SOFTBALL BATTER UP

LEARNING BANDS 3-4
FOUR SESSIONS

SOFTBALL AUSTRALIA™

Australian Government
Australian Sports Commission

FUN COMMUNITY DIVERSITY
TEAMWORK
EXCELLENCE

SESSION ONE 3-4

EGGS IN A BASKET

Learning intention
Eggs in a basket can be used as a high-energy warm-up that requires agility. A good lead-in to fielding games.

How to
1. Mark out an area with 4 cones and place all balls in the centre
2. Players line up behind each cone
3. On a signal, the first person from each team runs to the centre and picks up a ball to throw to the next person in line
4. Once the ball is caught and placed beside the team, the catcher runs to the centre repeating the process
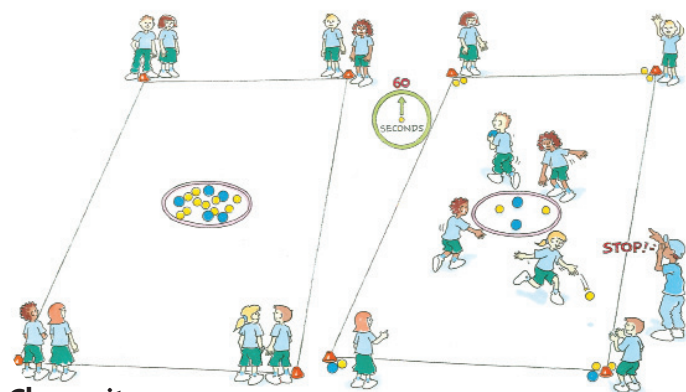5. The aim is to be the first team to each retrieve a ball

Category   Starter

Equipment   4 marker cones per group
                  1 foam ball or bean bag per player

Skill focus
Throwing, catching, locomotor movement and teamwork

Content description
ACPMP043

Change it
Easier
› Increase the size of the balls
› Players roll the balls to the next person in line
Harder
› Increase the distance to the centre of the cones
› Vary the type of throw, flyball, underarm, overarm

Tip
› Use a no-go zone to separate players

Questions
› What type of throw is the most accurate?

FIELD HIT

Learning intention
Field hit is a modified game of softball that builds on striking and fielding skills and encourages teamwork and thoughtful placement of the ball. It provides a good introduction to softball.

How to
1. 1 batter and 4 dispersed fielders
2. The batter hits the ball off the batting tee into the playing area
3. Fielders field the ball and throw it to the player on 2nd base
4. Rotate positions in the field regularly
5. The batter scores 1 run for each base reached

Category   Game application

Equipment   1 batting tee per group
                  1 bat per group
                  4 foam balls or similar per group

Skill focus
Fielding, throwing, shot placement, striking and teamwork

Content descriptions
ACPMP043, ACPMP045, ACPMP061, ACPMP063

Change it
Easier
› Use a larger, softer ball and bat
› Players kick the ball into play
Harder
› Batters attempt to run to 1st base before the player on 2nd base receives the ball
› The ball has to be passed by all fielders before the ball is thrown to 2nd base

Safety
› Ensure a safe distance is kept around the batter at all times
› The player at 2nd base rolls the ball back to the coach standing at the batting tee
› Ensure all players in the field are ready prior to the ball being hit

Questions
› What can you do as a team to stop the ball getting passed us?
› What type of throw will be the most accurate?

BLAST BALL

Learning intention
Blast ball is a modified game of softball that builds on striking and fielding skills and encourages teamwork and thoughtful placement of the ball. It provides a good introduction to softball and baseball.

