Making Sense of Mini Games
Sense Active gives people a chance to express themselves, enjoy physical activities and socialise. We believe that everyone has the right to enjoy sports and activities, and that these are vital for living full, rich and engaged lives.

The purpose
This resource is designed to give you suitable games and activities that can be enjoyed with little or no equipment or in any sized space, helping people to be more active.

Who is it for?
It has been compiled for people of all ages with complex disabilities and for people supporting them.

The benefits
Regular exercise is important to help maintain a healthy lifestyle. For people living with complex disabilities it can provide a number of benefits including:
- Making new friends
- Weight loss
- Keeping fit
- Improving communication
- Learning new skills
Top tips

- Participants are more likely to engage in games if their support workers are taking part and engaged as well.
- Make things more sensory e.g. by adding noise, texture or smell.
- Including time at the start of each session for individuals to feel the equipment and understand the area can help.
- Supporting a participant to actively take part in a way which is appropriate for them.
- As with all sport and physical activity sessions, make sure you have completed a risk assessment of the equipment and space to make sure it is safe to use.

Get creative with the equipment you use, some ideas for this are on page 22.

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The “Outcomes” column outlines some of the skills participants will develop by taking part in these activities. This is not an exhaustive list - participants will be working on many different skills.

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</table>
**Balloon keep up**

**Equipment needed**
- Inflated balloons

**Set up**
- Find a clear space for the activity

**How to play**
- Each participant must try to keep their balloon off the floor for as long as possible by tapping it up in the air
- For those finding it easy try working as a group or using multiple balloons
- If you are supporting the participant, you can join in with a team game or maybe just offer support to those who need it

**Make it sensory**
- Use different colour or shape balloons – bright colours are great
- Add a very small amount of rice to each balloon before blowing up to help make a sound

**Making it harder/easier**
- Use multiple balloons or add some rice to them to make them fall quicker

**Encourage participants to stretch up and reach the balloon**

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**Bowling**

**Equipment needed**
- Ball
- Skittles

**Set up**
- Set out the skittles as below with participants facing the skittles when it is their turn

**How to play**
- Participants take it in turns to roll the ball at the skittles
- The number of skittles knocked down is the number of points they get
- Participants get two tries each before the end of their turn and the skittles are reset
- Encourage the participant to grip the ball where possible

**Make it sensory**
- Try using different coloured skittles and balls. Consider the colour of the background you are aiming at - does it contrast with the skittles?
- Use different sounds when skittles are knocked over

**Making it harder/easier**
- Use a ramp to help roll the ball off

**Why not encourage the participants to keep score?**

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Bubble POP!

**Equipment needed**
- Pots of bubbles

**Set up**
- Find a clear space for the activity

**How to play**
- Blow the bubbles near the participant and encourage them to reach out and pop as many as possible
- How many can they pop in a certain time?
- Make sure to blow the bubbles near the participant and not directly at them

**Make it sensory**
- Add some music in the background or a sound

If you have a bubble machine how about using that instead?

**Making it harder/easier**
- Blow the bubbles further away or closer
- Can you encourage participants to blow bubbles to each other?

Cricket

**Equipment needed**
- Two Wickets e.g. cones or chairs
- Ball

**Set up**
- Two wickets set about 5-6m apart
- Participants acting as fielders positioned round the outside of the area
- The participant acting as the batter stands in front of one wicket with all fielders facing the same wicket

**How to play**
- The batter bats by pushing or throwing the ball
- As soon as the ball is released, the batter moves around wicket one then wicket two as many times as possible to collect “runs”
- The fielders must try to hit the first wicket to get the participant out

**Make it sensory**
- Use bright colours for the wicket and the ball
- Have a sound for each time a run is scored

**Making it harder/easier**
- Use bigger or smaller balls.

Make sure there is enough space between the fielders and the participant to move around
Disco Time

**How to play**
- Put on some upbeat music and get dancing
- You could encourage participants to create their own dance moves or teach each other a dance move
- For inspiration you could use animal movements, letters of the alphabet or using different parts of the body

**Equipment needed**
- Music
- Dimmed lights
- Speaker (if needed)

**Set up**
- Prepare an upbeat music playlist you can dance to

**Make it sensory**
- Use different lights, glow sticks and bright colours to make the activity more sensory

**Making it harder/easier**
- Participants could just use a single dance movement throughout the activity. To make it more challenging, encourage them to come up with a routine with others

Drumming

**How to play**
- Copycat drumming – the leader plays a certain rhythm on their drum, and the participants then copy this on theirs
- Individual drumming – participants come up with their own drumming rhythm, or you can put on some music for them to drum along to

**Equipment needed**
- Drums and drum sticks
- Get creative - e.g. use empty round boxes of chocolates, chairs, sports balls or upturned saucepans/bins

