

Agility

Agility is the ability to change direction quickly and control the movement of the whole body. It is important that players develop the ability to move in a variety of directions, leading off both left and right feet.

Agility Exercises/Activities

1. **Travelling** – players move around the playing area in different directions. Call different movement activities for players to perform as they move around (e.g. high knees, flick heels, move sideways, skipping, hopping, on knees).
1. **Ship, Sea, Shore** – mark out 3 areas and assign a name to each (i.e. ship, sea, shore). Coach calls a specific area and players must run to that area. Change the way that children must travel from one area to the next (e.g. hop, skip, jump). Also, if enough balls are available, one may be given to each child in order to get them accustomed to running with the ball.
Tip: competition may be introduced by telling last child to reach an area to stand out, however ensure this is not for an extended period and even give that child an activity to do while he waits (e.g. bounce a ball, cheer for other children etc.)
2. **Dodgems** – place cones/markers on ground in random order around playing area. Each player has a coloured marker and pretends it's a steering wheel. The players travel around the playing area pretending to drive whilst avoiding the markers and the other players. Children move around when the coach shouts 'GREEN' and stop when coach shouts 'RED'.
Tip: encourage players to make a 'beeping' noise as they approach an obstacle.
3. **Dodge the Dome** - place cones/markers on ground in random order around playing area. As players approach a marker they must side step to avoid it. Encourage the movement off both feet. Start at walking pace and steadily increase.
4. **Back-to-Back** – players move around the playing area while avoiding other players. On the whistle, they pair off quickly and stand back to back. Players must find a different partner each time.
5. **Closing space** - players move around the playing area in different directions. Coach reduces the size of the playing area throughout by acting as a perimeter that the children may not pass.
6. **Musical Chairs** - place cones/markers on ground in random order around playing area (1 for every child). Players move around the playing area while avoiding other players. On the whistle, players must find a marker to stand at

in order to stay in the game. One marker is removed before each round until one player remains.

7. **Fox and Hen** – one player is designated the ‘fox’. The ‘fox’ chases the other players (the ‘hens’) around the playing area. When a ‘hen’ is tagged he becomes the new ‘fox’. The hens are safe when standing at the round markers.
8. **Touch the Dome** – place different coloured markers around the playing area. Instruct players to do different activities (e.g. touch 3 markers of same colour in succession, 3 different colours in succession, call a colour that they must all stand at).
9. **Bridges & Rivers** – players work in pairs, with one designated the ‘bridge’ and the other the ‘river’. Players run round the playing area and on the whistle the ‘bridges’ balance on their hands and feet and the ‘rivers’ crawl under. Switch ‘bridges’ to ‘rivers’ after a couple of turns.
10. **Numbers & Shapes** - players move around the playing area and on the coaches call they make certain shapes with the other players (e.g. square, triangle). Alternatively, coach calls a certain number and players must get into groups of that number as quickly as they can.
11. **Statues** - players move around the playing area in different directions. Call different movement activities for players to perform as they move around (e.g. high knees, flick heels, move sideways, skipping, hopping, on knees). On the whistle, players must freeze like a statue until the coach instructs to move again. Encourage players to balance on 1 leg if whistle is blown if when they are hopping. Make it more fun by instructing the players to try not even to blink!
12. **Shadows** – designate one player as the ‘leader’ and the other as the ‘shadow’. The shadow must imitate the movements of the leader. Switch roles after one/two minutes. Start off with the players facing each other and then let one follow the other performing whatever movements the leader chooses to do.
Tip : encourage children to come up with the most unusual and elaborate things they can think of.
13. **Minefield** - place cones/markers (‘mines’) on ground in random order around a square playing area. Divide the players into 4 groups, 1 at each side of the playing area. Players must dodge the ‘mines’ as they move from one side of the square to the other. Initially only one team goes at a time, gradually increasing the number of teams going at the same time.
Tip: if there are leaves on the ground during autumn/winter instruct the players to move from one side to the other without touching a leaf (no need to put down markers).
14. **Zig-Zag Slalom Run** – place poles/cones approx 3 metres apart. Instruct the players to zig-zag through the obstacles and back to the group. Advance by telling players to run sideways, backwards etc. through the obstacles.
Tip: set up two courses side by side and have relays between two team.

