



# Daisyball

CROSSING THE DIVIDE

INTRODUCTION MANUAL

# INDEX

- Foreword.....p. 02
- The team.....p. 03-05
- Welcome.....p. 06
- How it started.....p. 07
- How it's going.....p. 08
- The goal.....p. 09
- Health aspect.....p. I0-II
- Adapted rules.....p. I2-I8
- Coaching.....p. I9-27
- Acknowledgements.....p. 28-29
- Resource links.....p. 30
- References.....p. 3I

# FOREWORD

THERE IS NO GREATER DISABILITY  
IN SOCIETY, THAN THE INABILITY  
TO SEE A PERSON AS MORE...

-ROBERT M. HENSEL

# THE TEAM



Dr. Maria Kempen  
Former Principal of The Gateway  
School

Dr. Kempen has been an excellent principal and manager of our school. With her consent and guidance, Daisyball would not have taken place. Her love and support for our learners do not go unnoticed.

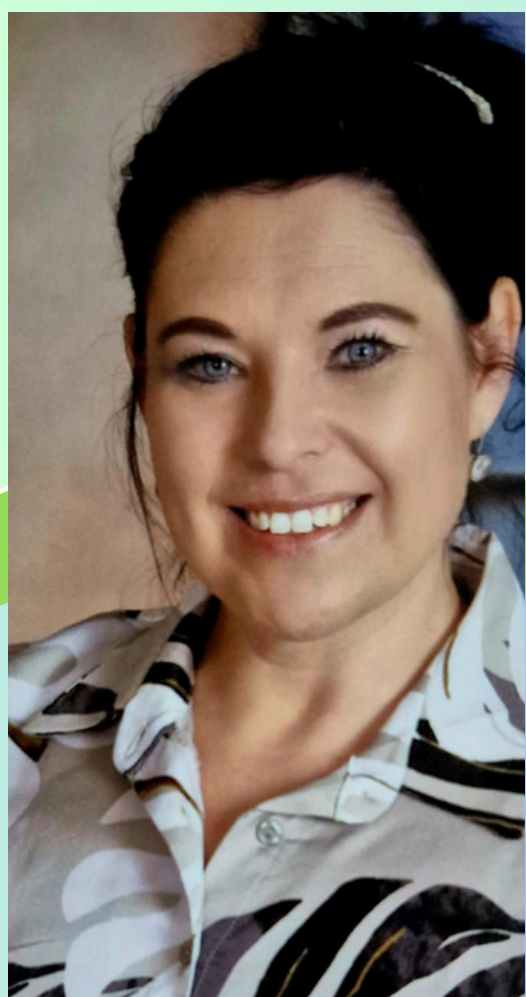
Ms. S. Nortjé  
Principal of The Gateway School

Ms. Sandra Nortjé is currently our acting principal. Her support and love for our learners are remarkable, and her encouragement with this project is greatly appreciated.



Ms. S. Meyer  
Deputy Principal of The Gateway School

Ms. Sonja Meyer has been with me on this journey from the start. From supporting us next to the court to assisting on court during a match. Her heart and excitement are such a motivation. Her laughter and cheer will always be a memorable moment for the Daisies.



# THE TEAM



## Ms. C. Trusler-Potgieter Educator at The Gateway School

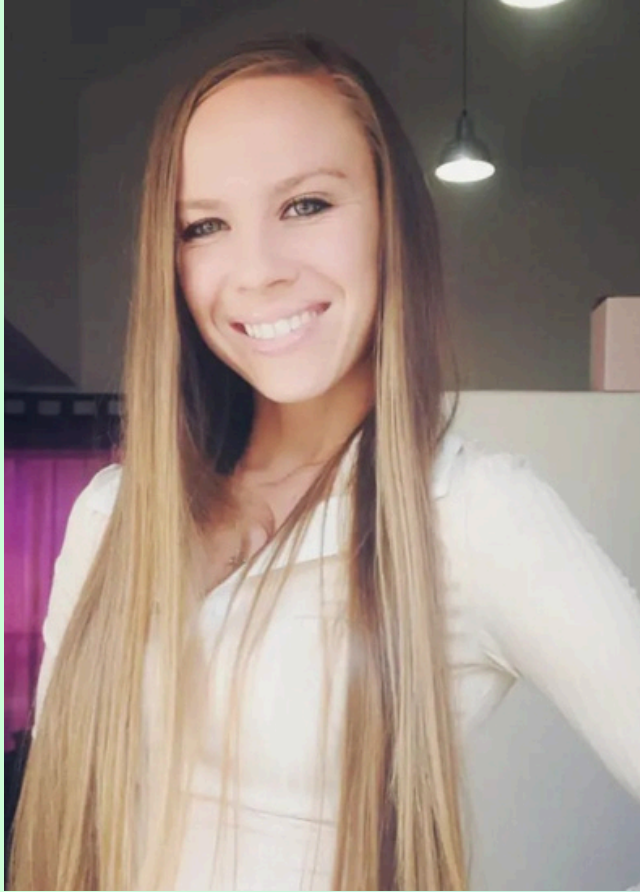
Ms. Cherilique Trusler-Potgieter, Educator at The Gateway School. I am a passionate teacher who holds a profound love for Down Syndrome learners. I have my B. ED degree, and I pride myself on the fact that I can fix anything. Daisyball is a new sporting code that I want to develop and implement in schools, with the help of my amazing team. I believe we will achieve this goal.

## Dr. D. Dowson Sports Physician

Dr. Donna Dowson grew up in the west of Gauteng and attended Krugersdorp High School. She is a sporting enthusiast herself and excelled in athletics, representing South Africa in various international sporting events as a junior Springbok sprinter. She completed her MBBCh (Bachelor of Medicine and Bachelor of Surgery) in 2006 at the University of the Witwatersrand. Dr. Dowson completed a two-year internship at Witbank Hospital and completed her one-year community service at South Rand Hospital. She then went on to open her own GP practice in Brackenhurst and has now expanded her scope as a sports physician after completing her master's in sports medicine at the University of Pretoria.



# THE TEAM



Ms. C. Kemp  
Educator at Learskool Dr. Havinga

My name is Chantel Kemp, A woman who is passionate about making a change and helping others. By day, I am a coding and robotics educator; by night, I am an action netball player. I am extremely honored and blessed to be part of this adventure, and I cannot wait to see it grow into something beautiful.

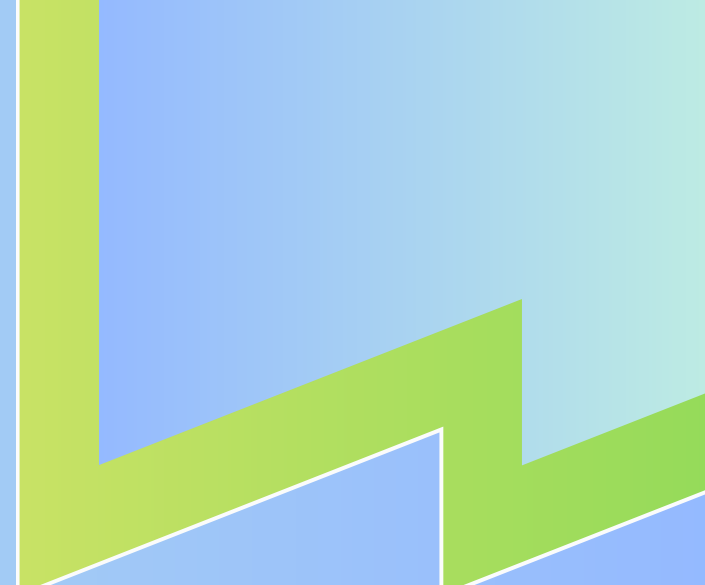
MS. A. Meyer  
Educator at The Gateway School

My name is Antonette Meyer, and I hold a Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE). For the past 15 years, I have dedicated myself to coaching netball, a sport I truly enjoy and value for the teamwork, discipline, and confidence it builds in learners. Alongside netball, I am deeply passionate about Daisyball, a growing sport that has brought immense joy and opportunity to our learners with Down Syndrome. Daisyball not only encourages active participation but also nurtures a genuine love for sport, creating inclusive spaces where every learner can thrive and feel celebrated.



