



What Time Is It, Mr. Fox?

Description: Tag game. Listen for the time to know how many steps to take, but be on the alert when the chase begins!

Players: 3+

What You Need: A big open space to play in

How To Play:

Choose one player to be Mr. Fox and stand at one end of the playing field, with their back to the group. The other players line up side-by-side on the other end of the field.

Together, the players call out, "What time is it, Mr. Fox?"

Mr. Fox responds with a time, such as "Four o'clock!" The group takes that many steps forward toward Mr. Fox.

Play continues, with Mr. Fox calling out numbers while listening to try and guess how close the other players are.

Eventually, Mr. Fox responds with, "It's dinner time!" and turns around. The other players must now run back to the starting line while Mr. Fox chases them, trying to tag one of the players.

If Mr. Fox tags another player, they become the new Mr. Fox.

Good to Know:

Mr. Fox can also call out "Midnight!" instead of "It's dinner time!" to signal the start of the chase.

You can change the name to Ms. Fox, or even another animal if you like. Just make sure all the players know what name to use when you call out.



Mother, May I?

Description: Race game. Make your way to Mother at the finish line, but don't forget to ask permission!

Players: 3+

What You Need: A big open space to play in

How To Play:

Choose one player to be Mother and stand at one end of the playing field, facing the group. The other players line up side-by-side on the other end of the field.

The first player asks Mother for permission to move toward the finish line in a specific way. For example, they might say, "Mother, may I take 5 giant steps forward?" Types of steps include:

Giant Steps: As far as you can stretch

Tiny Steps: The smallest steps you can take

Hops: Hop forward on one foot

Jump: Jump forward as far as you can

Scissor Steps: Cross one leg over the other as you walk

Backwards Steps: Turn around and walk backwards toward Mother

Mother can reply in two different ways:

If Mother says yes, the player takes the steps and their turn ends.

Mother can also say no and offer an alternative. For instance, she might say "No, but you may take 5 tiny steps forward." The player takes the steps and their turn ends.

If a player forgets to ask "Mother, may I..." at the beginning of their turn, they must go all the way back to the start line and begin again.

The first player to reach the Mother wins, and gets to be the Mother next.

Good to Know:

You can change the title to anything you like! For example: father, sister, brother, captain, teacher, etc.

Switch things up by having Mother give orders first. Players must ask "Mother, may I?" before they move, or they're sent back to the start.



Red Light, Green Light

Description: Race game. Dash your way to the finish line before the lights change and you get caught!

Players: 3+

What You Need: A big open space to play in

How To Play:

Choose one player to be the Traffic Light and stand at one end of the playing field, facing the group. The other players line up side-by-side on the other end of the field.

To start the game, the Traffic Light turns around facing away from the group and shouts "Green light!" The players now begin to walk or run toward the Traffic Light.

At any time, the Traffic Light turns to face the group and shouts "Red light!"

All the players must freeze in place. If the Traffic Light sees anyone moving, they must go back to the starting line.

Play continues until one player reaches the Traffic Light without getting caught. They become the next Traffic Light.

Good to Know:

The Traffic Light can also call out "Yellow light" before they turn around. The players must slow down or take baby steps until the Traffic Light calls "Red light."

Want to make the game a little harder? Make the players walk backwards so it's harder to know when the Traffic Light is going to turn!



Jump the River

Description: Race game. Leap across an ever-widening jump rope river to beat your opponents!

Players: 3+

What You Need: 2 jump ropes

How To Play:

Lay out the two jump ropes in straight lines side-by-side, about one foot apart. This is the "river."

Players take turns jumping across the river. They must make a clean jump without touching the ropes on either side. Any player who cannot make the jump is out.

Widen the river by moving one rope out 6 inches or so. The remaining players try to make the jump; anyone who misses is out of the game.

Continue expanding the river and taking turns jumping until only one player is left!

Good to Know:

You can make the game easier by allowing players to run and leap across the river, or harder by requiring them to stand still at the line and jump across with both feet at the same time.

Add a twist to each round with a different rule: jump on one foot, jump with your eyes closed, turn in the air as you jump, etc.



Team Tag

Description: Part hide-and-peek, part tag ... all fun!

Players: 2 teams of at least 3 players each

What You Need: A big open space, sidewalk chalk (optional)

How To Play:

Choose a place to be home base. This could be a spot like a tree or you can draw a big box on the ground with sidewalk chalk.

Organize your group into 2 teams. Team One closes their eyes and count out loud to 10 (or another chosen number), giving Team Two a head-start to run and try to hide.

When they finish counting, Team One chases after Team Two, trying to find and tag them one by one. When they do, they escort them to home base, where they have to stay.

