

## *Taking Care of Yourself*

# Girl Sports



To play sports it is important to learn the basics. Start by learning how to throw, catch, kick, volley, and strike. *You must complete four of these activities to earn this Try-It.*

### 1. **Stretching Action**

It is important to stretch before you exercise or play a sport and afterwards, too. Bending, twisting, and stretching your muscles will help keep them flexible. Try these stretches. Hold each one about 20 seconds.

*Thigh Stretch*—Reach back and grab your left foot with your left hand; slowly pull your leg back so that your knee moves away from your body; feel the stretch in the front of your leg; repeat with your right leg.

*Back of Thigh Stretch*—Place your hand under your left knee; pull your leg up; you should feel a stretch down the back of your leg and your lower back; repeat this stretch with your right leg.

*Calf Stretch*—Lean against a wall with your left leg behind you; keep your right knee slightly bent; lean forward until you feel a stretch in your calf; repeat with your right leg.

*Chest and Shoulder Stretch*—Bring both arms behind you with your fingers together; straighten your arms; lift your chest up.

*V-Sit*—Sit on the floor and make your legs into a “V;” reach over and try to touch your right toes—your knees can be slightly bent; then try to reach your left toes—make sure you don’t bounce; now lean forward and stretch your arms out in front of you.

*Back Stretch*—Lie on your back; bend your knees and bring them to your chest.

Now that you have warmed up and stretched, it is time to make your heart and lungs stronger with aerobics. As your heart grows stronger, it takes less effort to do the same amount of work. Keep your heart pumping with one or two of the following activities: jumping rope, bicycling, or dancing.

*Continued . . .*

## August Online Try-It for Girl Scout Brownies, Page 2

### Taking Care of Yourself: Girl Sports

#### 2. Throwing Skills

*Practice underhand throwing using chalk and a beanbag*—Make a circle on the ground with chalk; stand about 5 feet back from the circle; toss the beanbag into the circle. Practice stepping forward with your opposite foot as you throw.

*Practice overhand throwing*—You will need three 1-liter plastic soda bottles or milk jugs, chalk or tape, one cardboard box, and a beanbag.

- Place the plastic bottles or milk jugs about 1 to 2 inches apart on the box. These will be your targets.
- Use the chalk to draw a throwing line about 15 feet from the targets.
- Stand behind the line and point at the targets with the hand that is not holding the beanbag.
- If you are holding the beanbag in your right hand, step forward with your left foot. If you throw with your left hand, step forward with your right foot.
- Extend your throwing arm, leading with your elbow.
- Release the ball slightly above your head.
- See how many bottles you can knock over with five throws.

#### 3. Catching Practice

This activity builds on Activity #2, “Throwing Skills.” You’ll need a partner for this activity, as well as a beanbag.

- Stand facing your partner. Make sure you stand far enough from your partner to be able to toss and catch the beanbag.
- Practice throwing—remember to step forward with your left foot if you throw the beanbag with your right arm. Step forward with your right foot if you are left-handed.
- After your partner catches the beanbag, she throws it back to you. Keep your hand cupped so you are ready to catch the beanbag.
- Count how many times you and your partner can throw and catch the beanbag without dropping it.

#### 4. Kicking Fun

Try kicking a large balloon in a safe, open play area.

- Kick the balloon. Run to where it was kicked. Kick it again.
- Kick the balloon so that it doesn’t go very far from you. Tap lightly with the inside of your foot.
- Kick the balloon with the inside of your foot.
- Kick the balloon with the outside of your foot.
- Kick the balloon so that it stays close to the ground.
- Kick the balloon up into the air. Keep it off the ground. Kick with different parts of your foot.
- Hold the balloon in both hands. Drop it and kick it before it hits the ground.
- Kick back and forth with a partner.

*Continued . . .*

**August Online Try-It for Girl Scout Brownies, Page 3**  
***Taking Care of Yourself: Girl Sports***

5. **Volleying**

- Hit a large balloon up in the air with your open hand. See if you can keep the balloon from hitting the ground.
- Hit the balloon up with one hand, then the other. Keep it in the air. Hit it up above your head.
- Reach up above your head. Hit the balloon upward with both hands. Use your finger tips. Keep the balloon above your head. Hit it again as it comes down. Hit the balloon back and forth from one hand to the other.
- Strike the balloon up into the air with your head.
- Keep the balloon up in the air. Strike it with your head as it comes back down. Count how many times you can hit the balloon before it touches the ground.
- Strike the balloon with different parts of your body—shoulder, elbow, knee, shin, thigh, chest, and foot.

6. **Volleying**

You will need a partner, a paddle or racquet and a large balloon. Follow these steps:

- Hit the balloon with the paddle while standing in place.
- Hit the balloon with the paddle while moving around.
- Hit the balloon back and forth with a partner.
- Hit the balloon high, then hit the balloon low. Count how many times you and your partner hit the balloon before it hits the ground.

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