MS. C. Victor  
Educator at The Gateway School

My name is Clarissa Victor. I have my degree in hospitality management and a Post Graduate certificate in education. I've been teaching for 15 years and love working with our learners.



This has been such a journey...  
Wow! Can I start with what an honour it is to be at this point. I am proud to say that I believe that we are busy with something amazing. I look forward to what comes next and see how far we can take Daisyball into the world.

I extend my warmest welcome to you as a viewer of this manual. Your assistance and input in this project are highly appreciated, and my heart simply burst with joy, knowing that we have such a strong team working together to present a new opportunity for our very special Down Syndrome learners.

I want to thank God as well. For his blessings that he has bestowed on this project and for every step of guidance that he has given. For sending the right people to join this team and granting us the opportunity to make history. All the glory goes to Him!

-Cherilique

# HOW IT STARTED . . .

In 2023, we found that our Down Syndrome learners do not have a wide platform to participate in sports. The Department of Education does provide futsal, which caters to Down Syndrome soccer, along with other sports such as table tennis, athletics, etc. However, our learners at The Gateway School found it difficult to compete at these levels. We are a school for severe intellectual disabilities (SID), and unfortunately, our learners have to compete against more able learners. My colleagues and SGB mentioned that they want more opportunities for our Down Syndrome learners that would take place in a safe, controlled manner. That is when I realized that we could go out on a limb and attempt a new Down Syndrome sporting code. I looked at various sporting codes such as netball, ringball, korfbal, and volleyball, and combined various aspects of these codes, also adapting the codes to create Daisyball. And with that, we incorporated Daisyball practice times into our sports programme that commenced in 2024.

The challenges were keeping the health risks of our learners in mind and adapting the sport in such a way that it is medically safe for them to play. And, of course, we need to decide on a name for this new sporting code. After a lot of thinking, debating, and laughter, we decided on the name Daisyball. For these girls are our pretty, little, happy, daisy kids.

# HOW IT'S GOING . . .

In term 2 of 2024, our first practice started. Oh boy, what an experience! We spent the next three months working on ball skills, rules, positions, and attacks on the court. We are proud and grateful to say the girls know what to do. We ended the term happy and hopeful and looked forward to the school holidays, knowing that when we return for term 3, we have to face the challenge of coaching defence on court and avoiding any contact situations during the game.

Term 3 started, and was I amazed. The girls started understanding defence, and the game started to flow. At this rate, I believe it is safe to say that in 2025, our team could start playing official matches. We are still focusing on ball skills and game plan; however, this term is proof that our idea is working. We can now start playing around with attire and a mascot.

11 September 2024 was a big day for our team. Dr.

Donna Dowson visited us to assist in the health requirements for this league to kick off. Laerskool Dr. Havinga joined us with their 0/10 netball team. This is the age group in which the girls start to play real netball in the mainstream. While these girls are also new to the game and learning, we thought it wise to have them play a trial match against the Daisies. We were very excited and highly motivated to prove ourselves. The Daisies were READY!

# THE GOAL . . .

A key focus point for us is to adapt and develop the game in such a way that it is medically safe for our learners. We know that many Down Syndrome learners have fragile spines and heart problems. Therefore, any contact sport and all cardio activities could pose a potential risk.

Teacher Clarissa Victor and I took the time to look over the original rules of netball, ringball, korfball, and volleyball, and came up with our own rules and adapted the rules to suit our version of this new sporting code better.

Please forget everything you might know about the rules of netball, korfball, ringball, and volleyball. Throw your rule book out the window and look at our rules with an open mind; **THIS IS NOT NETBALL, KORFBALL, RINGBALL, OR VOLLEYBALL.** Remember safety first. Let's dive right in...

# HEALTH ASPECT . . .

Dr. Donna took the time to put together a medical information document as well as a parental consent form, which the parents of our Daisy players had to look over and sign. The medical information form simply explained what medical risks there are, how the sport could benefit Down syndrome learners, and how safety is a key focus in the game. The parents were thrilled and signed with a smile. They attended the big match on 11 September 2024. I have never seen parents that proud and emotional at the same time. Their child was performing and felt part of something. Most importantly, it was safe!

After the game, Dr. Donna said that she was happy and would send me the medical report. Her advice was that we do an ECG with the learners who have heart conditions before and after a game to ensure that they are medically sound. Please refer to the medical report next.

# HEALTH ASPECT . . .



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10/10/2024

To Whom it May Concern, The Department of Education

RE: MODIFIED NETBALL IN INDIVIDUALS WITH DOWN SYNDROME – DAISY BALL

## **The Benefits of Athletic Participation for Individuals with Down Syndrome:**

In recent years, the conversation around inclusive sports has gained significant momentum, highlighting the profound benefits that athletic participation can have for individuals with Down syndrome. Engaging in sports not only fosters physical health but also promotes social inclusion, builds self-esteem, and enhances overall quality of life. Regular physical activity is crucial for everyone, and for individuals with Down syndrome, the benefits are particularly impactful. Participation in sports can help manage common health issues associated with Down syndrome, such as obesity, cardiovascular problems, and poor muscle tone.

Sports offer a platform for social interaction and community engagement, crucial for fostering inclusion. For individuals with Down syndrome, participating in team sports or group activities can break down social barriers and challenge stereotypes. These environments promote friendship, teamwork, and communication skills, helping athletes build lasting relationships and integrate more fully into their communities.

Sports can improve cognitive functions such as attention, memory, and problem-solving abilities. Engaging in regular physical activity has been shown to have positive effects on cognitive development.

## **Medical Implications:**

### **Common Medical Problems in Individuals with Down Syndrome**

#### **1. Cardiac Issues**

- **Conditions:** Congenital heart defects are prevalent in individuals with Down syndrome, including atrioventricular septal defect (AVSD) and ventricular septal defect (VSD).
- **Impact:** These conditions can affect cardiovascular function and endurance.
- **Sports Management:** Regular, moderate exercise can improve cardiovascular health and stamina. However, it's crucial to determine safe levels of physical activity and avoid high-intensity sports if there are significant heart issues.

# HEALTH ASPECT . . .

## 2. Obesity

- **Conditions:** Obesity is a common concern due to lower basal metabolic rates and less physical activity.
- **Impact:** Excess weight can exacerbate other health problems, such as joint pain and cardiovascular issues.
- **Sports Management:** Engaging in regular physical activity helps control weight, increase metabolism, and improve overall fitness. Sports like swimming, cycling, and team games are effective for maintaining a healthy weight and promoting physical activity.

## 3. Hypotonia (Low Muscle Tone)

- **Conditions:** Hypotonia leads to decreased muscle strength and coordination.
- **Impact:** This can affect balance, motor skills, and overall physical performance.
- **Sports Management:** Strength-building exercises and activities that focus on motor skills, can help improve muscle tone and coordination.

## 4. Joint Instability

- **Conditions:** Loose ligaments and joints are common, leading to an increased risk of joint dislocations and injuries. Atlantoaxial instability is more common in Down's Syndrome.
- **Impact:** This instability can make physical activities more challenging and increase the risk of injury e.g. ankle sprains in netball.
- **Sports Management:** Strength training and proprioceptive exercises (e.g., balance drills) help stabilize joints and improve overall movement control. Consider strapping/taping as needed.

## 5. Vision and Hearing Problems

- **Conditions:** Common issues include strabismus (crossed eyes), nystagmus (involuntary eye movement), and hearing loss.
- **Impact:** Vision and hearing problems can affect coordination and spatial awareness.
- **Sports Management:** Adapted rules can be effective.

## 6. Respiratory Issues

- **Conditions:** Increased susceptibility to respiratory infections and conditions like sleep apnea.
- **Impact:** These issues can affect overall stamina and physical endurance.
- **Sports Management:** Regular, moderate exercise can strengthen respiratory function and improve overall lung health.

# HEALTH ASPECT . . .

Taking these risks into account, the team has come up with a modified rule system to keep the game as safe as possible. The new name of this modified netball is called Daisy Ball.