How to
1. Form 2 teams of 6
2. The fielding team take their positions in the field
3. A batter hits a ball off a tee into the field and attempts to reach the blast base before 1st base receives the ball

Rules
› If the batter reaches the base before a defensive player either catches the ball in the air or fields it and yells 'BLAST', they score a run
› The batter can continue running until the fielding team yells 'BLAST'
› Allow each team to bat through their order before changing over
› The batter scores 1 run for each base reached

Category
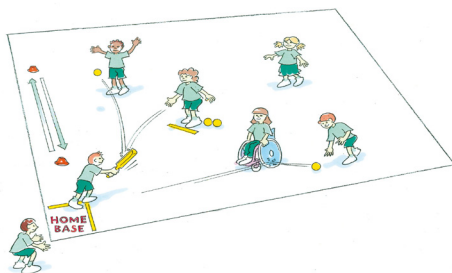Game application

Equipment
1 batting tee per group, 1 foam bat per group, 1 foam ball per group, 1 Blast base per group

Skill focus
Fielding, throwing, catching, shot placement, striking and teamwork

Content descriptions
ACPMP043, ACPMP045, ACPMP061, ACPMP063

Change it
Easier
› Reduce the distance of the bases

Tips
› The ideal number of players per team is 5-6. This keeps the game moving quickly and makes the players more active.

Questions
› Can you show me what type of throw you would use to get the ball in faster?

LET'S SEE IT

How to
1. Highlight a skill or tactic
2. Whisper to individuals or groups to be ready at the end of the session for a demonstration
3. Gather everyone together and ask one group to demonstrate an activity
4. Emphasise one key point and keep it short

Format
Short, focused demonstration

Tip
› Give the players the opportunity to ask questions and reinforce key skills

CHANGE IT

When observing the activity, ask yourself the following questions:

› Is the game safe and fun?

› Are all players engaged in the game?

› Is the objective of the game being achieved?

› Are all the players being included?

› Is participation being maximised?

› Is the game appropriate to the ability level of each player?

› Are they being challenged?

If the answer to any of these questions is NO, then CHANGE IT!

SESSION TWO 3-4

OCTOPUS

Learning intention
Octopus is an energiser or warm-up that requires players to avoid being tagged whilst running along the lines.

How to
1. Players line up along 1 side of the diamond
2. 1 player is chosen to be 'IT' and stands in the middle of the field
3. When 'IT' calls 'OCTOPUS', players run from one side of the field to the other, trying not to get tagged
4. If tagged, players must freeze but can assist by tagging players by moving only their arms
5. Continue until 1 person remains untagged
6. Look for ways for players who are tagged early to return to the game quickly
7. Ask both taggers and runners to come up with a successful strategy

Category	Starter
Time	10 minutes
Equipment	4 marker cones

Skill focus
Locomotor movement and tagging

Content descriptions
ACPMP009, ACPMP029, ACPMP047

Change it
› On your call, vary the locomotor movement, ie running, hopping, skipping or jumping
Easier
› Start the game with more than one tagger
› When a player is tagged, they can also become a tagger

Safety
› Players need to be aware of other players and the space around them

Questions
› What can we do to make this game easier or harder?
› Would it be easier if the playing area was smaller?
› How can 'IT' tag more players?

ALONG THE LINE

Learning intention
Along the line combines running with throwing and catching.

How to
1. Divide your players into groups of 5. Each player stands at a marker cone placed in lines 8 metres apart.
2. The player at the end marker for each group starts by throwing a ball up the line so each team member catches then throws to the next player, finally reaching the other end
3. Once the end player catches the ball, they run down the line to the front marker and each team member moves up 1 position
4. The activity ends when the player who started the activity is back at their original position
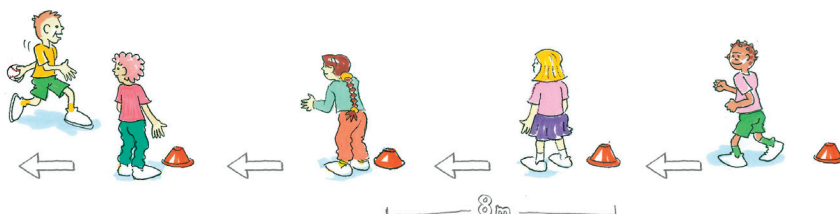
Category	Get into it
Equipment	1 ball per group
	Marker cones
	1 glove per player (optional)

Skill focus
Throwing, catching and locomotor movement

Content description
ACPMP043

Change it
› Use different types of throws; rolling or fly balls
Easier
› Larger balls, shorter distance
Harder
› Increase the distance; timed activity; smaller balls
› Use gloves

Question
› What do you need to do to get the ball down the line faster?