Other members of Team Two can try to run up to home base and tag captured teammates to free them to join the game again.

The game ends when all the members of Team Two have been caught and sent to home base.

Good to Know:

You can also play for a specific amount of time, and if some or all of the teammates are still free at the end of the game, they win the game!

Team One can choose a person to stand near home base and guard the members of Team Two in case their teammates try to free them.



Steal the Bacon

Description: Race game. Listen for your number, and be the first to grab the bacon from the middle!

Players: 2 equal teams of 3+ players, plus one call leader

What You Need: An object to be the "bacon," like a ball or flag, and a way to mark two team lines and the center

How To Play:

Lay out the starting lines for two teams facing each other, a good distance apart. Mark a spot in the center between the two teams with a cone or something similar. Place the "bacon" on this spot.

Each team lines up side-by-side on the starting lines. On each team, the players count off ("1, 2, 3, etc.") until each player has been given a number. This will be their number throughout the whole game.

The call leader starts the game by shouting out a number. The player from each team who has that number runs to the middle, trying to be the first to reach the bacon.

The first player to the middle grabs the bacon and races back to their starting line. The other player chases, trying to tag them. If the player reaches the starting line without being tagged, they earn a point. If they're tagged first, no one gets the point.

Return the bacon to the middle, and have the call leader shout out a new number to start the next round. (Be sure to give all players a turn!)

The first team to earn 10 points wins the game!

Good to Know:

The call leader can shout several numbers at once ("Two and five!"). They can also shout "Bacon!" This means every player can make a run for the middle at the same time!

Tip: To ensure the calls are random, roll one or more dice to choose the number(s) for each round.



Spud

Description: Dodgeball game. Beat the ball to be the last one standing!

Players: Best with 5+ players

What You Need: A rubber playground ball

How To Play:

Assign each player a number, which will be their number throughout the whole game.

To start a round, everyone stands close together, with one player in the middle holding the ball. That player throws the ball straight up into the air, and shouts a number that's been given to one of the players.

As the ball goes up, everyone runs away, except for the player whose number was called. That player tries to catch the ball, or chases after it if they miss. As soon as they have the ball, they yell "SPUD!" and stop in place. All the other players must freeze exactly where they are.

The player with the ball looks around and chooses another player as a target. They may take three giant steps toward that player, then try to hit them with the ball (below the shoulders). The other player may dodge in place, but can't move their feet.

If the thrower hits the target, the target receives the letter S. If the thrower misses, the thrower gets the letter instead.

Return to the center for another round, with the person who caught the ball last calling the next number. Each time a player is tagged or misses their throw, they receive another letter in the word SPUD. When a player has gotten all 4 letters, they're out of the game. Play until only one is left standing!

Good to Know:

Make the game harder by eliminating the three giant steps or requiring the thrower to close their eyes before they toss the ball at their target.

For a faster game, eliminate a player the first time they're hit by the ball or miss their target.



Octopus

Description: Race game. Run from side to side, avoiding the octopus and seaweed in the middle!

Players: 8+ players

What You Need: A big open space to play in

How To Play:

Choose one player to be the Octopus. They stand in the middle of the playing field, while all the others line up side-by-side at one end.

The Octopus shouts, "Swim across my ocean!" The players all take off running at the same time, trying to reach the opposite side without being tagged by the Octopus.

Any player who is tagged by the Octopus freezes in place. They're now Seaweed!

The remaining players line up again. The Octopus again calls, "Swim across my ocean!" and runs after the other players, trying to tag them. The Seaweed must stay in place, but they can wave their arms and twist around to try to tag the runners too, helping the Octopus turn them into Seaweed.

Repeat until there's just one player left standing. They become the Octopus for the next round!

Good to Know:

Make the game more challenging by starting with more than one Octopus.

Add some extra fun by changing up the way the players move across the field: they can skip, hop, or even run backwards!



Sardines

Description: It's like hide-and-seek, but in reverse!

Players: 5+ players

What You Need: An area with lots of good hiding places

How To Play:

Choose one player to hide. The rest of the group closes their eyes and counts out loud to 50 (or 100, or whatever number the group chooses.)

The other players spread out and begin looking for the hider. When they find the hider, they quietly join them in the hiding spot.

Play continues until all the players except one have found the hiders and joined the hidden spot. The last player becomes the first person to hide in the next round.

Good to Know:

Choose your hiding spot carefully, since you'll need to fit a lot of people into it before the game ends!

For a spooky twist, play this one at night with flashlights.



Freeze Tag

Description: Tag, you're ... frozen!

Players: 5+ players

What You Need: A big open space to play in

How To Play:

Choose one player to be "It." They stand in the middle of the playing field, close their eyes, and count to 5 while the other players scatter around the field.