15. Switch – players are divide into 2 teams (e.g. blue and red). There are blue and red cones scattered around playing area. On the whistle both teams run and place sliotars on their own colour cones. They can steal from opponents cones. Whichever team has most balls on their colour when whistle blows wins.

Balance

Balance is the ability to maintain a stable orientation in relation to your environment. Developing good balance is vital in Gaelic games, as players are often required to perform skills while off balance or while balanced on one foot.

Balance Exercises/Activities

1. **Copy Cat** – players copy the coach as he/she guides them through a series of mobilisation movements (e.g. raise arms, stand on one foot, jump from side to side).
2. **Leaning Tower** – players sway or lean in different directions while in a standing position. Lean as far in all directions while still maintaining balance. Advance by raising arms out to side, standing on one leg and closing eyes.
3. **Animal Walk** – Children are lined up at one side of playing area. Coach stands at other side and calls a certain animal (e.g. dog, limping dog, snake, chicken, crab, frog, monkey etc.). Players must walk out to coach and back to start like that animal.
Tip: increase enjoyment by instructing players to make the noise of the animal as they move.
4. **The Postage Stamp** – one player lies on back pretending to be stuck to the floor. Their partner attempts to lift each individual limb off the ground. Once a limb has been lifted it cannot be replaced. Once all limbs are lifted the players switch roles.
5. **Walk the Line** – a skipping rope is laid out in front of a line of players. First layer must walk along rope from one end to the other without touching

ground. Make it harder by telling players to move across the rope in different ways (e.g. sideways, backwards etc.).

Tip: set up two courses side by side and have relays between two teams.

6. **Body Balance** – start with all players sitting on ground with legs out in front of them. On the call, players must raise their hips upwards so only their hands and heels are touching the ground. Raise each leg alternatively off the ground. Challenge the players by instructing them to raise both feet off the ground momentarily.
7. **Change shape** – players lie face down on ground. Instruct them to raise arms and legs individually, then together on opposite sides, then together on the same side. Advance by moving players into press up position. Instruct players to move feet from side to side while continuing to balance on the hands. Advance by instructing the players to raise one leg off the ground.
8. **Spacehopper Relays** – divide children into 2/3 groups, each one starting behind a separate cone. First person in the group sits on spacehopper. On the whistle, he bounces out around a cone and back to the group where the next person goes. Vary by instructing all groups to bounce out around the same cone to challenge the children to deal with moving objects around them and develop good balance and coordination skills.

Coordination

Coordination refers to the ability to move different body parts simultaneously or in sequence in order to perform a specific task. Gaelic games require a good sense of coordination, as players are required to perform skills that require good hand-eye coordination, foot-eye coordination and hand-foot coordination at various stages.

Coordination Exercises/Activities

1. **Circle Time** – sit players in a circle (coach also sits in circle). Coach guides players through series of activities that everyone must do together (e.g. lie on tummy with hands in centre of circle, slap hands and/or feet off ground, pretend to fly, pretend to swim etc.).
2. **Body Parts** – players work in pairs. On a signal from coach, players attempt to touch using as many different body parts as they can think of or that the coach instructs (e.g. elbows, knees, toes etc.).
3. **Log Roll** – players roll along ground with hands and feet extended. Progress to perform the roll while attempting to keep arms and feet off the ground.
4. **Body Balance** – players begin on hands and feet. Coach instructs them to lift right arm, left arm, right leg, left leg off floor while maintaining balance. Advance by instructing players to lift opposite arm and leg off ground at same time. Finally, lift arm and leg from same side off the ground at same time (depending on coordination levels of the group).

