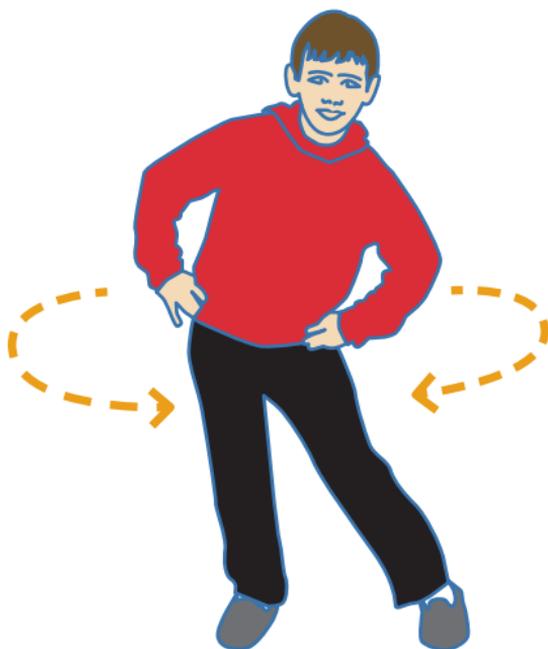




Forestry Commission Scotland  
Coimisean na Coilltearachd Alba

# The Woodland Workout Teachers' Guide

A resource for educators



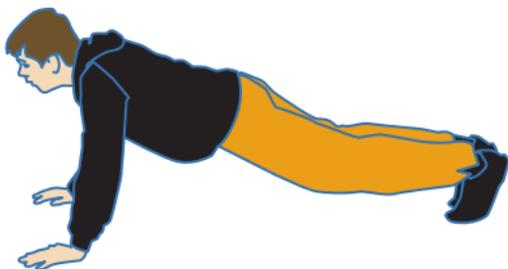


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## Introduction

### The Woodland Workout An Enterprising and Active Woodland Trail

The original Woodland Workout was a Forest Education Initiative project supported by the Forestry Commission Scotland. The resource was developed by four teachers. The aim of the project was to produce a resource that could be easily used by teachers and enable them to offer a wide range of outdoor activities and exercises to their pupils. The activities have been adapted from a wide range of sources, which can be found in the bibliography.

This is the updated version of the Woodland Workout.

### Example of 'active responsibility'

Risks – learning to mediate risks, take appropriate risks and thus minimise harmful risk or adverse risk taking, is essential to successful, confident learners. Managing failure and seeing risks as problem solving are also fundamental to lifelong learners. As such all natural settings should be promoted as places where risk and 'failure' are positive learning environments. The use of a natural environment promotes 'best-fit' problem solving and risk taking in a positive environment. Participants need to evaluate their own expectations and outcomes – there are no templates or correct answers in nature. Nature is not 'made' for humans and therefore there may be no solution, other than the one arrived at by consensus of the participants. This should be a key focus for Woodland Workout activities. Creativity and imaginative play, utilising the natural world, are to be encouraged and fostered in students.

# Overview

## Aims

To enable all children (aged 3-14 years), to participate in enjoyable learning experiences in local woodlands and other outdoor environments such as playgrounds and parks, that will develop enterprising knowledge, skills and attitudes and promote physical health and wellbeing.

## Enterprise Aims – The 6 Rs

To help children develop an enterprising attitude, the trail aims to incorporate activities that:

- Have REAL learning contexts
- Are RELEVANT to pupils of different ages, stages and abilities
- Encourage active RESPONSIBILITY
- Promote inclusion, enabling all pupils to have a ROLE
- Encourage children to consider RISKS
  - thinking about potential hazards
  - learning to take risks in problem solving and to manage ‘failure’
- Enable children to REFLECT on their performance and adapt strategies accordingly





## Physical Activity Aims

- To promote healthy and active lifestyles, the trail aims to:
- Promote inclusion
- Provide opportunities for quality, safe and fun physical activity
- Promote a positive attitude towards participation in physical activity
- Encourage and support children to reach their full potential within physical activity



# A Curriculum for Excellence

Using the framework from 'A Curriculum for Excellence' the trail also aims to develop:

## Successful learners

with:

- Enthusiasm and motivation for learning
- Determination to reach high standards of achievement
- Openness to new thinking and ideas

able to:

- Use literacy, communication and numeracy skills
- Use technology for learning
- Think creatively and independently
- Learn independently and as part of a group
- Make reasoned evaluations
- Link and apply different kinds of learning to new situations



## Confident individuals

with:

- Self respect
- A sense of physical, mental and emotional wellbeing
- Secure values and beliefs
- Ambition



able to:

- Relate to others and manage themselves
- Pursue a healthy and active lifestyle
- Be self aware
- Assess risks and make informed decisions
- Achieve success in different areas of activity

## Responsible citizens

with:

- Respect for others

able in the longer term to:

- Develop knowledge and understanding of the world
- Make informed choices and decisions
- Evaluate environmental, scientific and technological issues
- Develop informed, ethical views of complex issues
- Participate responsibly in political, economic, social and cultural life

## Effective contributors

with:

- An enterprising attitude
- Resilience
- Self-reliance



able to:

- Communicate in different ways and in different settings
- Work in partnerships and in teams
- Take initiative and lead
- Apply critical thinking in new contexts
- Create and develop
- Solve problems





## Trail Design

### The trail comprises of:

- Activities – which encourage a wide range of skills and learning experiences
- Physical exercises – which encourage enjoyment of physical activity

