

Make the Stick Jump



Make the stick jump is a Blackfoot game of stamina and dexterity that was traditionally played by young boys and was designed to improve throwing accuracy for hunting small game. This game was a favorite and can be played by anyone (<https://www.nscrd.com/uploads/document/files/indigenous-games-for-children-en.pdf>).

Wide Willow sticks were traditionally used for Make the Stick Jump. The sticks would often have carvings and/or beads. Stones used to be thrown, which has changed to balls or Hacky sacks (<https://www.traditionalnativegames.org>).



“We take a ball and throw it at the sticks embedded in the ground. They are set for different scoring systems. There are tails on the balls to find them in case they fall into gopher holes. The ball should be thrown by the ball not the string”.



(Mary Ellen Little Mustache)

Make the Stick Jump would usually be played with five sticks, but the game can still be played with three or four sticks. The sticks are planted into the ground up to six feet apart forming a line that stretches away from the starting line. The sticks usually have carved lines in them to indicate the number of points awarded for knocking the stick over (ie. One line on the stick closest to the start line and five lines on the farthest). The objective of the game is to knock down the sticks beginning at the closest stick and ending at the farthest. Players can play as individuals or in teams



(<https://blogs.uoregon.edu/honoringtriballegacies/other-resources/other-educational/native-games/physical->

Games of Stamina and Dexterity

Improve Hand-Eye Coordination



When children are throwing rocks or balls, they are developing hand-eye coordination that is part of a fundamental movement skill during development.

- ◆ *Make the stick jump is an activity for throwing skill for power and short distance accuracy (Brady-Leader, 2012). Strength and accuracy in the throw is needed to seize small game. The dexterity is exercised with practicing hand-eye coordination needed for accurate throwing and hitting a target.*
- ◆ *Rhythmic hand-eye coordination requires well developed proprioception of coordinating information of where the hand is with respect to the eye during activities such as throwing. It is also a temporal (timing) and spatial (in space) action in that the eye needs to track the actions of the hand that will execute the throw while staying fixated on the target (Bekkering & Sailer, 2002).*
- ◆ *Throwing an object to hit a target has been considered a fundamental movement skill of a series of movements, or combinations of motion patterns that build the basis for children to learn more specialized movement sequences required for higher level sports and activities (Donath, Faude, Hagmann, Roth & Zahner, 2015).*
- ◆ *Continuation of practicing fundamental motor skills has been found to enhance motor coordination skills in later childhood and beneficially affect cognition in adolescent youth (Donath, Faude, Hagmann, Roth & Zahner, 2015).*

References

- Brady-Leader, D.A. (2012). *How we learned is who we are: Blackfeet and traditional learning practices*. Research of the Blackfeet: Manuscript for Blackfeet Community College, with permission.
- Bekkering H. & Sailer, U. (2002). *Commentary: Coordination of eye and hand in time and space*.
- Donath, L., Faude, O., Hagmann, S., Roth, R. & Zahner, L. (2015). *Fundamental movement skills in preschoolers: a randomized controlled trial targeting object control proficiency*. Retrieved online October 23, 2020; doi:10.1111/cch.12232.