BEAT THE BASE

Learning intention
Beat the base is a modified game of softball that builds on fielding, throwing and catching skills and encourages teamwork and thoughtful placement of the ball. It provides a good introduction to softball.

How to
1. Divide your players into 2 teams. 1 team fields and the other bats.
2. The fielding team must start outside the baselines and are not allowed to move until the batting team has thrown 3 balls into the field of play
3. 1 player from the batting team throws 3 balls into the field of play then runs between markers placed on the 1st base line at 2, 4 and 6 metre intervals
4. Each batter continues to run each time making a choice of what distance to run to score runs until all 3 balls are fielded and thrown to a base
5. Each fielding player at a base must have 1 ball thrown to them, stand on the base and hold the ball in the air to stop the runner from running and scoring runs
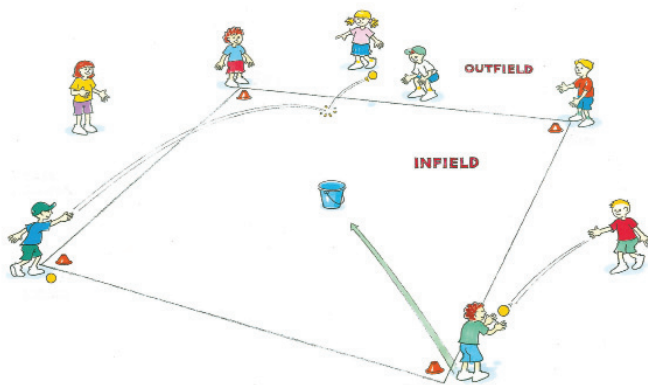
Category	Game application

Equipment	3 balls per group
	Marker cones
	1 glove per player (optional)

Skill focus
Fielding, throwing, and teamwork

Content descriptions
ACPMP043, ACPMP045, ACPMP061, ACPMP063

Change it
Easier
› Use a smaller diamond
Harder
› Different players at a base, catching each time

Question
› How should we stand when waiting to catch the ball?

WHAT DID YOU LEARN?

How to
1. This reinforces key skills or tactical points. Use keyords and provide tactical tips.
2. Ask the players questions, eg remember when I asked Mary, Kate and John to show us how to throw?
3. What did you learn?

Format
Questions and answers

Tips
› Give the players the opportunity to ask questions and reinforce key skills
› Provide feedback and encouragement

GAME SENSE

The game is the focus
The coach enables players to develop sporting skills and tactics by playing fun and competitive games.

The coach is the facilitator
Rather than direct players on how to perform skills, the coach acts as a facilitator and sets challenges allowing players to find solutions through game-play.

Discreet coaching
Ensure the activity remains engaging for all, discreetly providing tips to allow the game to flow. Create an encouraging and supportive environment, building player confidence and self-esteem.

Ask the players
Ask the players questions about how they think the games can be modified to make them easier or harder.

Make changes
Game variations create fun, safe and inclusive environments. Modify games to challenge all participants.

SESSION THREE 3-4
BAT TAPPING

Learning intention
Bat tapping is a fun activity that allows players to develop hand-eye and bat coordination.

How to
1. Each player has a bat and a ball suitable for their age and ability
2. The aim is to hit the ball into the air continuously and keep the ball from hitting the ground

Category   Starter

Equipment   1 soft core ball per player
                    1 bat per player (foam, plastic, alloy)

Skill focus
Striking

Content descriptions
ACPMP043, ACPMP061

Change it
Easier
› Use a lighter bat and foam ball
› Use a flat edged cricket bat
› Allow one bounce before hitting the ball back into the air

Harder
› Count the number of taps you can do in a row
› Move around a designated course
› Use multiple balls
› Tap in pairs, counting consecutive taps

Questions
› Which part of the bat do you need to hit the ball with so it will go straight up in the air?
› How high did you have to hit the ball in the air to make sure you had time to get ready for the next hit?
› Would it be easier or harder with a different bat and ball?

