



500 Minutes for Parkinson's Lesson 12 : Fitness Blast #1 Spongy Skills

Parkinson's Points:

There is increasing evidence that aerobic and learning-based exercises could be neuroprotective in aging individuals and those with neurodegenerative disease. Although research on this subject is ongoing, it does appear that beyond aerobic activities performed with healthy movement patterns, exercises challenging the individual to change tempo, activity, or direction (what is referred to as "random practice" exercise) benefits people with Parkinson's disease. It is also important to keep variety in exercise activities, because individuals with Parkinson's disease often have difficulty in shifting from one activity to another or in performing two activities at the same time. Finally, exercises that promote attention and learning are beneficial.

In other words:

1. Exercises that involve lots of movement and thinking can help keep the brain as healthy as possible for people who are aging and those who have diseases like Parkinson's.
2. Doing different types of exercises is important for people with Parkinson's.
3. Activities that require focus and thinking are helpful for people with Parkinson's.

Lesson Objectives:

- To develop fine motor skills and coordination.

Materials/Equipment:

1 sponge per person
Hula hoops (1 per group of 2 students for extension activity)

References/Resources:

Activity Description:

SPONGEY SKILLS

First have each student obtain a sponge (common variety) and sit down and wait for further instructions.

Lead students through the following sequence of activities:

- squeeze sponge, flip from fingers and catch; try other hand
- hold sponge between two hands at eye level, elbows to side; drop sponge; and catch it before it hits the floor
- repeat; add a clap before catching the sponge
- repeat; add several claps
- drop sponge again, roll both hands forward around each other before catching
- repeat; roll hands backward
- repeat; roll hands forward and backward before catching
- drop sponge, spin body around before catching
- drop sponge, clap, spin body, catch

Now, try some of these activities where a student drops a sponge for a partner

- repeat with two sponges
- repeat; but partner starts with back to you, and on a count of three, turns to catch sponge

Extensions of this activity can include adding partner challenges and having students toss sponges from one partner to another. Have students stand in hula hoops and repeat sequences with their lateral movement restricted.

Ontario Ministry Curriculum Links:
Daily Physical Activity
Health and Physical Education