"It" now tries to catch and tag another player. When a player is tagged, they freeze in place, exactly as they are.

A player can be "unfrozen" by another player running up and tagging them. Now they can return to the game.

The game ends when all the players have been frozen. Last person tagged is the new "It."

Good to Know:

Give the game a twist by requiring a special movement to unfreeze a player, like touching their ankle or giving them a high five.

Make things more fun by requiring players to freeze in a pose (e.g. as an animal, in a superhero pose, etc.)

For a spooky twist, play this one at night with flashlights.



Rock-Paper-Scissors Tag

Description: Everything you love about tag, with the added fun of rock-paper-scissors!

Players: 5+ players

What You Need: A big open space to play in

How To Play:

Choose one player to be "It." They stand in the middle of the playing field, close their eyes, and count to 5 while the other players scatter around the field.

"It" now tries to catch and tag another player. When they tag a player, they both stop in place and play a game of rock-paper-scissors.

If "It" wins, the player who's been tagged is out.

If the tagged player wins, they stay in the game.

Play continues until just one player is left. They become the new "It."

Good to Know:

To play rock-paper-scissors, each player shows a hand signal on the count of three. Use a fist for rock, a flat hand for paper, and two fingers extended in a V for scissors. Rock crushes (beats) Scissors, Scissors cut (beats) Paper, Paper covers (beats) Rock.



Blob Tag

Description: The Blob grows and grows until it gets everyone!

Players: 5+ players

What You Need: A big open space to play in

How To Play:

Choose two players to start the Blob. They stand in the middle holding hands, close their eyes and count out loud to five while the other players scatter around the field.

The Blob begins to chase other players, holding hands the whole time. When they tag another player, that player joins the end of the line as part of the Blob.

If at any time the Blob breaks apart, it must join up again before it can tag any other players.

When all the players except one have joined the Blob, that player is the winner! They can choose a partner to start the next Blob.

Good to Know:

Split Blobs Rule: You can designate a minimum number for a Blob, like three. When a Blob has enough people in it, it can split apart into smaller Blobs. So, in this case, a group of six could split into two Blobs of three.

For a more challenging game: Only the players on the ends of the Blob can tag someone.



Wall Ball

Description: Bounce, catch, and run!

Players: 2+ players

What You Need: A bouncy rubber playground ball and a playing space with a wall

How To Play:

Line up side-by-side facing the wall, about ten feet away from it. One player throws the ball so it hits the wall and then bounces on the ground back toward the group. If they miss the wall (the ball bounces on the ground first), or throw too hard and the ball doesn't have time to bounce on the ground before it reaches the group, the thrower is out.

The nearest player catches the ball before the second bounce. If they miss, or bobble and drop the ball, they must run and touch the wall as fast as they can. If another player picks up the ball, throws it at the wall and hits it before the first player touches the wall, the first player is out.

Play continues until only one player is left, and is declared the winner!

Good to Know:

To make the game last longer, give each player three "lives." They lose one life each time they're out, until they're down to zero and leave the game entirely.

Make the game a little harder by exchanging the playground ball for a tennis ball, and move the line further back from the wall.



Follow-the-Leader

Description: Can you keep up with the leader?

Players: 2+ players

What You Need: A good imagination!

How To Play:

Choose one person to be the first Leader. The others line up behind them.

The Leader begins to lead the line around the playing field, incorporating motions or activities for them to mimic.

For instance, if the Leader does a somersault, everyone else must do one too. If the Leader hops over a rock on one foot, the others must do the same.

Anyone who doesn't or can't complete the action is out of the game. Continue until only one player is left aside from the Leader. They become the new Leader for the next game.

Good to Know:

Add a "no talking" rule so everyone must watch very closely to be sure they do the movements correctly.

This is especially fun on a playground, where you can climb, swing, and slide while you play!



H-O-R-S-E

Description: Show off your hoop-shooting skills, and find out if your friends can match them!

Players: 2+ players

What You Need: Basketball and basketball hoop

How To Play:

The first player chooses a spot and shoots a basket any way they like. Trick shots are especially fun: eyes closed, over-the-shoulder, standing on one foot, etc. If they miss the shot, they receive an H.

If they make the shot, the other players must stand in the same spot and shoot in exactly the same way. If they miss, they receive an H.

Each player takes turns making new shots from different places. For every missed shot, players take the next letter in the word H-O-R-S-E, keeping track of their own progress. When a player misses a total of five shots (spelling out the word HORSE), they're out of the game.

Last one standing wins the game!

Good to Know:

For a quicker game, use the word PIG instead.

You can play this game without the trick shots to get practice shooting from different places on the court. It's an excellent basketball drill!