The modified rules:

- No running, walking only.
- Adjusted foot fault rules. Players may walk to turn around. Reducing twisting and pivot actions. Players may not walk from one point to another with the ball.
- No contact, even whilst defending
- Modified obstruction rule, changed from 3 feet to 6 feet - preventing contact.
- Bounce balls and chest balls are encouraged over overhead balls.
- Type of ball – sponge ball.
- Time to pass a ball – extended to 10 seconds from 3 seconds as to slow down the pace of the game.
- Match time – 7 minutes of play with 10 minutes half time. Play time can increase depending on the level of cardio fitness of the players.
- Toss up rule is forbidden, to prevent injury and contact. Umpire makes final decision of who's ball it is to play.

As a Sports Physician I feel that the modified rules have made Daisy Ball an ideal sport for individuals with Down Syndrome and no more dangerous for an individual than any other school sport. The benefit of sport out ways the risk and I hereby endorse Daisy Ball for individuals with Down Syndrome.

Yours sincerely



---

Dr Donna Dowson

Sports Physician



# ADAPTED RULES



- **The ball:** Due to our learners' fragile spines, we simply cannot risk letting them play with a standard netball ball. We play with a smaller sponge ball. These balls are available at various sporting outlets.
- **The game:** NO RUNNING! Our learners have heart conditions, and given their body build and risk of injury, running on the court is not permitted. We walk and play daisy ball.
- **Footwork:** The rule for "stepping" has to change. Our learners find it challenging to halt at a specific spot and pivot to pass the ball. Therefore, our learners may walk to turn around; however, they cannot walk from one point to another, which can alter the game itself.
- **Touch:** NO BODY CONTACT! Our learners cannot, under any circumstances, touch each other, even while defending. This is the only way we can ensure no severe injuries.
- **Interference:** This rule has changed. In netball, you must have a 3-foot space between you and your opponent. With Daisy ball its 6 feet, and we measure from their belly buttons, due to their unique body shape. The intention is to prevent body contact from taking place due to their body build.
- **Passing the ball:** We encourage bounce balls and chest balls, over head balls are still a topic of debate. Even though we play with a sponge ball, we are fearful that overhead balls could cause the learners to lose focus, and they might bump into one another or jump up to try and catch the ball, possibly causing injury. This poses a debate on contesting as well. More information to follow.

- **Time:** In most sporting codes, you have 3 seconds to pass the ball; however, with daisyball, we have allocated a time frame of 10 seconds due to the pace at which our learners play.
- **Match time:** We play 7 minutes a side with a 10-minute half-time. This could change depending on the level of cardiovascular fitness our learners can keep up with.
- **Short ball:** The rule for short ball applies. This is to ensure that no body contact can take place in attempting to attack or defend the ball.
- **Out of position:** This rule applies. A player is out of position if a part of their body touches the ground in a playing area other than the designated areas of the playing position.
- **Ball out of bounds:** The ball is out of bounds if it has touched the ground, something, or someone outside the perimeters of the court during play.
- **Third-line violation:** This rule still applies. The ball must be touched between the two transverse lines before being passed over.
- **Double touch:** A player who has caught the ball may not bounce it and replay it, throw it and catch or play it in any way again until it is touched by another player.

- **The toss-up:** This rule is strictly forbidden. It is up to the umpires' discretion to decide who last touched the ball out of bounds. In this way, we prevent serious injuries.
- **Dead ball:** This rule still applies. If obstruction or body contact occurs, the penalised player must stand aside and away from the player taking the pass and may not attempt to take part in play until the ball has left the thrower's hands.
- **Shorter Goal posts:** The goal post will be shorter with a meter.
- **Half playing area:** Both halves will be played on the same side.
- **Uncontested pass:** An uncontested pass is awarded for all infringements on the court except for body contact, obstruction, out of bounds, or simultaneous infringements. An uncontested pass is taken on the spot where the infringement occurred and may be taken by any player allowed in that area. When a free pass is taken, offending players are free to take part in the next play immediately.
- **Sanctioned pass:** The sanctioned pass is awarded for the infringements of body contact, obstruction, and intimidation. The sanctioned pass is taken where the infringing player was standing, unless this places the non-defending team at a disadvantage. It may be taken by any player allowed in that area. While the penalty is taken, the offending player is out of bounds and must stand aside and away from the player taking the pass and may make no attempt to take part in play until the ball has left the thrower's hand.

- **Sanctioned attempt or awarded shot:** If body contact or obstruction is committed in the goal circle by one of the defending players, one of the attacking shooters may either pass the ball or take a shot at the goal. While the penalty is taken, the offending player is out of bounds and must stand aside and away from the player taking the pass and may make no attempt to take part in play until the ball has left the thrower's hand.

# COACHING



- **Repetition, repetition, repetition.** That is the secret! To perfect a skill, you will need to practise it repeatedly.
- Make use of different resources to allow your learners to visually associate playing areas and positions with certain things, like flat cones, hula-hoops, chalk markings, etc.
- Ball skills are vital. Due to their bigger and thicker hands, they need to learn to throw and catch a ball with ease.
- Defending takes time and is considered an almost impossible task. However, repetition and using the buddy-up system truly help.
- Attack is always excellent fun. Focus on letting them understand that when the ball is in an opponent's hands, they can't just take it and resume play.
- Patience is a virtue! We all strive for success, and occasionally it can become frustrating. Especially if you have practiced a skill for weeks, but somehow it feels like the learner isn't grasping the concept. Trust me, they are learning, and one random day, they will do exactly what you have practiced—they just need time. These are the moments that make it all worth it!
- Love and laughter. Cheer them on a lot, even for the smallest thing. Such behaviour builds their understanding and confidence. It also lifts their spirits and is a great form of bonding as a team.

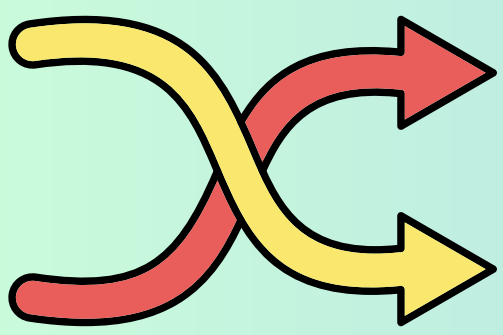
**Here are some coaching techniques that you can apply to your practices.**

**Warm up:**

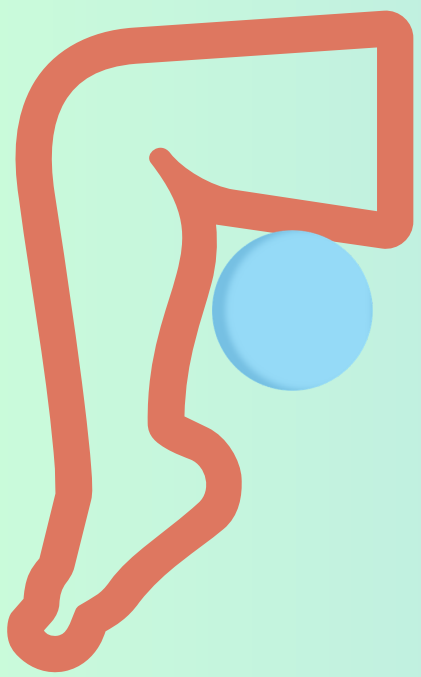
Running is difficult, and due to cardiovascular risks, we can't expect the players to run and do extreme warm-up exercises. However, we aim to warm up their movement and focus.



Start with basic ball passing between one learner to another



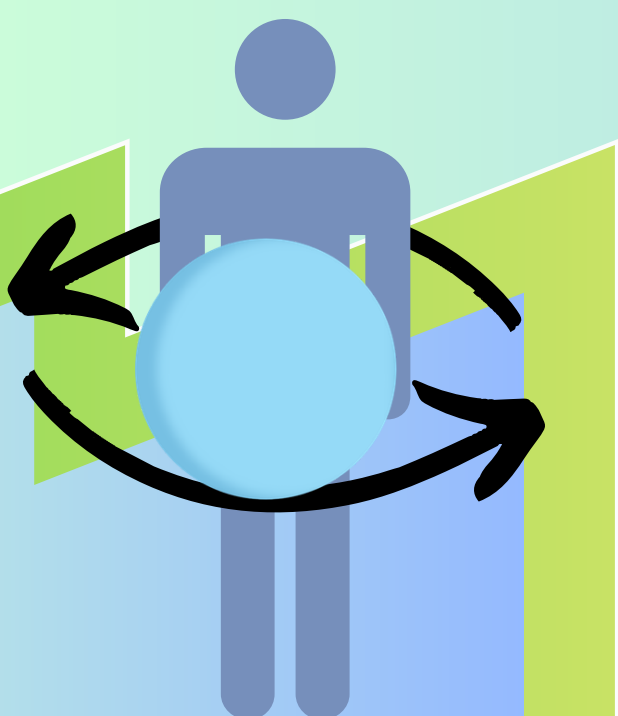
Learners can dribble while passing the ball from one learner to another in different line patterns.



