

TARGET PRACTICE: STRIKING



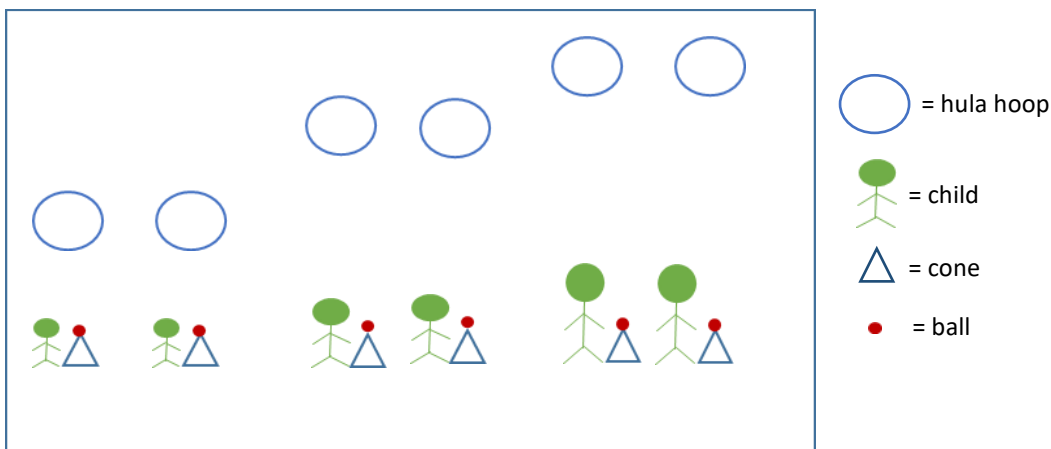
Gross Motor Skills: Object Control—Striking

Suggested Ages: 4+ years

Required Materials: Foam pool noodle cut to size that is easy for child to handle (or rolled up/taped newspaper); something small, soft, and round to hit (rolled socks, small playground ball, soft fleece ball)

Suggested Materials: Cones or floor spots, hula hoops (one for each child)

Set up: If using, spread out cones or floor spots so each child has a place to strike without interfering with each other. Lay hoops on floor to act as a “target” for children to aim for.

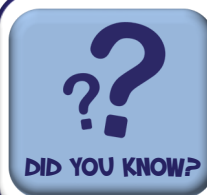


How to Play:

Instruct children to hold a noodle with two hands and hit the ball towards a target. If using a cone, prop the ball on top of the cone. If not using a cone, have children bend over and hit the ball on the ground (like a hockey shot).

Variations:

- If outdoors or in a large indoor space, use hoops laid flat on the ground as a target. Set up one target per child. Place targets at different distances for children of varying ages/abilities.
- If outdoors or in a large indoor space, encourage children to take hard strikes and soft strikes, noticing how far and fast the ball moves with each motion.



Math and Cognitive Skills

Object control activities like this one strengthen math and cognitive skills by providing children with opportunities to experience cause and effect as they estimate distance (near/far), height (over/under), and speed (fast/slow).