

The Lycra Tube

Here are a few activities that you can do with a Lycra Tube.

LEAN ON IT - Have participants stand inside the Lycra Tube facing the center. Slowly back up until the Lycra Tube is completely stretched tight. At this point, participants can lean outward slightly and feel the support of the Lycra Tube.

SIT IN IT - Beginning with a moderately stretched Lycra Tube, have all participants sit on the Lycra Tube, with their legs extended towards the center of the circle, and the top of the Lycra Tube above the shoulders of each participant. Each participant should now be able to lean backwards and be fully supported by the tube. This is a great position for processing. You can even create a “wave” motion by having a single participant lean backwards and then forward, followed by the person to their right, passing a wave around the circle.

THE GIANT ROLL - This activity is the same as Around the World except that all participants roll at the same time and in the same direction. Encourage participants to keep adequate space between themselves to minimize contact during this activity.



ROUND UP CIRCLE - With the Lycra Tube well stretched around the group, have participants hold the top of the tube, and pull the lycra to the top of their shoulders. From this position, the group can now skip sideways to the left and the right. This is a useful activity for teaching observation and empathy for other participants. By watching others in the group, the speed of the movement can be tailored to the abilities of the group. Encourage participants to move only as quickly as other members of the group are comfortable with.

AROUND THE WORLD or ROCK AND ROLL - With the group standing inside a very limp Lycra Tube, have a single participant back up, stretching the Lycra Tube in the process. This participant will now roll to the right completely around the inside perimeter of the Lycra Tube, until they reach their original starting position. The next person to the right then begins their journey. Encourage participants to stand near the center of the tube, so that they do not contact the person rolling around the perimeter. This activity has been known to make some participants dizzy. Proceed with caution, and encourage participants to stay in control during their journey around the tube.

4x4 CROSS OVER - No question about it, this is “the activity” to do in a Lycra Tube. It is also the most energetic activity, and one that requires some appropriate safety considerations.

Begin with four participants of nearly the same weight in the Lycra Tube, equally spaced around the perimeter. Assign two opposite participants to be partners for Group 1, and the other two opposite participants to be partners for Group 2.

Safety tip: Proceed through these next few steps at a walking pace, before attempting these same movements at a faster pace. Also, ask participants to hold up their right hands about shoulder high, during each passing event. This simple reminder really helps participants remember on which side they are to pass their partner. Equal weight participants are encouraged, because this activity has been known to launch some lightweight participants that were joined by heavyweights.

Begin by asking Group 1 partners to back up. As they do, they pull the Lycra Tube tighter. The Group 2 partners now walk forward, almost touching right hands, changing places with their partner, and then backing up. As Group 2 partners back up, Group 1 partners come forward, almost touching right hands, changing places with their partners, and begin backing up. Walk this section of the activity at least four times before speeding up the cross overs. This cross over process continues indefinitely. As each group backs up, the Lycra Tube gives a firm push forward to the other group. The harder each group backs up, the stronger the push forward for the other group.

This particular activity requires an awareness of other group members, so that all participants are able to stay in control at all times. It is critical that group partners remember on which side to cross with their partners.

POPCORN - Here is an activity for small children. With three or four adults acting as fence posts, the Lycra Tube is fully stretched. Children now inside the Lycra Tube are said to be kernels of pop corn inside a frying pan. As the temperature warms up, the kernels begin to pop, and the popcorn bounces around the inside of the Lycra Tube. Explain to participants that they should bounce off the Lycra Tube, not other children!

THE RACETRACK – Begin with about 6 participants standing back-to-back inside the lycra tube, holding the top edge. Next, have 8-12 additional participants on the outside pull the bottom edge outward, forming a giant racetrack. You can race stuffed animals around the track, or use two different colored balls. Bounce the blue ball to the left while bouncing the red ball to the right, around the racetrack for X number of laps.

PROCESS IN IT - The Lycra Tube can be a great place for processing and debriefing after another challenge activity.

INSTANT SHADE - If it happens to be a sunny day, and there are few trees in sight, the Lycra Tube can be used to provide shade for the group. Just stretch the Lycra Tube into a large circle, and lift the top of the Lycra Tube over the heads of all participants by about 24 inches (610 mm). The stretch within the Lycra Tube will create a canopy that blocks the sun.

SCAVENGER HUNTS - Pile the entire group into a Lycra Tube and send them off on a scavenger hunt. They'll need to stay inside the Lycra Tube for the whole event. If they stop for a drink of water, they'll need to work together.

FACE IT - Have three participants stretch the Lycra Tube into a large triangle. With all remaining participants, except one, facing one of the sides of the triangle. From the center of the Lycra Tube, the remaining "unknown" person then presses only their face against the Lycra Tube, and the members of the group outside the Lycra Tube attempt to recognize this person, only by their facial imprint. When guessed correctly, this participant joins the outside group, now standing with eyes closed, and taps the next person to participate.

GET SOME PRIVACY - Sometimes when you are leading a single group in a large area with many other groups nearby, it can be helpful to use the Lycra Tube to block out some of the surroundings that can distract the group. The Lycra Tube won't block much sound, but it can be used as a visual barrier, and allow the group to focus on the challenge confronting them, rather than the distractions come from all directions.

Important Points

Always keep the Lycra Tube above the shoulders and below the hips of all participants. Sometimes tubes have a tendency to bunch up, looking more like a rubber rope than a wide rubber band. If this happens, stop the activity and resume again with the Lycra Tube spread fully open.

Lycra Tube activities are best supervised at all times. You shouldn't leave a Lycra Tube lying around for unsupervised play any more than you would a climbing rope or similar piece of challenge equipment. It is a useful tool in the hands of a skilled facilitator, but can be a major risk if left for unsupervised activities.

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