Passing a ball from one hand to the other by passing under the leg.



Hula hooping is a fun and effective way to warm up the core and help with movement.

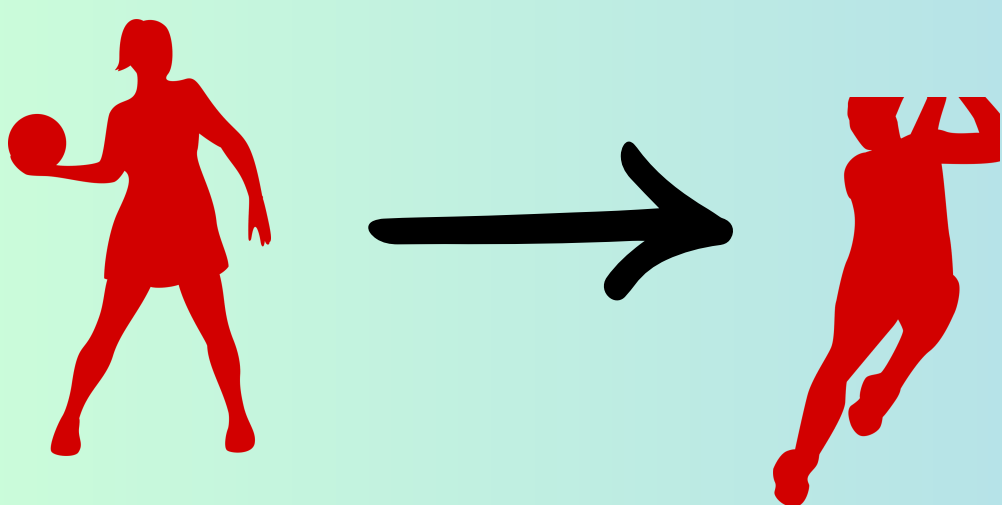


Passing the ball around the body from one hand to the other while walking in different directions.

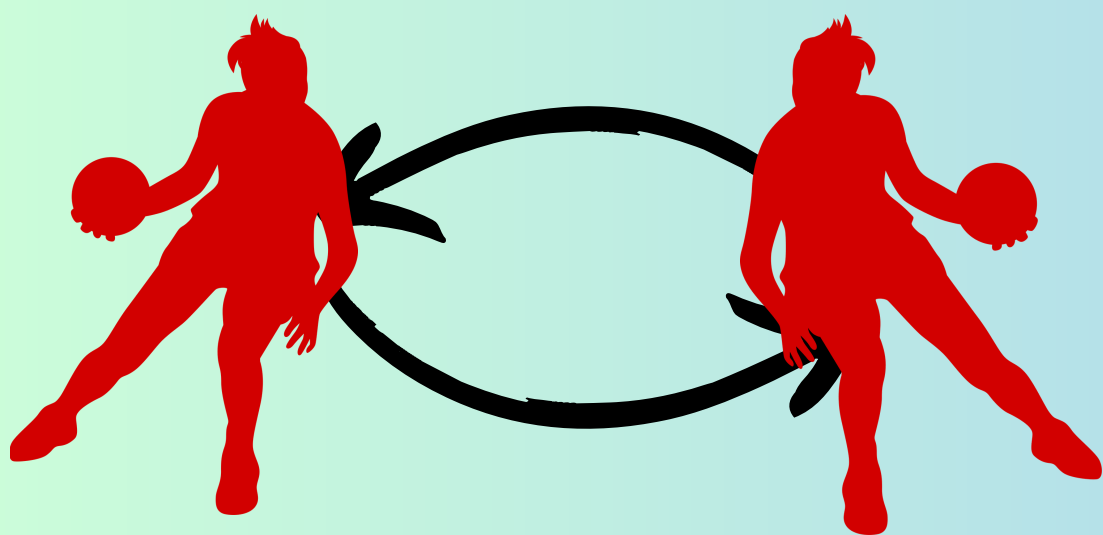
**Here are some coaching techniques that you can apply to your practices:**

**Attack:**

Remember, the goal is to have no contact while attacking the ball. Jumping is difficult; therefore, chest balls are encouraged, and running is not allowed.



Pass the ball in various directions and ways so the attacker can intercept and steal it.



Learners move in a circular motion in passing the ball without a defender intercepting.



Two learners pass the ball to one another, with a defender in the middle trying to intercept and take it.

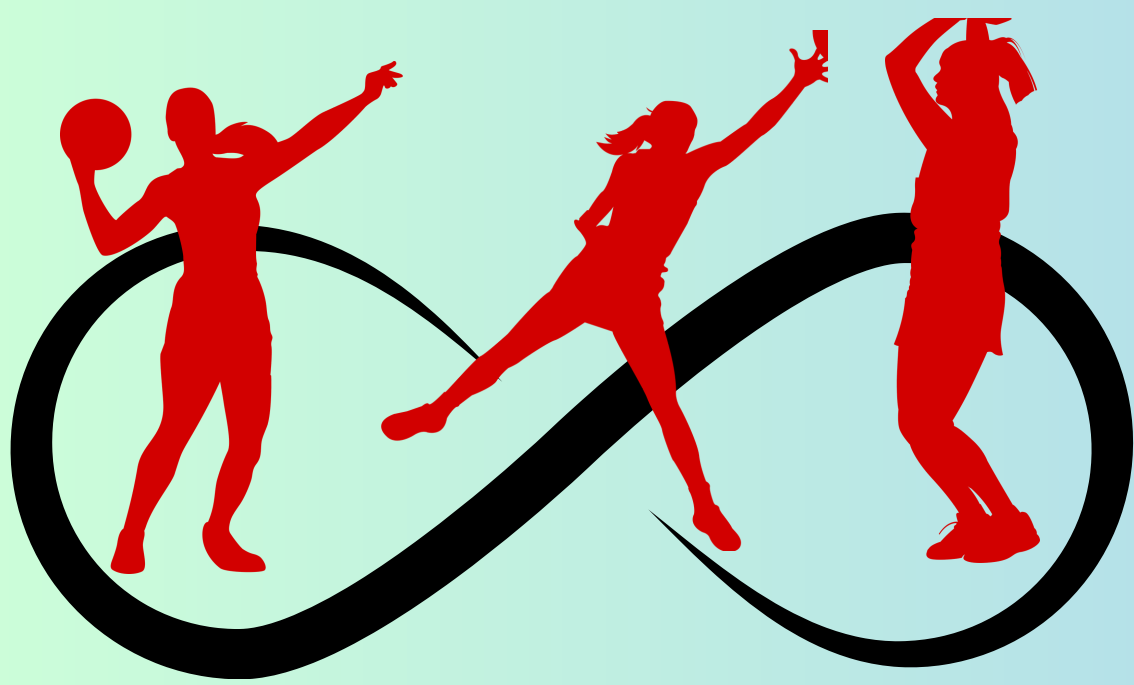


Learners practice the defence rule of obstruction in learning how to reach correctly.