Safety
› Ensure players keep their distance from other players and obstacles around them

FIELDING SOCCER

Learning intention
Fielding soccer combines passing, catching, running and fielding with the need to evade defenders and hit a target. Interceptors have to read the play and anticipate the throw.

How to
1. Mark out an area with marker cones as goal posts
2. Players form into teams of 4
3. Rolling and fielding the ball between their teammates, players attempt to score goals
4. The ball can only roll through goals and cannot be lifted into the air
5. A player cannot run or move off the spot with the ball
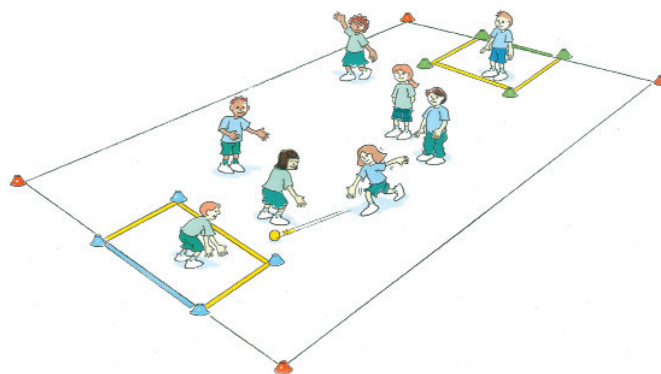
Category   Get into it

Equipment   1 low impact volleyball (or similar) per group
                    12 marker cones

Skill focus
Fielding, catching, defending and teamwork

Content descriptions
ACPMP043, ACPMP045, ACPMP061, ACPMP063

Change it
Easier
› Reduce the size of the field
› Have 2 end zones (goals) at each end

Harder
› Use more than 1 ball at a time
› Use different size balls
› Limit the time in the goal area

Tip
› Introduce a number of passes before they can shoot at goal

Questions
› What can you do to help your teammates receive the ball?
› Where is the best place to stand when defending your opponent's goal?

TEE BALL

Learning intention
Tee ball is a modified game of softball game that builds on striking and fielding skills and encourages teamwork and thoughtful placement of the ball. It provides a good introduction to softball.

How to
1. Play with a maximum of 6 per team
2. Form a batting team and a fielding team
3. Each batter hits the ball into the field from a batting tee, then tries to run around the bases while fielders field the ball
4. Score 1 point for each base touched

A batter is out when
› A batted ball is caught on the full
› A batted ball is fielded and thrown to 1st base before the player arrives
› A fielder with the ball touches a base before the runner arrives at the base

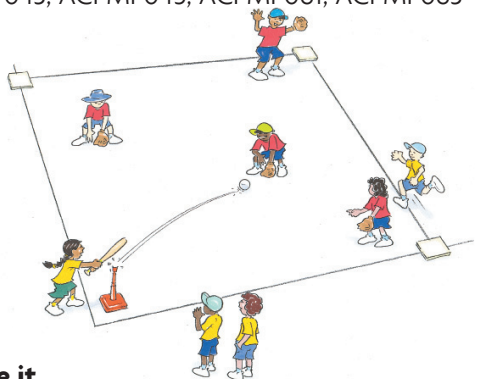|	
Category	Game application
Equipment	1 soft core ball per group 1 batting tee per group 4 bases, 1 bat per group 5 batting helmets

Skill focus
Fielding, throwing, catching, shot placement, striking and teamwork

Content descriptions
ACPMP043, ACPMP045, ACPMP061, ACPMP063

Change it
Easier
› Use a larger ball and bat
› Shorten the distance between the bases

Tips
› Rotate players in the field regularly
› No base stealing is allowed

Question
› How can you work as a team to stop players scoring runs?

