

Gross Motor Skills Using Balloons



Information: Gross motor skills are large movements of our body, including the movement of our arms, legs and trunk of our body. Playing with balloons can be a fun way to work on our gross motor skills on our own or by playing with a friend 😊



Before you begin...

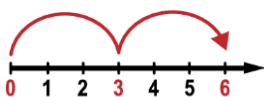
You will need to have a balloon to play with. Once you have a balloon, take a deep breath and blow up the balloon until it is full (but not so full that it will burst!). An adult may help as needed to fill the balloon and/or tie the knot!

Breathing tips:

When blowing up a balloon, try taking a big, deep breath in through your mouth or through your nose. When you breathe in, think about trying to fill your tummy and lungs in your chest as much as you can!



Count how many breaths it takes for you to fill up your balloon. The goal is to try and fill the balloon with as few breaths as you can!



When blowing up a balloon using big breaths, it is normal to feel a stretch in your throat and chest.

If you begin to feel dizzy, take a seat and wait for the dizziness to go away.



Once the dizziness or feeling of being light-headed goes away, you can continue to blow up your balloon 😊

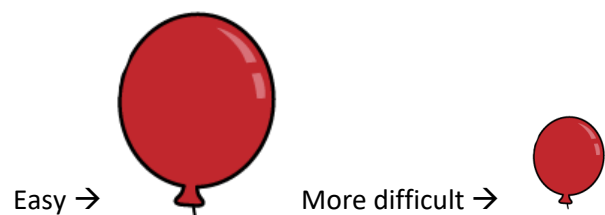
If the dizziness does not go away, then you should not continue blowing up your balloon. Instead, have a friend or an adult blow up the balloon for you.



Playing Keep Up:

In general, “keep up” means to keep the balloon up in the air and not let it touch the ground/floor. You can play keep up with different rules, depending on what part of the body you want to work on. Playing keep up is a great way to work on hand-eye coordination and balance while having fun!

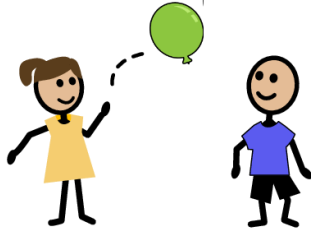
You can adjust the difficulty of the game by making the balloon larger (easier) or smaller (more difficult)



1. Keep up (hands only):

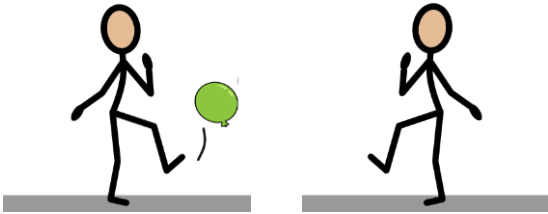
Play keep up using only your hands! Keep the balloon in the air using your hands on your own or with a friend. If the balloon hits the floor, then you will have to start again!

To make this more challenging, you can try using your hands only, while balancing on one foot! If the balloon hits the floor or you or your friend touches the ground with the other foot, then you will have to start again! To start, try to play for 1 minutes without having to start again!



2. Keep up (feet only):

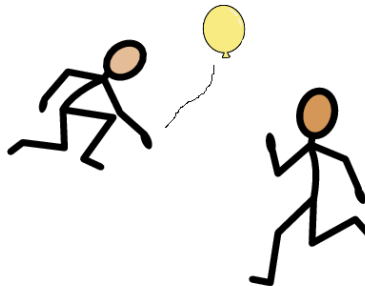
Play keep up using your feet! Keep the balloon in the air using your feet on your own or with a friend. If the balloon hits the floor, then you will have to start again!



3. Keep up (anything goes/call it!):

Play keep up using any part of your body! Keep the balloon in the air using your hands, elbows, feet, or your head. If the balloon hits the floor, then you will have to start again!

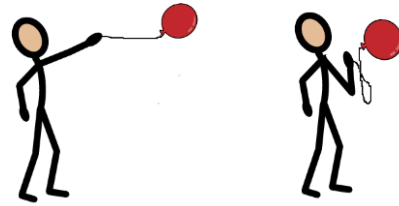
To make it more challenging for you partner, once you hit the balloon up in the air you can call the next body part that your partner has to use. The balloon has to be hit above the level of the body part called for fairness (for example, if you call "head", then the balloon has to be hit above the level of your partner's head for them to have a fair chance of keeping the balloon in play).



Extra Activities

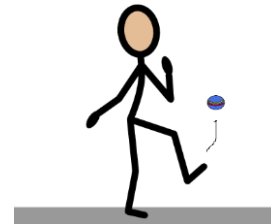
Balloon bounce:

Tie a string or thread to your balloon (about 3 feet/1 meter long). Bounce the balloon back and forth while holding onto the string. Try doing 10-15 bounces in a row! Try with your right hand and your left hand!



Hackie sack:

Hackie sack is similar to playing keep up with a balloon using your feet. Instead of balloon, a hackie sack is used! A hackie sack is a small pouch filled with some kind of bead or grain, like rice. Try keeping it up 3-5+ kicks in a row – it is harder than it looks!



If you have any questions, please contact the physiotherapist at MFNERC.