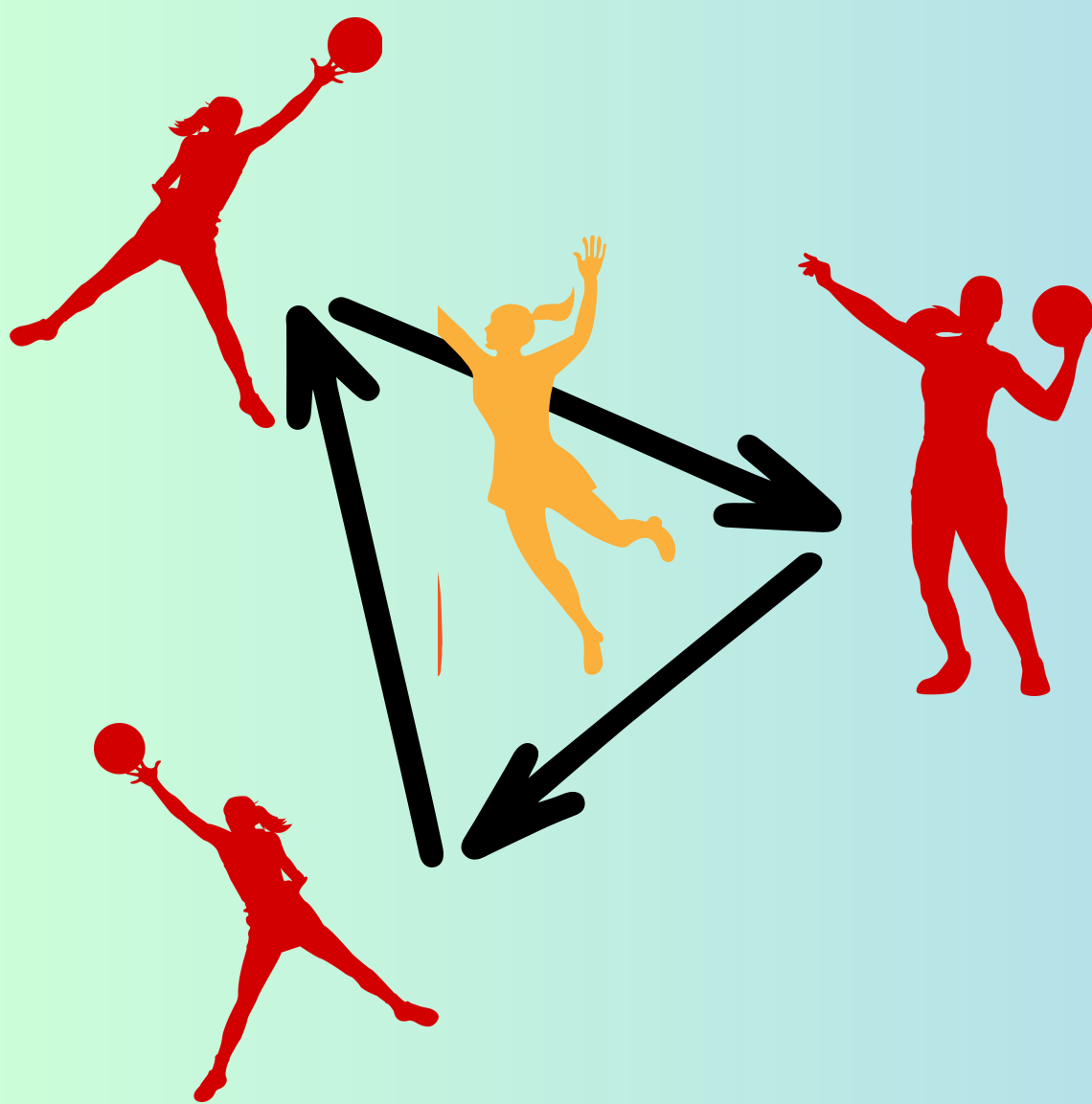
Here are some coaching techniques that you can apply to your practices:

Defence:

The goal is to defend your ball with no contact taking place. Therefore, the distance and the contact rule are looked at closely and can be skillfully mastered if practiced correctly.



Two learners pass a ball to one another. The defender moves in a figure 8 motion around the two learners, aiming to intercept the ball between them.



Three learners stand in a triangle and pass the ball to one another in any direction. The defender moves in the middle of the triangle, attempting to catch the ball.

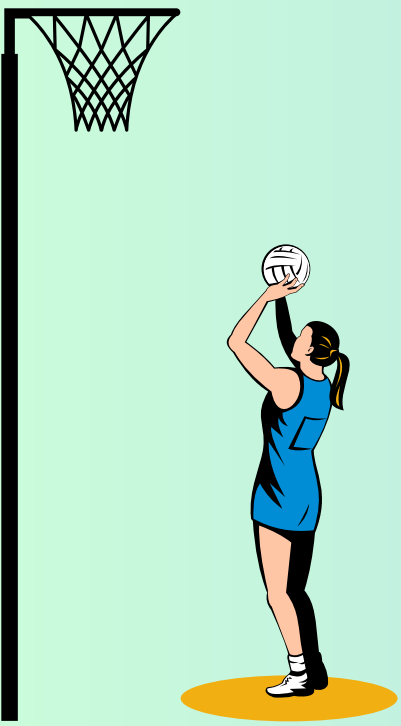


One learner stands in front of a wall, throwing the ball against the wall and catching it again. While this is happening, the defender stands between the learner and the wall, attempting to catch the ball.

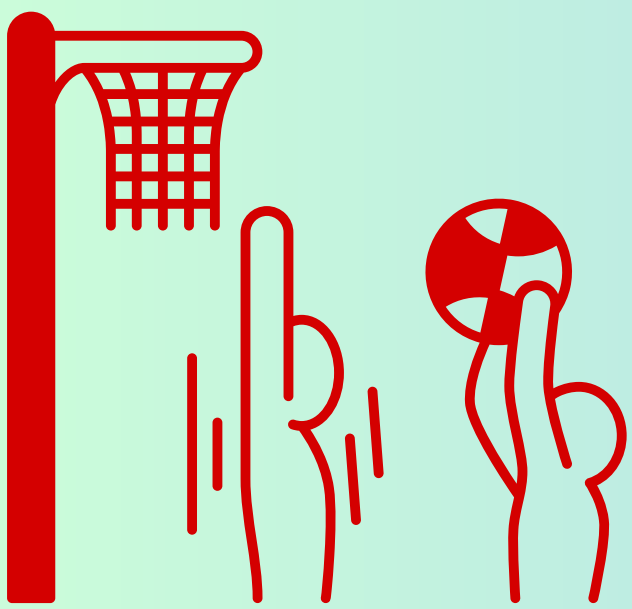
**Here are some coaching techniques that you can apply to your practices:**

**Goal shooting:**

Goal shooting poses challenges due to the fact that the ball is smaller and lighter, especially in windy conditions. This is the reason why the goalposts have been lowered. Ball control is a vital skill.



Have the learner stand as close as possible to the post and practice shooting the ball in the hoop.



To develop quick thinking, add a defender in the exercise who must try to steal the ball.



Later on, you can add another attacker and defender to the exercise to help the learner become more spatially aware and know how to play the ball to ensure a goal.