5. **Stepping Stones** - place cones/markers on ground in random order around playing area. Players must move from one to the other without touching the ground using only one step or jump. Challenge players to get from one side to the other without touching the ground. Progress by only allowing players to touch certain coloured markers.
6. **Turn the Cap** - place cones/markers on ground in random order around playing area. Players run around area turning over the markers. To add new dimension, pick 2 teams and one must ensure all cones are right way up as the other team tries to turn all cones upside down.
7. **Ladder activities** – lay ladder down in front of group. Get players moving through ladders in different ways (e.g. 1 foot in each space, 2 feet in each space, hop scotch, side ways, hopping). After completing the ladder the player must run out around cone and back to tag the next person in the group to go. Add in other obstacles such as agility poles or hurdles to advance the course.
Tip: set up two courses side by side and have relays between two teams.
8. **Volleyball Push** – each player has a ball. In a stationary position, push the ball overhead using fingertips. Attempt to keep ball up as long as possible without catching it. Challenge players to see how many they can get or for how long they can go before they drop it.
Tip: if players are struggling to perform the exercise with a football use a balloon.
9. **Popeye** – each child has a balloon. In a stationary position, children must keep balloon off the ground by batting it up in the air using only one hand. Advance by instructing players to move around the playing area as they do it.
10. **360 Spin** – each child has a football. On the call they must throw the ball into the air, perform a 360 degree spin and catch it before it hits the ground. Challenge players by asking them to count how many they can get in a row without dropping it, or seeing how many they can do in a minute.
Tip: if children are unable to do it with a ball, let them try it with a balloon.
11. **Ladders & Balls** – set up ladders side by side (approx 3 yards apart). Get children moving through ladders in pairs throwing ball back and forth between them. Challenge players by asking them to move through ladders in different ways and also by seeing how many throws they get in before they reach the end of the ladders.
12. **Swap Shop** – place a number of markers randomly around the playing area and place a football on half of them. Children must run around playing area picking the ball up off a marker and replacing it at another. Challenge players by seeing how many they can get in one minute, then further challenge them to try to beat that score the next time.

13. **Relays** – separate players into groups with approx 4 children per group. First player has a ball and, on the whistle, runs out with ball performing different activities with the ball (e.g. dribble along ground, hold high above head, bat ball with hand along the ground with hands etc.). player runs out around a cone and back to end of group where he rolls ball under team mates' legs to next person in the group who then goes.

Tip: encourage children to cheer for team members.

Throwing, Catching & Passing

Throwing skills form the basis for many of the skills of Gaelic games. Throwing involves hand-eye coordination and should be developed using a variety of balls and beanbags, incorporating different sizes and weights and throwing over various distances.

Catching and passing skills are integral to Gaelic games. The ability to catch the ball to take possession and pass the ball to release possession in a variety of different situations is vital to the development of players. It's important to develop catching and passing skills using a variety of balls and beanbags, incorporating different sizes and weights.

Throwing, Catching & Passing Exercises/Activities

1. **Hand Roll** - in pairs, players sit or kneel on the ground about 2/3 yards apart. Roll the ball back and forth using two touches – one to stop the ball and the other to roll it to partner. Progress by using only one touch or performing the activity while standing.

Tip: challenge players by seeing how many passes they can get in a minute.

2. **Hand-to-Hand Roll** – every player has a ball. Standing with feet wide apart, players roll the ball back and forth from one hand to the other using an open hand. Advance by using the hands to make a 'Figure of 8' shape around legs.

Tip: use balls of different sizes and weights and constantly ask players to swap ball with other person so they use all types and sizes.

