Swimmers

Grade Level
K through second

Fitness Focus
Muscular strength and endurance

Equipment
None

Organization
Players are in scattered formation facing you.

Activity Description
1. Children often do not have the upper body strength to do traditional push-ups. This activity helps develop upper body strength through bearing weight on the hands.
2. Have students move to push-up position. Encourage them to keep their backs flat and straight (like a board) when in push-up position.
3. They raise the right hand off the floor, bringing it back to touch the left hip, and return hand to place.
4. They raise the left hand to touch the right hip and then return hand to place.
5. They continue alternating right and left to complete 20 swims.
Around the Clock

**Grade Level**
K through second

**Fitness Focus**
Muscular strength and endurance

**Equipment**
None

**Organization**
Players are in scattered formation, evenly spaced.

**Activity Description**

1. Have players move to push-up position. Encourage them to keep their backs flat and straight (like a board) when in push-up position.

2. Have them keep the feet in one spot and walk the hands (positioned on the 12 of an imaginary clock face) around the clock, returning to the starting or 12 position.

3. They repeat, moving in the opposite direction.

4. They may also do this activity by keeping the hands in one spot and walking the feet around the clock.
Parachute Fun

Grade Level
K through fourth

Fitness Focus
Muscular strength and endurance

Equipment
One 7-meter (23-foot) parachute per 25 to 30 players

Organization
Have players evenly spaced around the edge of the parachute and holding on to the edge using the overhand grip.

Activity Description
The parachute is a popular item with elementary school children and can be used to promote fitness. Parachute activities that require pulling and shaking provide a means for developing arm and shoulder strength. Other exercises and locomotor movements also promote endurance and coordination. Any of the following grips can be used:

- **Overhand grip**: Grip the edge of the parachute with palms facing down. This is the most commonly used grip.
- **Underhand grip**: Grip the edge of the parachute with palms facing up.
- **Cross-over grip**: Cross the arms and grip the edge of the parachute with the overhand grip.

Suggested Activities
The following are instructions you can give students for various parachute activities:

- **Inflation**: Hold the parachute at waist level using the overhand grip. On the signal “Ready, down!”, bend down and hold the parachute on the ground. On “1, 2, 3, up!”, stand up and bring your arms overhead to allow air under the parachute. When the center of the parachute touches the ground, repeat, trying for an even better inflation.

- **Dome**: Inflate the parachute, then quickly pull the edge to the ground, sealing in the air to make a dome shape. Hold the edges down until the parachute settles.

- **Igloo**: Hold the parachute using the crossover grip, inflate it, and walk three steps forward. On the signal “Turn!” quickly turn and duck under the parachute. Regrasp the inside edge, and kneel or sit on the edge to seal it to the ground. Return to the outside and try it again.

- **Ripples and waves**: Shake the parachute making small ripples. Gradually, make the ripples get bigger and bigger, turning into waves.

- **Ball shake**: Place different types of balls or beanbags on the parachute and see how high you can bounce them into the air.

- **Pinwheel activities**: Hold the parachute with the right hand and rest the left hand on your hip. Walk forward in a clockwise direction holding the parachute as high as possible. Walk quickly, raising and lowering the parachute on the signals “Up!” and “Down!”
  - Change to the left hand and jog forward, counterclockwise. Then switch hands and jog forward or clockwise.

(continued)
-Grip the parachute again with the left hand and skip forward, counterclockwise. Then switch hands and skip forward or clockwise. Use a variety of locomotor skills to travel around the parachute, such as galloping, hopping, or jumping.
-Hold the parachute using both hands and slide to the right or counterclockwise. Then change direction and slide to the left or clockwise.

- **Parachute push-ups**: Move into push-up position facing the parachute. Using the overhand grip, grasp the parachute with the right hand and shake it. Change hands and shake with the left.
- **Parachute curl-ups**: Move to curl-up position with feet under the parachute. Using an overhand grip, hold the parachute with both hands so that it is at chin level when taut (as you lie in supine position with knees bent). Do curl-ups, returning each time to the stretched parachute position.
- **Toe touches**: Sit with feet under the parachute and hold the parachute taut at chin level. Bend forward touching the parachute to the toes. Return parachute to stretched position. (Toe touches may also be done from a standing position.)
- **Parachute pull**: Holding the parachute with both hands using an underhand grip, step one leg forward, lean back, plant both feet firmly, and straighten the arms. On the signal “Pull!”, pull the parachute as hard as you can for 10 seconds.
Hoop Jumping

Grade Level
First and second

Fitness Focus
Muscular strength and endurance

Equipment
10 hula hoops per group

Organization
A large outdoor playing area or gymnasium is needed for this activity. Form groups of five players. Assign each group to a particular area to ensure that groups are well spaced.