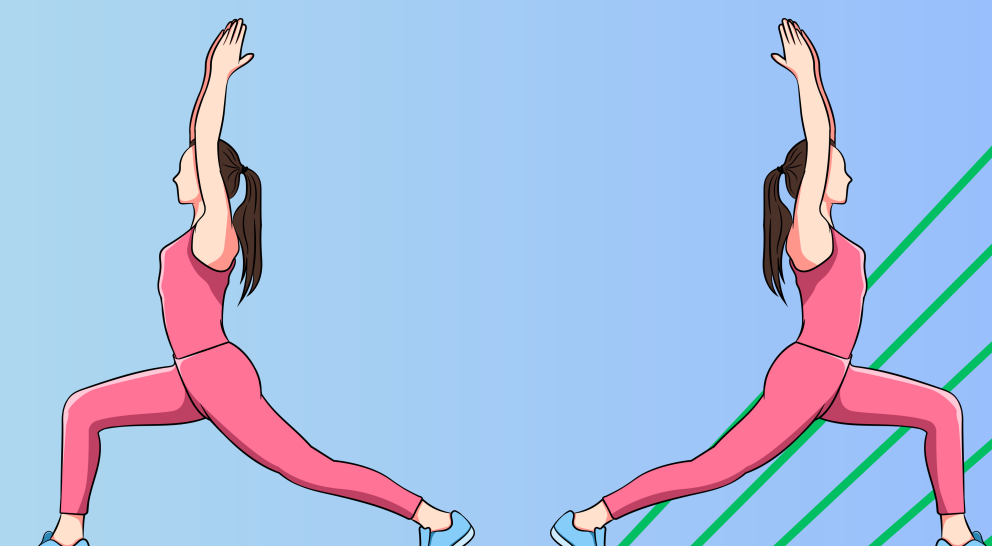
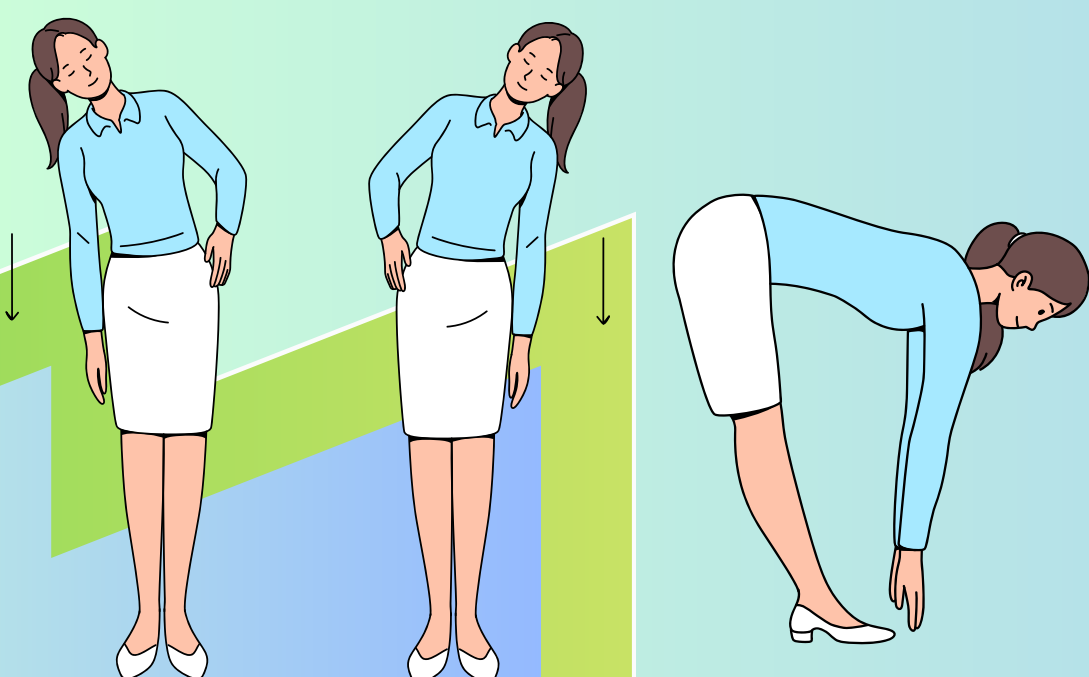
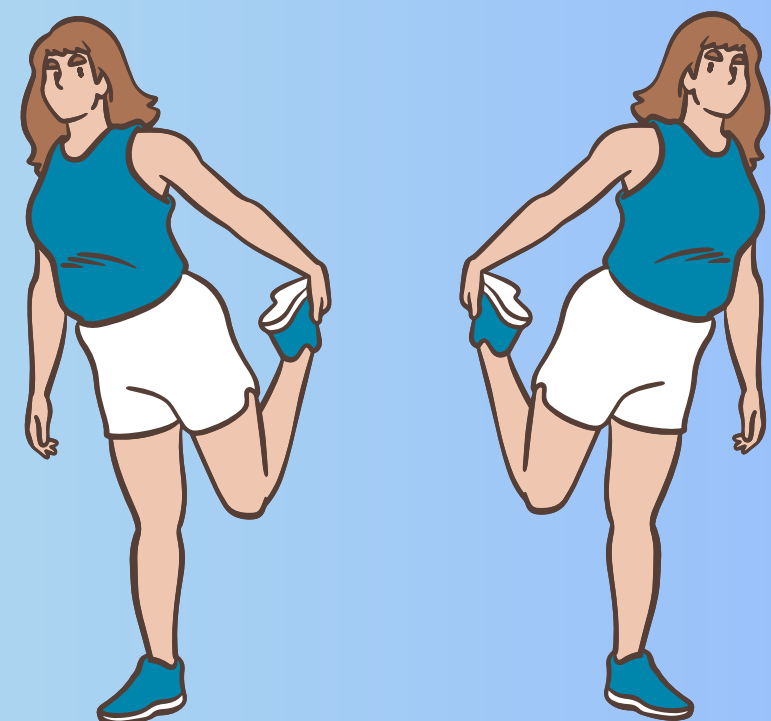
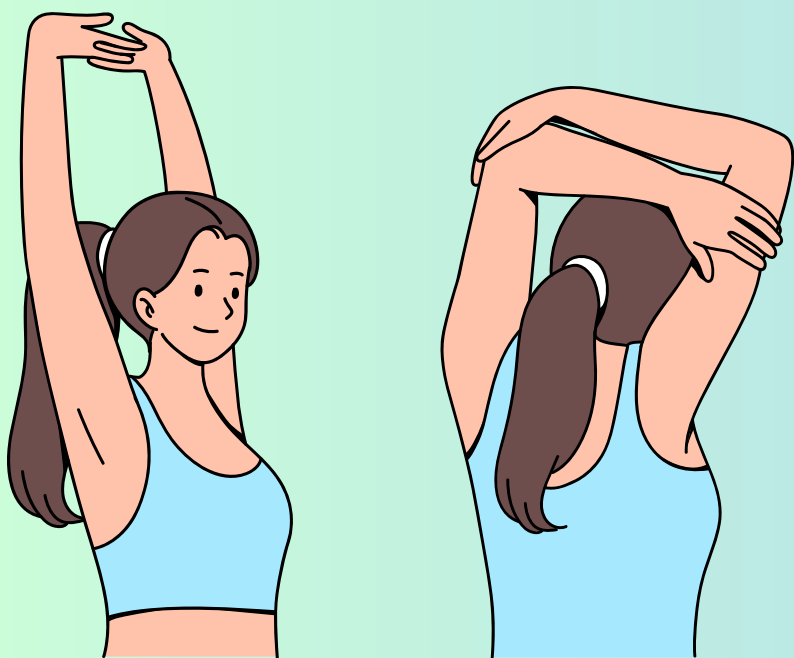
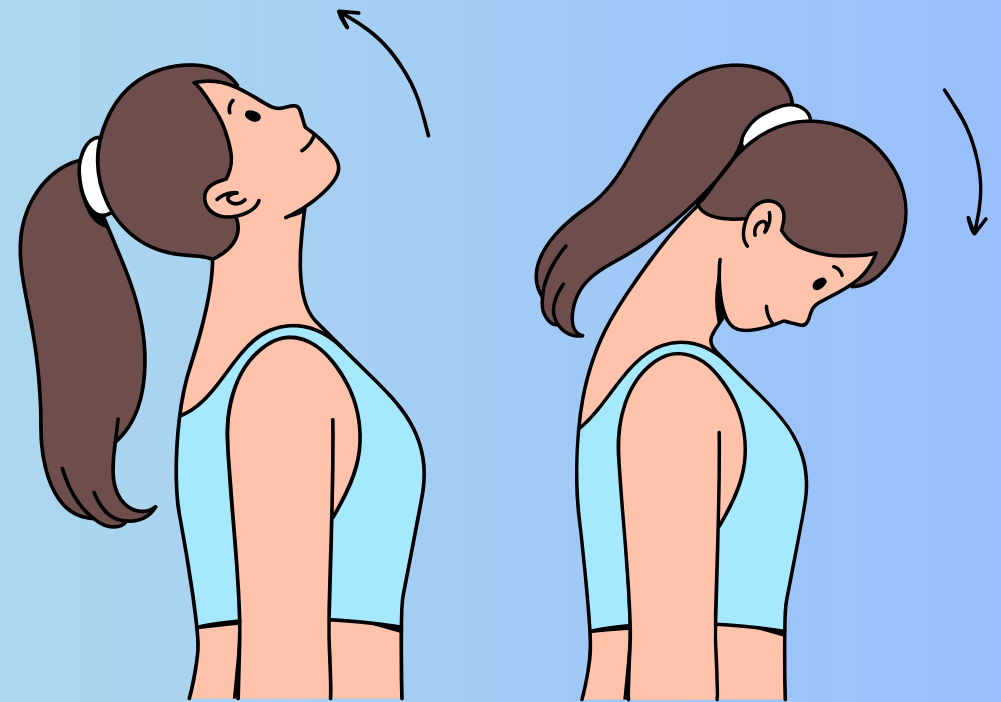
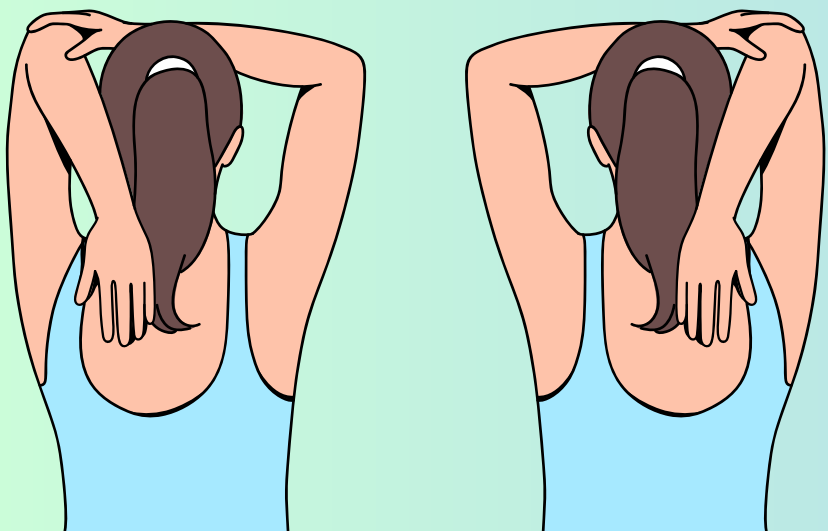
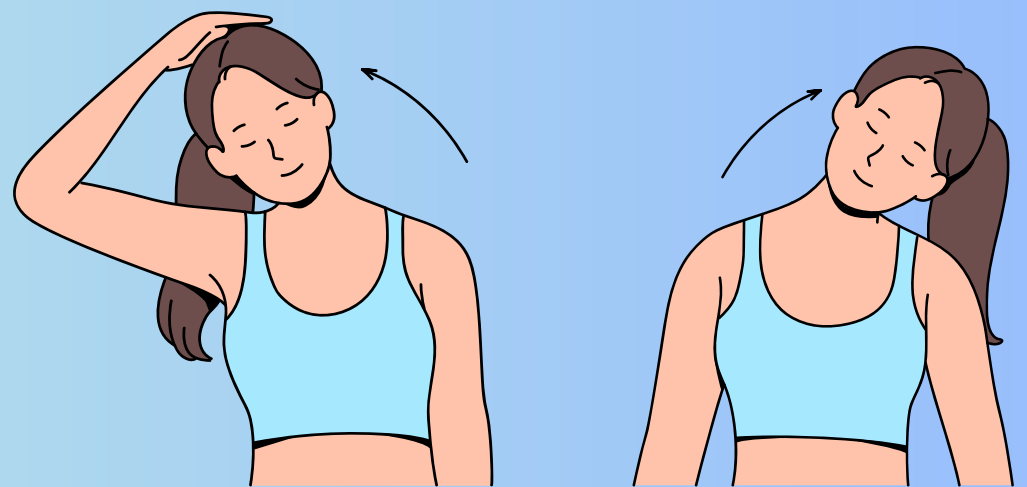
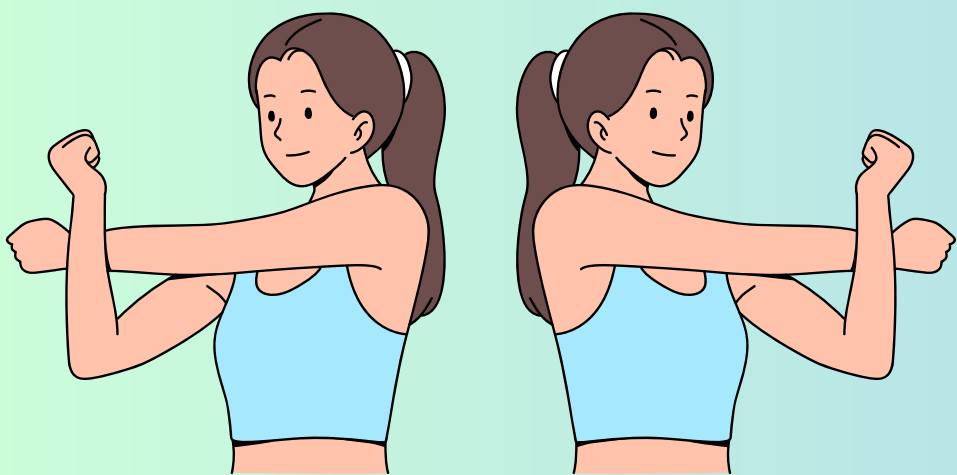