**Set up**
- Have drums and drumsticks at the ready

**Make it sensory**
- Using different equipment as drums will give a different sensation and sound when hitting it. Try experimenting with different objects

**Making it harder/easier**
- You may want to support a participant by holding the drum in a certain position for them. Others may prefer to hold their drum independently

**Encourage the participants to really stretch when hitting their drum**
Golf

Equipment needed
- Ball
- Club/bat if wanted
- Targets e.g. markers or buckets

Set up
- Set up a number of targets around the area

If you have a big enough space, players can continue their turn on target 2 whilst others are still finishing target 1

How to play
- Participants take it in turns to aim for target 1 (rolling, throwing or hitting the ball)
  Once they hit the target, they then start just in front of target 1 and aim for target 2
- Participants try to get to the end of the course in the fewest turns
- Encourage the participant to do this independently and really stretch to push/throw/hit the ball away

Making it harder/easier
- Put the targets closer or further away
- Use a ramp to push the ball down or throw the ball

Make it sensory
- Make a noise for when the ball hits the target
- Make the target clear using lights or bright colours

Parachute Ball Roll

Equipment needed
- Small balls
- Parachute

Set up
- Everyone stands around the parachute and pulls it out tightly at waist level

Make it sensory
- Try a ball with bells in it to make noise

How to play
- Participants take it in turns to roll a ball towards the middle of the parachute to try to get it through the hole in the middle
- Other participants can help by lifting their part of the parachute to encourage the ball into the hole
- Celebrate together when you get the ball in the middle of the parachute
- If you don’t have a parachute you could try to keep the ball balanced for as long as possible

Making it harder/easier
- Add in more balls

If you don’t have a parachute use a bed sheet or blanket

Making it harder/easier
- Small balls
- Parachute

Set up
- Everyone stands around the parachute and pulls it out tightly at waist level

Make it sensory
- Try a ball with bells in it to make noise

How to play
- Participants take it in turns to roll a ball towards the middle of the parachute to try to get it through the hole in the middle
- Other participants can help by lifting their part of the parachute to encourage the ball into the hole
- Celebrate together when you get the ball in the middle of the parachute
- If you don’t have a parachute you could try to keep the ball balanced for as long as possible
Parachute Run

**Equipment needed**
- Parachute

**Set up**
- Everyone stands around the parachute and pulls it out tightly at waist level

**How to play**
- Participants lift the parachute above their heads and back down again
- As they lift the parachute up, the leader calls out a name and those participants go under the parachute to the other side before it comes down

**Make it sensory**
- Play a sound once the participant has got out the other side without being caught by the parachute

**Making it harder/easier**
- Hold the parachute up for longer or bring it down more quickly depending on how fast the participants are moving
- Call multiple names out at once

**Rather than names try giving other commands - e.g. everyone with white shoes**

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Parachute Wave

**Equipment needed**
- Parachute
- Ball (if required)

**Set up**
- Everyone stands around the parachute and pulls it out tightly at waist level

**How to play**
- One participant puts their hands up, still holding onto the parachute and the participant next to them does the same to create a Mexican wave
- Send this wave around the circle
- Try to add in some balls - how many can you keep on the parachute before balls start to fall off?

**Make it sensory**
- Try using balls with bells in and explore their texture and sound before placing them on the parachute

**Could you try moving multiple balls moving around on the parachute?**

**Making it harder/easier**
- Do not use any balls or try different sized balls
**Shot Ball**

**Equipment needed**
- Ball
- Markers (2 colours) and a starting marker
- Benches as bumpers (if needed)

**Set up**
- Set up one marker where you want to start the game from
- Place benches down the sides of the area if you want bumpers (like a bowling alley)
- Put participants into 2 teams

**Why not use fun items such as rubber ducks as markers for each team?**

**How to play**
- From the same starting position, participants take it in turns to push or throw the ball as far as they can
- Where the ball eventually stops, put a marker at that point (make sure it matches the team colour)
- Once everyone has had a go, add the scores up for each team, the nearest marker scores 1 point, the next scores 2 etc

**Making it harder/easier**
- Use bigger or smaller balls
- After each ball stops, put an item on top of the marker – if it gets knocked off by the next participant that marker is taken out of the game

**Making it sensory**
- Try using a ball with bells in it or balls with different textures

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**Sitting Volleyball**

**Equipment needed**
- Balls (beach balls are great)
- Net (or alternative)

**Set up**
- Set up a low net
- One team on each side

**How to play**
- One team starts with the ball. The participants must try to hit the ball back and forth over the net using any part of the body. You could add some competition - if a team drops a ball, the other team gets a point
- Encourage participants to stretch up for the ball and shuffle across the space

**Making it harder/easier**
- Use lighter or heavier balls
- Move the teams closer or further away from the net
- Change the height of the net

**Make it sensory**
- Use different colour balls, bright colours are great
- Use balls with different textures or try balloons

