

FAI Summit 2021

How To Add FUN To Your Workouts!

Balloons

- **Wiggler**

Wiggle the knot of the balloon and see how many different places you can move the balloon. (Behind your head, leaning way out to the side, between your legs, etc.). Do the same thing holding the balloon in your non-dominant hand.

For even more fun, do this with two balloons, and see how vigorously and quickly they can whack the balloons together. You can vary this by asking them to wiggle the balloons up/down, side/side, or in a clockwise or counterclockwise circle. Fun and challenging with two balloons!

- **Ski Moguls**

Sitting with the balloon between your knees, hop legs from side to side like you are skiing moguls. Play around with doing this with feet off the ground, or touching the feet on the floor each time you change direction.

Or, holding the balloon between your knees, widen your stance and try to catch the balloon before it hits the floor.

- **Stand and Catch It!**

Sit, holding a balloon; toss it up; stand to catch it; sit back down. Or, see if they can toss up the balloon, stand up and then bat it back and forth between their hands while they sit down.

- **Tap It!**

(This activity causes your client's head to move up and down, which activates their vestibular (inner ear) system. To be safe, have your client start this activity while sitting. If they are very balanced and advanced, progress to standing.) Have the client tap the balloon gently with the body part that you call out until you call out a new body part. For example: right hand, left hand, right thigh, head, etc.

Feel free to tweak these "rules" to suit your client.

Brain Games

These games involve a bit of thinking. It's important to emphasize to your client that the point of these drills is *not to try to do them perfectly, and that mistakes are to be expected and celebrated*. I always say that my mistakes are just another chance to laugh! This attitude will free up your client to enjoy these brain games, rather than stress about errors. It's supposed to be fun, right?

Antonyms

While moving or practicing their balance, have them say the antonym of the word I say. "Cold – HOT!"

Spelling Backwards

Spell the color of the shirt you are wearing, then spell it backwards. You can spell the day of the week, their favorite relative's name, what they ate for breakfast, etc. Change it up each session.

Lists

- Customize lists to each client, depending on what they are interested in. Ask them to name things from one of these categories while they are working out to add a fun cognitive challenge. (Many of my clients hate math, so they despise having to do the standard "count backwards from 100 by 7"). I use these custom-made categories with them to keep things entertaining.
- Flowers
- Ice cream flavors
- Cars (Ford, Toyota)
- Movie stars
- Red foods
- European countries
- Movies
- Books
- Animals that start with the letter A
- Female names
- Names that start w/ A
- Things that are alive
- African animals
- TV shows

- Circular things
- Magazines
- Fast things
- Sports
- Alphabet - skip one or two letters
- Alphabet – backwards (I find this quite challenging!)
- Desserts
- States

Clapping Game

While marching in place, count out loud 1-8 with your client. Clap on two different beats: “clap on 3 and 7 while counting up,” and master this together. Next, count down 8-1 out loud. Clap on two other beats while counting down: “clap on 6 and 4 while counting down.” Combine counting up and down with the claps.

Partner Memory Game

Another memory game is assigning different moves:

Start a few steps away from the screen.

Walk a few steps toward the screen and:

Do one move at a time, building the sequence as the client becomes able to remember the pattern. (Thanks to Mindy Mylrea for this gem!)

- Shake Right, then Left hands
- High five
- Hip bump
- Shimmy
- Walk “cool”
- Elbow swing (you’ll have to fake this one for now)
- Add any other fun move
- **Seated Fast Feet**
- Sitting, client does fast feet when you say “Hurry!” and shoots arms to upper corners and plants feet wide when you say “Yay!”
- To progress, say “one” instead of “Hurry,” and “Two” instead of “Yay.” Next, just hold up one or two fingers for visual instead of verbal cues.
- **Seated Reaction Drill**
- Say a type of a car, the clients clap their feet together once (or whatever movement you choose).
- Car = clap feet once

- Fruit = clap hands twice
- Color = 2 fast punches
- If this is too easy, try building a sequence

Cueless

Either you or your client assign an arm movement to a single step touch. For example, biceps curls arms w/ single step touch. Next, assign a different arm movement with a double step touch like "flye arms," and finally, assign another new arm movement to four lateral step touches.