With individual practice, the learner can start taking a step backward after every goal they shoot correctly. This develops the learner's distance shooting skill.

**Here are some coaching techniques that you can apply to your practices:**

**Cool off:**

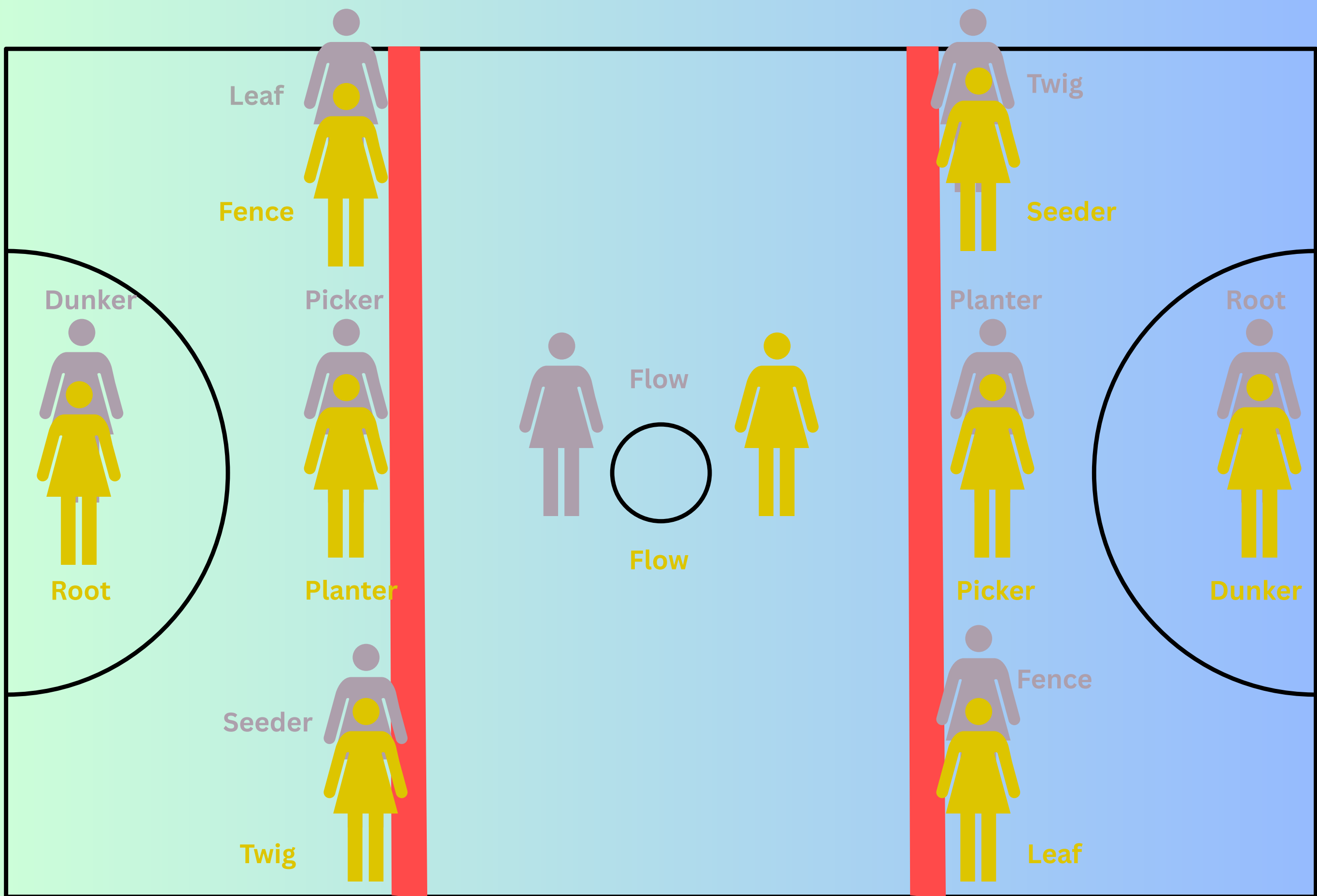
After any exercise, it is important to stretch and cool off to ensure healthy muscle restoration. With Down Syndrome learners, this rule is even more important because their bodies are different, and the in-between muscles aren't as developed. The images below are a few excellent examples of stretches that can benefit your learners.