3. **Bridge Ball** – in pairs, players with the ball start at one side of playing area facing their partner who is standing with legs wide apart approx 2 yards away. On the whistle, player with the ball rolls the ball underarm through partner's legs. Thrower runs around and picks up ball. Exercise is repeated until the other end of the playing area. Switch roles on the way back.
4. **Knock the Cap** – players stand at 2 cones 10 metres apart with a target (pyramid made with three markers) in the middle. First player rolls ball at target. If successful, coach replaces marker and team is awarded a point. Ball is then rolled to group at other side where the process is repeated in opposite direction. How many times can the team hit the target in 2 minutes???
Tip: set up two courses side by side and have relays between two teams.
5. **1/2 Handed Underarm/Shot Putt/Over Arm Throw** – each player has an object (beanbag, football, tennis ball etc.) to throw. Players underarm /shot putt/over arm throw beanbags and balls of different sizes and weights as far as possible or at a target. Ensure all players use as many different kinds of objects as possible. Challenge players by telling them to beat their previous distance or number of times they hit a target.
6. **Bounce & Shoot** – place a number of hoops on the ground and a target to aim for at the end of the course. players line up at start of course. First player starts with a ball and runs through playing area bouncing the ball in the hoops before throwing the ball to land in or hit the target.
Tip: set up two courses side by side and have relays between two teams.
7. **Roll & Pick Up** – all players start with a ball along one side of the playing area. On the whistle, players roll the ball away before running in front of the ball and letting it roll up into their arms. Once they get to end of the playing area, turn and repeat going in other direction. Challenge players by seeing how many times they can pick the ball up from one side to the other.
8. **Roll & Follow** - all players start with a ball along one side of the playing area. On the whistle, players roll the ball away before running after or alongside it to pick it up. Once they get to end of the playing area, turn and repeat going in other direction. Challenge players by seeing how many times they can pick the ball up from one side to the other
9. **Roll Partner Pick Up** – players work in pairs approx 5 yards apart. Ball is rolled using one or both hands to partner who lets it roll up into his hands. Challenge pairs by seeing how many times they can pick the ball up in one minute then try to beat score.
10. **Bounce & Catch** – each player has a ball. Start by asking players to sit on ground and bounce the ball back up into their hands. Next get players to kneel, then to stand and repeat exercise. Advance by asking players to see if they can do it without catching ball between bounces. How many can they get in a minute???
Tip: use balls of different weights and sizes if possible.

11. **High Bounce & Catch** - each player has a ball. Bounce ball high above head and attempt to catch ball at highest point. Advance by asking players to tap the ball higher at the top of the bounce and catch the ball at the new highest point.
12. **Bounce, Move & Dribble** - each player has a ball. Ask players to move around the playing area bouncing the ball every 4 steps. Use a two-handed bounce before progressing to the one-handed bounce. Advance further by asking players to see if they can do it without catching ball between bounces.
13. **Target Bounce** - place hoops/markers on ground in random order around playing area. Each player has a ball and moves around playing area attempting to bounce the ball to hit the target as they pass them.
14. **Bounce Pass** – players work in pairs approx 5 yards apart, each pair has a ball. Bounce pass the ball back and forth. How many passes can each pair get in a minute??? Try to beat that score.
15. **Sit & Get Up** – players sit/kneel on the ground with a balloon or a ball. The ball/balloon is tossed into the air and the players must get to their feet quickly and catch it before it hits the ground.
16. **Toss & Catch** – each player has a balloon or a ball. Instruct them to move around the playing area throwing the ball/balloon into the air and catching it. Advance by asking players to clap once or more while the ball is in the air.
17. **Partner Toss & Catch** – players work in pairs a short distance apart. They throw the ball back and forth to each other using different types of throwing techniques (e.g. 1 handed underarm throw, 2 handed underarm throw, chest pass, overhead throw etc.). Begin with bigger ball before progressing to a smaller one.
18. **Piggy in the Middle** – players spread out around the playing area. One player is designated ‘piggy in the middle’. Other players pass ball around attempting to keep it away from the ‘piggy’. If ball is dropped or intercepted the player who missed the catch or attempted the pass becomes the ‘piggy’.
Tip: if some players aren’t getting a touch of the ball set up 2 separate games with only half the number in each.

Kicking

Kicking is essential to the development of players in Gaelic games. Kicking involves eye-foot and hand-foot coordination and should be developed using a variety of balls and beanbags incorporating different sizes and weights. Accurate kicking over a variety of distances should also be developed.

Kicking Exercises/Activities

1. **Beanbag Control & Dribble** – each player has a beanbag. They must simply move the beanbag from foot to foot along the ground in a stationary position. Advance by moving and dribbling with the beanbag along the ground. A kick into space or at a target can also be incorporated into the exercise
2. **Beanbag Kick & Stop** – in pairs, players kick the beanbag back and forth to each other. Players must stop the beanbag with their foot before kicking it back. How many passes can each pair get in a minute??? Try to beat that score.
3. **Trap & Flick** – each player has a beanbag. Instruct the players to toss the beanbag in the air with their hands and trap it under their foot as it hits the ground. Advance by instructing the players to flick the ball into the air with their feet and then trap it as it lands. Vary exercise by asking players to flick the beanbag as far as possible or at a certain target.
Tip: encourage players to use both feet.