Do the arm movements/step touches with your client as you cue them, but gradually reduce the number or repetitions. Let them know that they have to memorize the arm movements.

Next, tell them how many step touches to do while not cueing the arm movements, and you only do the footwork but keep your arms at your sides. Next, hold up your fingers instead of verbally stating how many step touches to do.

Finally, see if they can do the step touches and the arm movements while you stay stationary and only cue the number of steps either verbally or with a show of your fingers.

Bouncy Ball

(An inexpensive playground ball works well.)

Cardio Bounces

Bounce/dribble the ball as quickly as possible while doing fast feet. Or, bounce the ball while doing out/out in/in feet.

Thigh bounces

March slowly, bouncing the ball off of alternate thighs each step.

Bouncing Rhythms

- 2 slow, 4 fast bounces
- Right bounce, left bounce, two bounces on the right
- Two slow bounces, two fast bounces, one slow (slow, slow, quick/quick slow)
- Double step touch – two bounces going R, 3 bounces going L

Bounce Patterns

Client stands in the middle of a circle of colored post-it notes, or behind a line of colored post-it notes.

Cue the client to bounce the ball on each color. When successful at this, call out a sequence of colors.

If they only have one color of post-it notes, assign a number to each note, and have them slam or bounce in the sequence you call out.

Good Catch!

Move feet wide/narrow (like a jumping jack) but let go of ball in front of body in midair and try to catch it before it hits the floor. This can also be done with a scarf or dishtowel.

Medicine Ball

(These drills can also be done without a medicine ball.)

Step Touch/Hold

Three step touches or leaps; hold/squat/or balance on the third.

Toss up, or toss hand to hand, w/ step touches, hold ball down in outside hand on the "hold," or do a chop toward the outside knee on the "hold."

Medicine Ball Pattern

Push ball to right corner, center, left corner, center, up, down, straight out in front of chest (2x) while marching or fast feet.

Or, push to the right corner 2x, left corner 2x, up, down, center 2x.

Or have your client make up a pattern!

Scarves, Bean Bags, or Napkins

- Toss up a scarf- how many times can you clap before you catch it
- Hold a scarf in one hand with arm extended straight above head level, then release scarf and catch it with the same hand.
- Focus eyes on a focal point, toss/catch scarf while looking at focal point
- Toss/catch with eyes closed!
- Place bean bag on top of foot, then swing bean bag upward from your foot and catch it. Try this sitting first. Careful when standing!

"Just for Fun" Challenges

“How High Can You_____”

- Squat in a wide stance, bringing a ball between the knees (like a kettlebell swing) and then stand and throw the ball up as high as possible.
- Toss up a scarf or napkin and catch it – fun with two at a time!

“How Many Times Can You _____” in 30 Seconds:

- Toss a napkin on to a chair, retrieve and do again, starting a few feet from the chair (easy version.)
- Toss a med ball or scarf on to the floor, retrieve it and do it again, starting a few feet from the target on the floor you are throwing to. (More challenging version.)
- Sit to stand while catching a ball that you toss up each time.
- Sit to stand w/ two different back- to- back chairs.
- *Safely* walk in a figure 8 around two chairs (or cones or some marker). You can sit in each chair each time, or just walk in the figure 8.
- Toss/catch 1 or 2 scarves, or drop/catch a scarf.

Record their “personal best,” and repeat the next week to celebrate progress.

“How Fast Can You_____”

- Pick up 6 coins from the floor (or the seat of a chair if the floor is too challenging) one at a time. You could also use scarves or washcloths.
- Slam a ball on two different dots (If slamming, be careful of the rebounding ball.)
This can also be a “how many times can you in 30 seconds” game.
- Tap alternate feet on a stationary medicine ball on the ground.

“How Hard Can You_____”

- Throw a ball against a wall.
- Slam, or rainbow slam a sandbell or ball on the floor

Have FUN!

Sue

I would love to hear from you!

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