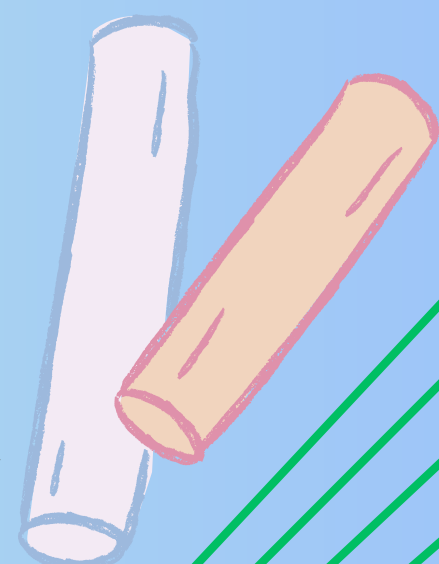
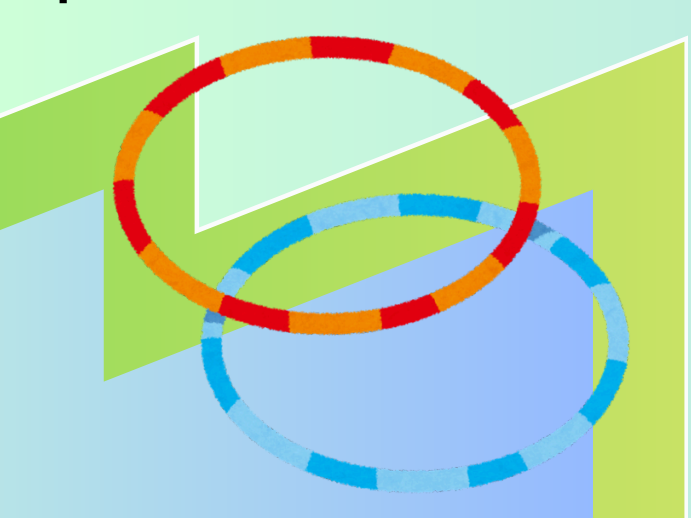
Here are some coaching techniques that you can apply to your practice:

### Positions:

Because Daisyball is a new sporting code, it is only fitting to have new names and different positions. The image below shows every position and its name. A breakdown of each position and the role of each player is provided on the next page.



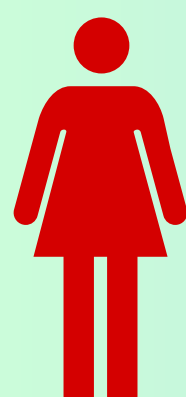
There are various pieces of equipment that one can use to help your learners remember their positions and how they have to move around the court. For me, Hula Hoops has worked best to show them their position and where they must go. I also used cones to map the path they must walk into to get to the next position of the drill we are practicing.



Here are some coaching techniques that you can apply to your practice:

Positions:

Position and role of each player on the court:



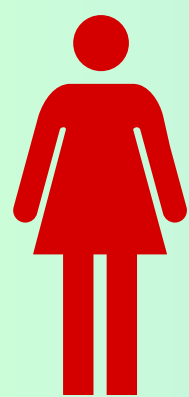
Flow

Controls the game, links defence and attack, moves accross the entire court, including circles if needed.

Feeds the ball to shooters, plays in the attacking and center thirds.



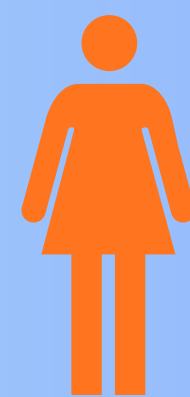
Leaf



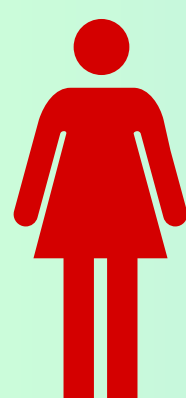
Root

Main defender in the goal circle and defensive third.

Defends the goal circle and attacking thrid, aiming to prevent scoring.



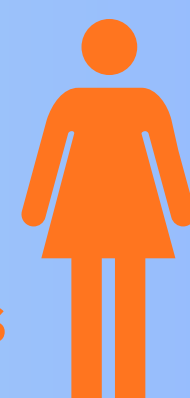
Twig



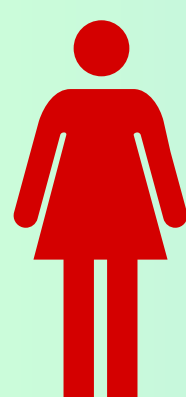
Dunker

Scores goals and works with the Twig in the goal circle

Moves in the attacking and defensive thirds as assistance to attack.



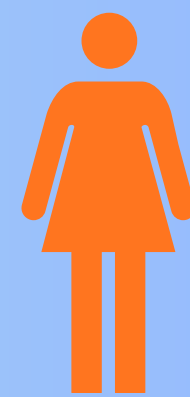
Planter



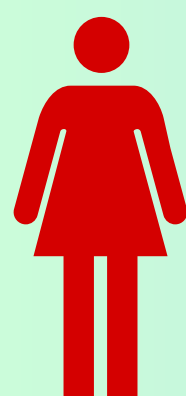
Seeder

Feeds the Dunker and scores, plays in the attacking third, center third and goal circle.

Moves in the attacking and defensive thirds as assistance to defence..



Picker



Fence

Defends against the Leaf, playing the defensive and center thirds.

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS



**"God has chosen you and has set you  
aside for a special purpose..."**

**- John 15:16**

A special thanks to Dr. Donna Dawson. Your experience and enthusiasm are greatly appreciated. Teacher Chantel Kemp and your netball team. Thank you for your willingness to learn a new sport and assist with the medical test game. Your learners are stunning and have amazing hearts. Laerskool Dr. Havinga, for allowing your educator and her team to play against the Daisies and take a few hours off from school. Dr. Maria Kempen for standing with me in this journey and supporting us every step of the way. Ms. Sandra and Sonja for believing in us and supporting us every step of the way. Teacher Clarissa Victor, for coaching and developing this code with me. We greatly appreciate your patience and love. Teacher Antonette Meyer, thank you for assisting in coaching and umpiring. Your efforts have helped immensely in the development of this code. Teacher Gerrie, for assisting in coaching as well as making headbands for our team. And last but not least, to the parents of these special learners, your love and support have helped build their self-confidence, excitement, and motivation.

***From the depths of my heart, I want to thank you!  
Thank you for being an inspiration, motivator,  
and advisor on this journey. We are deeply  
grateful for your invaluable input and guidance.***

***But most importantly. Thanks to our Father God.  
For guiding, inspiring, and protecting this journey.  
All the glory to Him.***

29

# Resource Links

Please feel free to follow the link below. This link will take you to a folder with videos on various exercises and drills that you can incorporate into your practices.

<https://drive.google.com/drive/u/0/folders/1DuCop5D1wHzJeviW5NdTPac5zSpN8Jdb>

Always remember safety is not everything; it is the **ONLY** thing! If you experience a learner who battles to complete a drill or an exercise, allow them enough rest; their health is important. Slow and steady wins the race. With continuous practice and repetition, the pace of the learner's progress will show, and you and your team will soon reap the benefits of all that you have put in.

If you need any more information or advice, you are welcome to contact me at:

[\*\*truslerpotgieter.c@thegatewayschool.co.za\*\*](mailto:truslerpotgieter.c@thegatewayschool.co.za)

I will be happy to assist in any way possible.

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