CIRCLE SIT

How to
1. Players stand in a circle facing the back of the person in front of them
2. Players are close to each other with the toes of each player touching the heels of the player in front
3. After the count of 3, all players sit down slowly on the knees of the player behind
4. Players stand up on the count of 3

Format
Cooperative play

Questions
› What did you learn today?
› What was one thing you did well today?

CHANGE IT

When observing the activity, ask yourself the following questions:

› Is the game safe and fun?

› Are all players engaged in the game?

› Is the objective of the game being achieved?

› Are all the players being included?

› Is participation being maximised?

› Is the game appropriate to the ability level of each player?

› Are they being challenged?

If the answer to any of these questions is NO, then CHANGE IT!

SESSION FOUR 3-4
CHAIN TAG

Learning intention
Chain tag is an activity that develops cooperative behaviours as players work together to move around the playing area.

How to
1. Players spread out within a designated area
2. 2 players are nominated as taggers and hold hands to form a chain
3. Holding hands they run to tag as many players as they can
4. Once tagged, others join the chain
5. Only outside hands can tag free runners, ie first and last person of the chain
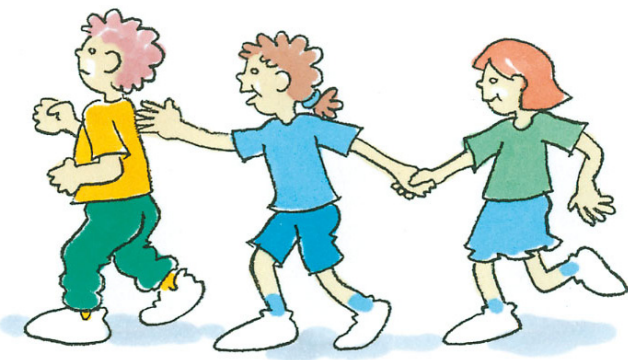
Category   Starter

Equipment   4 marker cones

Skill focus
Locomotor movement and teamwork

Content descriptions
ACPMP008, ACPMP025, ACPMP043

Change it
› Have more players in a chain
› Change the size of the playing area

Safety
› Players need to be aware of other players and the space around them

Questions
› Is it easier or harder with more people in the chain?
› What do players in the chain need to do to tag loose players?

PEPPER

Learning intention
Pepper combines different ball delivery methods, striking and fielding.

How to
1. 1 batter and 4 dispersed players
2. The batter hits the ball off the batting tee, aiming for the targets behind the fielders
3. The fielders field the ball
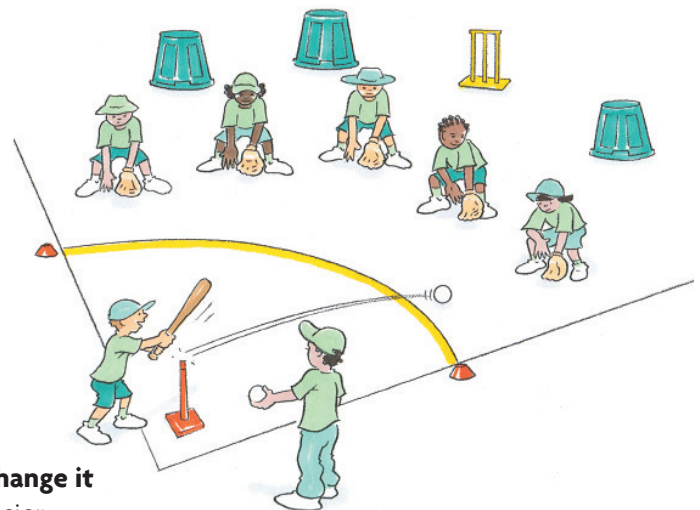
Category   Get into it

Equipment   1 batting tee per group
1 foam bat per group
4 foam balls per group
A variety of different targets

Skill focus
Fielding, throwing, catching, shot placement and striking

Content descriptions
ACPMP043, ACPMP061

Change it
Easier
› Use a larger bat and ball or more targets
› Use a larger hitting area
Harder
› Use fewer targets

Tips
› Stand side-on to the direction you want to hit
› Keep hands close together

Safety
› Ensure all players are in the ready position before hitting the ball

Questions
› What do you need to watch before you hit the ball?
› Where can you the fielder stand to stop the batter from hitting the target?

