

**TAKE IT
OUTSIDE!**



Moving With Pool Noodles

Row, Row, Row Your Boat! Children sit in pairs facing each other and hold onto the same noodle. Children pretend to “row the boat” by pulling back and forth. Increase the challenge by having children sit on big balls. That will help them develop stability and engage more core (trunk) muscle strength.

Tug of War! A great partner activity for adult and child. Each person holds onto an end of the noodle and tries to pull it from the other. Vary positions to increase the fun and benefit. Try sitting, kneeling and then standing. Try kneeling while the child stands. Challenge him/her to pull you over; you both will have fun when you fall over! This activity increases muscle strength and endurance.

Copy Cat! What fun ways can we move with the pool noodle? Let the children create the fun by taking turns being the “leader,” who everyone copies. Just be aware that this could get silly while children practice moving through self-space and taking on the roles of leader and follower.

Rocket Ships! Cut pool noodles in half or into thirds. Count “1,2,3, Blast Off!” and children throw their noodles high in the air, then try to catch them. Or, have them throw the noodles high in the air and you call out an action to perform (e.g., jump, touch the ground, turn around) before the noodles land.

Jack Be Noodle! Cut a noodle into 2- to 3-inch segments. Children can jump over the noodle segments, or line up the pieces to make a low “wall” for children to jump over. Or, have them jump over one piece, then stack one more piece with each successful jump. See how many you can stack before the jumper knocks them down. For a variation, children can perform standing broad jumps starting on a spot marked on the floor. Mark the landing spot and then let children measure the length of their jump using pool noodle segments.

Noodle Limbo! Adults or two friends hold ends of the noodle, starting up high, over the head. Children then walk under the noodle. The holders then lower the noodle in increments (e.g., shoulder height, chest, belly button, hip, thigh, knee, shin), so that children must bend lower to move under the noodle. Let all children continue — without eliminating anyone — as the noodle goes lower. Children learn to move their bodies through space at different levels: high, medium and low. What creative ways will they find to get under the noodle as it goes lower? Join the fun and model some!

Ride 'em, Cowboy! Children put on their imaginary cowboy hats and spurs, pretending that the noodle is a horse, and gallop away. Add some fun by giving signals to go fast/slow or start/stop. Be creative. What other animals might they like to ride? How do those animals move? Walk? Crawl? Waddle? Children can practice a variety of locomotor patterns such as sliding from side to side, twisting back and forth, and walking in straight, curved or zig-zag paths.

Pool noodles are inexpensive and typically are not used after summer ends. Pull out your pool noodles to help your child develop a variety of gross motor (large-muscle) skills.

Did You Know?

Children are smarter, more cooperative, happier and healthier when they have had many opportunities for varied outdoor play activities.



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