**If you have lots of people involved consider using multiple balls to keep everyone engaged**
**Skittles**

**Equipment needed**
- Ball
- Skittles with numbers on them or use alternative objects and number them

**Set up**
- Scatter the skittles around in a small area
- Participants must face this area with the ball, divided into 2 teams

**How to play**
- Participants from each team take it in turns to push the ball off their laps towards the skittles
- As the skittles are knocked down, they are replaced where they fall
- The number on the skittle that is knocked down is the number of points for that turn
- The team with the highest score is the winner

**Try using different types of balls to roll at the skittles**

**Make it harder/easier**
- Use bigger or smaller balls
- Have the skittles starting closer together or further apart
- Use benches as bumpers

**Make it sensory**
- Use a ball with bells in it or of a different texture
- Make the targets stand out with bright colours
- Make a noise when the targets are hit

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**Splat**

**Equipment needed**
- Large ball
- Targets (get creative with your targets – they must be able to fall over)
- Benches (for bumpers)

**Set up**
- Set up the targets as shown in the diagram below with benches to act as bumpers
- Targets could be anything that can easily be pushed over

**How to play**
- Participants from each team take it in turns to push the ball off their laps or roll a ball towards the target
- The number on the target is the number of points gained when hit
- If the target falls flat then shout “splat” and an extra point is given
- The team scores add up until the team reaches 25 points exactly
- Encourage participants to push the ball off or roll the ball independently

**Encourage the participant to push the ball independently to help with their strength and flexibility**

**Making it harder/easier**
- Use bigger or smaller balls
- Participant moves closer to the targets or further away

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Target Ball

Equipment needed
- 4 small balls each
- Target mat – you can make your own like a bullseye
- Ramp (if needed)

Set up
- Set out the target mat and have all participants line up facing the target

Make it sensory
- Put a large object (e.g. a cone) in the middle so it is clear where the target is – you could wrap it in flashing lights and make it brightly coloured
- Somebody could clap above the middle of the target for those who are visually impaired

How to play
- Participants take it in turns to roll their team’s colour ball at the target with the aim of trying to get it to stop in the middle of the target zone
- The ball that is closest to the middle of the target wins
- If you are supporting the participant, you could hold the ramp towards the target

Consider the background so that the target can be seen clearly

Making it harder/easier
- Use a ramp to help roll the ball off

Equipment needed
- 4 small balls each
- Target mat – you can make your own like a bullseye
- Ramp (if needed)
To make things easier, here is a list of the equipment needed for all the games, where you can buy it and everyday objects that you can use too!

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<tr>
<th>Equipment</th>
<th>Where can you buy it?</th>
<th>Alternatives</th>
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<td>Balloons</td>
<td>Most supermarkets, toy stores or party stores</td>
<td>Chairs, marker cones</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cricket wickets</td>
<td>Sports stores</td>
<td>Chairs, marker cones</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drums</td>
<td>Music stores</td>
<td>Saucepans, old chocolate tins, upturned bins, sports balls, chairs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drumsticks</td>
<td>Music stores</td>
<td>Sticks, pens</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Golf club/bat</td>
<td>Sports stores</td>
<td>Some people may need a lighter plastic club or they could use a plastic cricket/softball bat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Large ball</td>
<td>Jingling balls are great for this</td>
<td>Large gym ball, basketball, football</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Markers</td>
<td>Sports stores</td>
<td>Get creative - you could use pieces of paper or rubber ducks as markers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Net</td>
<td>Sports stores</td>
<td>A piece of string or a blanket/bedsheet tied between 2 chairs or a short barrier works well</td>
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<td>Parachute</td>
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<td>Try a bed sheet or blanket instead</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pot of bubbles</td>
<td>Most supermarkets, toy stores or party stores</td>
<td>Bottles filled with water, sand or rice work just as well</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skittles</td>
<td>Most supermarkets, toy stores and sports stores</td>
<td>Bottles filled with water, sand or rice work just as well</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Splat Targets</td>
<td>Easels work really well for this. You can get them from most craft stores</td>
<td>Instead of easels why not try making your own out of old cardboard boxes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Target mat</td>
<td>Online sports stores</td>
<td>Try creating your own target mat using a bed sheet or some paper</td>
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</table>
We’d love to hear what you think of our games. Have you adapted them in any way to meet the needs of your participants, or have you come up with any new versions? Maybe some of the participants you work with have seen improvements in their health, skills or confidence levels too? We’d love to hear your stories, please let us know by emailing sense.active@sense.org.uk, and we’ll be in touch to find out more. You can also stay connected through Twitter by tagging @Sensecharity and including #SenseActive.

If you have enjoyed these games you can find more sport and physical activity sessions delivered by Sense Active at www.sense.org.uk/sport.

If you, or someone you know, require this information in a different format, please contact Sense Information and Advice - contact details below.

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