

Striking with an Implement

Striking and controlling a ball with an implement (racquet, stick or bat) can occur in many forms. As a result, its application to sports varies. For example, the horizontal striking pattern occurs in softball, while a more vertical pattern is found in golf, cricket and hockey. Many sports (e.g. tennis, badminton) include striking in several planes, and share the same movement concepts as striking with the hand. (Developing FMS Manual, Sport NZ).

Foundation skills for striking need to be practised in the early years, starting from birth and continuing into the preschool and school years. When children are first learning these large-motor manipulative skills, it is important to remember that their goal isn't complete accuracy. They need to start by mastering the action. It can be helpful to have them practice using imaginary or slow moving objects at first.

In developing striking skills you can utilise a large number of different objects / materials. You can use balloons, bean bags, koosh balls, bits of cardboard and wood (cut to the needed size), as well as a variety of traditional equipment such as bats, racquets or clubs and tennis, hockey and softballs.

1. At first object and child should be stationary, e.g. striking a large ball off a cone or tee
2. Next the object moves, but the child remains still, e.g. hitting a pitched beach ball with a bat
3. Both child and object are moving, e.g. keeping the ball in the air with a paddle



Striking with an Implement - Activities (5 - 12 year olds)

To be effective strikers, it is helpful for children to imagine the implement as an extension of their own arms.

Airborne – Use a rolled up newspaper to keep a balloon in the air

Newspaper Golf – Spread some sheets of newspaper on the ground in front of the striker. Use a marker to award different points to each of the pieces. Pitcher kneels down about 1 metre from striker and gently throws the balloon up for the striker to hit. Striker gets the points their balloon lands on. Take 10 shots each.

Smash – hit your balloon with newspaper bat for distance. 5 shots each to see who goes furthest.

Belt the bomber – throw paper aeroplanes at the striker who bats them away with their rolled up newspaper bat.

Target Ball – Use a newspaper bat and newspaper balls.

Mark three circles touching each other on the ground at the base of a wall. Allocate points for each of these circles, say 10 for the middle and 5 for each of the outside circles. Pitcher throws the ball underarm for the striker who attempts to hit it to the wall. Striker gets the points that the ball lands in.

Sock Hockey – Use newspaper bats and a rolled up pair of socks for a ball. Mark out small field and goals with cushions and shoes.

Stocking Ball – put a tennis ball in the end of an old stocking and tie other end off to clothline, pergola etc. How many successive strikes can you get?

Fetch – partners face each other each with some type of bat and a batting tee (witches hats are good). Attempt to hit the ball to your partner who fields it and hits it back.

Activity ideas taken from: www.healthpromotion.com.au/Documents/FMS/Fun_Activities@home_to_practise_FMS.pdf

Discovering Striking

- When discovering striking with an implement, begin by exploring with short implements such as padder or table tennis bats and use slow moving objects such as balloon and a variety of small balls or bean bags. Page 254 Developing FMS manual.
- **Racquet Relays** using a variety of racquets and implements is another great way of practising our striking skills. See page 255 Developing FMS manual.
- **Spot On** – striking for accuracy. Have a batter hit the ball of a tee and aim for one of 3 fielders scattered close by. Batter scores a point for every catch a fielder makes. See page 260 Developing FMS manual.