4. **Beanbag Shadow** – players work in pairs and each has a beanbag. The leader dribbles the beanbag around the playing area being followed as closely as possible by his ‘shadow’. Alternate roles after one or two minutes.
5. **Beanbag: Through the Gap** – players work in pairs, one beanbag per pair. Set up a target gate approx 1 meter wide in the middle of each pair. Challenge the players to kick the beanbags through the gate to one another. How many passes can each pair get in a minute??? Try to beat that score.
Tip: encourage players to use both feet.
6. **Ball Roll** – each player has a ball. In a stationary position the players roll the ball back and forward using the bottom of their foot. Encourage players to use both feet. Challenge the players to switch from one foot to the other quickly.
7. **Minefield Dribble** - place cones/markers on ground in random order around playing area. Each player has a ball and must dribble the ball around the playing area avoiding the markers. To vary, divide the players into teams and on the signal from the coach, one or more teams must navigate through the minefield.
8. **Ground Kick** – players work in pairs with a ball with each pair. Players must kick pass the ball along the ground to each other. First get them to stop the ball before passing it back and then ask them to use only one touch in order to advance. Vary by placing a target gate between the players that they must try to kick the ball through.
Tip: encourage players to use both feet.
9. **Dribble & Shoot** – set up a course using cones or obstacles and a target or goal at the end. In turn, allow the players to dribble the ball around the obstacles and kick at the target.
Tip: set up two courses side by side and have relays between two teams.
10. **Thigh Solo** – each player has a ball. In a stationary position instruct players to drop the ball from the hand to tap it with the thigh before catching it again. Encourage children to use both legs. Increase difficulty of exercise by instructing players to do it whilst walking or jogging around the playing area.

Team Games

Team games are important to teach the children about aspects of the game such as teamwork, use of space and fair play. These games can be played at the end of a session and may emphasise or reinforce skills practiced during the session.

Team Games

1. **Modified Gaelic** - divide children into 2 teams. Set up a goal at each end of the playing area. Children may kick or throw the ball to a teammate in order to pass. Scores are the same as normal Gaelic (i.e. points & goals). Players on the team not in possession attempt to get the ball back. Instruct players that they may slap the ball out of opponents' hands but no wrestling or rugby tackling is allowed. Ball is allowed to be picked up straight off the ground.
Tip: award points for skills such as a proper dispossession, a high catch, a good pass, a high catch etc. Also, if all players are bunching and crowding around the ball, introduce a second ball into the game.
2. **Possession Game** – divide children into 2 teams. Both teams must remain inside the playing area. The player in possession must throw the ball to a member of his team as players on the opposing team attempt to get the ball back. Instruct players that they may slap the ball out of opponents' hands but no wrestling or rugby tackling is allowed. Five consecutive passes gets a team a point, at which stage the ball must be handed to the other team. Introduce a bounce after every four steps to make it harder for the player in possession.

Tip: if all players are bunching and crowding around the ball, introduce a second ball into the game.

3. **Rob the Nest** – scatter footballs randomly around playing area. Divide children into 2/3/4 teams, each with its own corner of the playing area. On the whistle, one player from each team collects a ball and returns to their corner. Next child repeats. Once all balls have been collected, players can ‘rob’ from other corners. Winning team is one with most balls at the end. Instruct players to dribble, roll, bounce, thigh solo ball while taking them back to their corner.
Tip: encourage children to cheer for team members.

4. **Dodgeball** – use cones to mark out playing area that the players must remain inside. Choose 1 or 2 taggers who must try to catch the other children by hitting them below the waist with a light ball or beanbag. Children stand at the side bouncing or throwing a ball to one another when caught.
Tip: change taggers regularly and give them targets (e.g. they have one minute to catch everyone).