PROGRESSIVE COACH PITCH

Learning intention

Progressive coach pitch is a modified game of softball that builds on striking and fielding skills and encourages teamwork and thoughtful placement of the ball. Coach pitch introduces the skill of hitting a pitched ball.

How to

1. Players play as 1 team and take it in turns to bat the ball, which is pitched underarm by the coach
2. The batter attempts to run around the bases while the rest of the players field the ball
3. Once a player goes out, they pick up a glove and join the fielding team at right field and the remaining fielders rotate one place
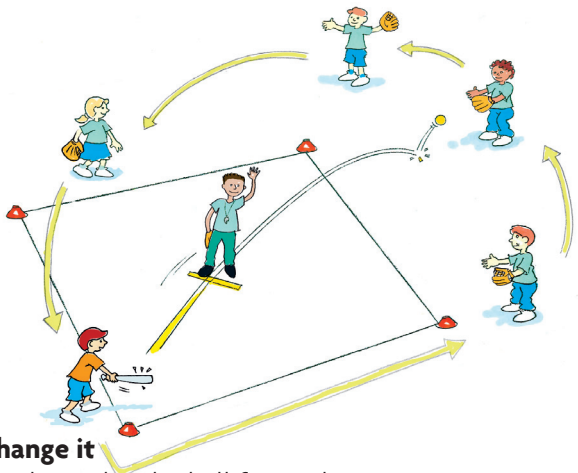
Category	Game application
Equipment	1 soft core ball per group
	1 glove per player
	4 bases per group
	5 batting helmets per group
	1 set of catchers gear per group

Skill focus

Fielding, throwing, catching, shot placement, striking and teamwork

Content descriptions

ACPMP043, ACPMP045, ACPMP061, ACPMP063

Change it

› Players hit the ball from a batting tee

Tips

› Encourage awareness of other players
› Instruct the players to shout 'MINE' or their own name when moving to field the ball
› Make sure all players rotate around the field

Question

› Where is the best place to stand to stop the ball?
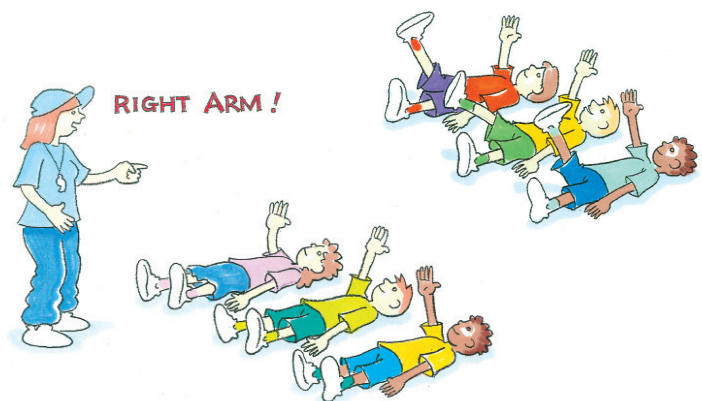
PUPPETEER

How to

1. Players act as puppets, moving their body to your calls (you are the puppeteer). Players lay down.
2. Players respond to your calls. The coach says 'I am pulling the string to your right arm now' (players raise their right arm).
3. 'Now I'm lowering your arm and pulling the string to your right leg' etc. Gradually slow down the activity.

Format

Relaxation, gentle stretching and winding down

Questions

› What did you learn today?
› What activity did you enjoy the most?

RIGHT ARM !

GAME SENSE

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The coach is the facilitator

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Discreet coaching

Ensure the activity remains engaging for all, discreetly providing tips to allow the game to flow. Create an encouraging and supportive environment, building player confidence and self-esteem.

Ask the players

Ask the players questions about how they think the games can be modified to make them easier or harder.

Make changes

Game variations create fun, safe and inclusive environments. Modify games to challenge all participants.

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