 20secs.
- Further progressions decrease the rest interval or to increase the time of the runs.

Running Challenge 2

- The 15 minute class challenge. Each pupil has 15 minutes to record distances of steady state running.
- This activity is run on a track.
- All pupils start at the same time with a view to running as far as they can without stopping.
- As soon as a pupil stops running they record their distance and return to the start. After a short recovery period, they start again and run until they feel compelled to rest, at which point they record and add the distance covered to their first score.
- At the end of the 15 minutes each pupil will have recorded a total distance they have covered during that period.
- All pupils' distances are added together to give the class a score. Subsequent 15 minute runs will see to what extent they are able to increase the overall distance.

Running Challenge 3

- A more competitive edge to the tasks can be added by a series of team challenges.
- This activity can be done on a track or a school field.
- Teams of 4 mixed ability runners are selected.
- Four cones are placed at various distances from a starting line.

The teams of four decide which cone each member of the group will run around. Clearly the more able will be expected to select the more challenging distances while the less proficient runners will opt for the shorter distances.

- All the pupils start at the same time with the winning group the first to have all 4 members return to the starting line. A variation can involve team members running in relay.

Running Challenge 4

- This activity takes place on a school field.
- 3 routes, designated by coloured cones/markers, are located at varying distances from a starting zone. A Red Route would approximate 400 metres, a Green Route approximating 300 metres and a Blue Route of 250 metres.
- Mixed ability groups of 6 are divided into A & B teams of three.
- Members of Team A negotiate which route each member of the team will follow with the most able runner expected to complete the Red Route.
- All members of Team A are set off by Team B to complete their routes at the same time. Team B records the time that the last member of Team A returns to the starting zone.
- Team B allocate their respective routes and their run is timed by members of Team A. This period also allows Team A a period of recovery.
- Both teams complete a second run to see if they can beat their previous time. This might involve changes to the routes run by team members. They might also wish to see which of the two teams completed the courses in the fastest time.

Running Challenge 5

- Each group will need a stop watch, paper and pencil and cones to mark their course. The course should take approximately 60 - 90 seconds to complete, either walking or running. Each group should give themselves a team name.
- The group should work together to come up with an interesting circuit using the available space.
- Teaching Points Encourage children to:
 - work together as a team
 - pace each other as a team
 - work together as a team by taking on different roles of timekeeper, pacemaker etc
- The group should map their course on the paper provided with a clear start and finish and any landmarks featured to make it easy for other groups to understand.
- In designing a course children could be given the following suggestions:
 - A course using the lines of the playground
 - Laps of a school field/playground with obstacles
 - A slalom of cones
 - Shuttle runs to a cone or a tree and back
 - Zig Zag Run

One member of the group is the timekeeper/recorder and times how long it takes the remaining members of the group to complete the course as a team.

- All of the runners must start together and the watch should not be stopped until the last runner in the group has crossed the line.
- The team records their time on paper.

When all groups have completed their own challenge they then move around to the different stations and try to beat the times already set by the other groups.

Cool Down

- Questions & Answers
- Why is this kind of activity good for us?
- How might this be useful to other games and activities?
- As a whole class the children walk at a relaxed pace around the area.
- The teacher/coach then takes children through basic stretches for the legs.