Activity Description
1. Each group will need approximately 10 hula hoops. Instruct each group to place their 10 hoops on the ground, creating their own configuration. See the figure for sample configurations.
2. Have players, taking turns, jump with the feet together into each hoop. Have players travel through the hoops different ways, such as hopping on right foot, hopping on left foot, moving on hands and feet into hoops, or doing an agility run using one foot per hoop.
3. Have players create a new pattern and explore different ways of traveling through it.
Row Your Boat Sit-Ups

Grade Level
First through fifth

Fitness Focus
Muscular strength and endurance

Equipment
One deflated bicycle tube per two players

Organization
Players are scattered in the playing area, sitting with knees bent and facing a partner. The tube is between them, both partners holding tight to it with two hands.

Activity Description
1. Keeping the knees bent and feet on the floor, one player leans back and lies on his back.
2. Then, as the other partner lies on her back, the first partner sits up.
3. This continues in an up-and-down alternating manner.
4. Partners may choose to sing “Row, Row, Row Your Boat” as a timer.
The Push-Up Macarena

Grade Level
Third through fifth

Fitness Focus
Muscular strength and endurance

Equipment
Music: “Macarena,” on Christy Lane’s Complete Guide To Party Dancing Music, CL115CD (www.wagonwheelrecords.net)

Organization
Players are in scattered formation or in lines facing you.

Activity Description
Players perform a modified version of the popular four-wall line dance, the Macarena, while in push-up position.

1. Right arm goes out palm down, turn palm up, return.
2. Left hand goes out palm down, turn palm up, return.
3. Tap right hand on left shoulder, return.
4. Tap left hand on right shoulder, return.
5. Touch right hand to right back of ear, return.
6. Touch left hand to left back of ear, return.
7. Touch right hand on left hip, return.
8. Touch left hand on right hip, return.
9. Touch right hand on right hip, return.
10. Touch left hand on left hip, return.
11. Walk hands four steps to make a quarter-turn to the right to face the next wall.

Repeat.
Push-Up Fun

Grade Level
Third through fifth

Fitness Focus
Muscular strength and endurance

Equipment
Depending upon the push-up activity, equipment needs to vary from no equipment to small manipulative equipment such as hockey pucks, beanbags, or tennis balls.

Organization
Depending upon the push-up activity, players may be in scattered formation facing you or facing a partner.

Activity Description
Children often do not have the upper body strength to do traditional push-ups. The following activities are designed to develop upper body strength through fun weight-bearing activities. They are done in push-up position. Encourage players to keep their backs flat and straight (like a board) when in push-up position.

Suggested Activities

- **Push-Up Spelling.** Call out a spelling word. Players spell the word aloud, in unison, while alternating shoulder taps. On the first letter they tap the left shoulder with the right hand, on the second letter the right shoulder with the left hand, then the left with the right, and so on, until they have spelled the word.

- **High Five Spelling.** This activity is similar to Push-Up Spelling, but there are two differences:
  - Players are in push-up position across from a partner about arm’s-length apart.
  - Players are to high five each other using opposite hands on each letter of the word they are spelling.

- **Push-Up Hockey.** Two players in push-up position face each other about 5 feet (1.5 meters) apart. Using a beanbag or floor hockey puck, they try to slide the object between their opponent’s two hands. Players may stop the object or prevent it from passing between their hands using one hand only. Players may choose to keep score, 1 point for each time the beanbag or puck travels between the hands of the opponent.

- **Hand Jive Push-Ups.** Players are in push-up position across from a partner about arm’s-length apart. Players perform a hand jive routine in push-up position synchronized with a partner. Demonstrate the following moves:
  - Shake hands (right hand)
  - Shake hands (left hand)
  - High five (right hand)
  - High five (left hand)
  - Tap right fist on top and then on the bottom of partner’s fist (or bottom, then top)
  - Tap left fist on top and then on the bottom of partner’s fist (or bottom, then top)
- “Hitchhike”: thumbs up with right thumb over left shoulder
- “Hitchhike”: thumbs up with left thumb over right shoulder
- Lasso with right hand
- Lasso with left hand

After students have had an opportunity to practice the moves with a partner, they may do the routine to any favorite music or to “Willie and the Hand Jive” by Eric Clapton.

**Push-Up Routine.** This activity is very similar to the preceding one; the difference is that students are allowed to create their own hand jive routine by making up and putting together a sequence of their own movements. Have students create the routine with their partners. Have them practice the routine so that movements are synchronized and performed remaining in a push-up position. You may allow students to select their own music, or they may use the hand jive music from the preceding activity. Volunteers may wish to perform their routine for the class or share their routine by teaching it to others.