### The trail has been designed to:

- be easily used by any leader, e.g. teacher, parent, youth leader
- be easily and quickly set up and taken down by any leader
- require little prior knowledge
- cater for children aged 3-14 years, of different ability levels
- be as flexible as possible in order to meet individual needs
- be set up in school grounds, local park or woodland
- rely on only a few, easily obtainable resources
- require little paperwork
- accommodate groups of up to 32 children



## How to use the trail

### The Woodland Workout includes:

- 10 activity cards
- 15 physical exercise cards



### Other resources you will need

- 20 plastic pegs or pieces of string to hang up the Activity Sheets in the woodland.
- 1 large tarpaulin for ACTIVITY – Penguin game
- 16 blindfolds for ACTIVITY – Hug a tree (you could make these from scrap fabric/scarfs)
- Paper and pens for ACTIVITY – Take a spot

### Children will need to find (outside):

- 9 sticks per pair for ACTIVITY – Sticks (lollipop sticks can be used in case sufficient sticks cannot be found)
- Woodland materials for ACTIVITY – Art attack
- Sticks for ACTIVITY – Creating mini-worlds (string could be used if sufficient sticks cannot be found)

For some activities it would be useful to record outcomes digitally.



## Preparing the trail

It is suggested that the leader visits the selected site and conducts a risk assessment in line with school policy.

The trail should be set up in advance by attaching task cards to the trees.

The task cards should be attached in such a way that they can be easily seen. Brightly coloured ribbons can be attached to task cards to aid visibility.

**Note:** The places where the tasks are pegged are referred to below as 'Woodland Stations'.

## Suggested sequence of tasks

See the table for suggested order of activities and physical exercises, designed to achieve a balance of cognitive and physical activities.

The physical exercises have been sequenced in order to allow children to warm up, exercise heavy muscles, perform aerobic exercise and then warm down.

It is not necessary to do all the activities and physical exercises. Leaders can pick and mix activities and physical exercises to suit the age, stage and ability of their group, the woodland environment and time available. However, it is advised that leaders incorporate at least one of each type of physical exercise e.g. one warm up, one workout, and one warm down, in that order.

## Suggested structure of trail

The trail can be organised sequentially either:

- In a loop
- In a line
- From a base



## Suggested sequence of tasks

Woodland Station	TASK
1	Poles 2 long sticks
2	Warm-up - Arm Swinging
3	Collections (a selection of woodland materials)
4	Warm-up - Body Twisting
5	Warm-up - Tree Shuttle Runs
6	Hug a Tree (16 blindfolds)
7	Warm-up - Star Jumps
8	Take a spot
9	Work-out -Tree Push Ups
10	Tarpaulin games (large tarpaulin)
11	Work-out - Heel Flicks
12	Work-out - High Knees



## Suggested sequence of tasks (continued)

Woodland Station	TASK
13	Creating mini-worlds (a selection of sticks and other woodland materials)
14	Work-out - Jump and Touch
15	Work-out - Squats
16	Ants (a random selection of woodland materials)
17	Work-out - Tree Circles
18	Work-out - Line Jumps
19	Sticks (approx. 9 sticks per pair or 100 lollipop sticks)
20	Work-out - Tuck Jumps
22	Cool-down - Tree Walks
23	Reflective circle time (large tarpaulin)
24	Cool-down - Arm Swinging
25	Cool-down - Body Twisting



## Extension Activities

### Poles

A leaf or forest object could be placed on the pole to make this activity more challenging and ensure that the pole stays level. Start with one object balanced then add one after each successful lift. See how many you can balance successfully. Remember if you drop any you must start again.

### Collections

The collected items could be taken back to class to make a display or collage. The objects could also be stuck on to a piece of card with double-sided tape, to make a nature postcard or bookmark. This gives children a memento to take home and remind them of their visit to the woods/park/playground.

### Hug a tree

This can be done with two pupils leading the blindfolded one. For older pupils, a small obstacle course could be set up on the woodland floor for a blindfolded child to be led around.

### Take a spot

- **Write a Haiku poem:** Start by asking pupils to describe the 10 things they have selected e.g. brown seed, whispering wind, fresh pine, smooth stone. Underline key words so that there are 17 syllables. Arrange them so that there are 5 syllables on the first line, 7 on the second and 5 syllables for the last line.



A sample Haiku:

*Brown seed on the ground  
round, silent, a little damp  
makes me feel so big.*



- **Sound map:** Children could make a sound map of all the sounds they hear. They draw a face to represent themselves on the map and draw the sounds around them.
- **Sound recording:** Record sounds on mobile phones to create a 'sound map'. Back at school create a sound collage utilising free sound editing software, such as Audacity. Try and record as many different sounds as you can, to capture the whole woodland/outdoor environment. Create a 'walk' or story describing the woods through sounds.
- **Interview with nature:** Children find a special tree, plant, flower or insect and sit quietly and interview it. They think about how old it is, how it got there, the things that it has seen, how it feels. They can then share their interview with a friend. Write up the interview, share with other participants, create a magazine of the forest.
- **Share a Special Place:** Children find a special place of their own and make an invitation for a friend. They then give out the invite to a friend and welcome them in and describe why their place is special. Student can then act as expert guides to the location. This activity promotes storytelling about this special place, where the student is the 'expert' and truly knows the location.

## Creating mini-worlds

Introduce and present a tour of your mini-world, much like in the Special Place activity. Again students are the experts, and are demonstrating their knowledge of an imagined world using the natural world as a model and springboard for their imaginations.

This could be done on a larger scale as a class activity. Each child can make something for the mini-world, e.g. a chair, a swing, etc.

## Penguin game

Why not use the tarpaulin as a parachute and play some parachute games.

## Ants

Children can follow each other in a line moving as different animals, e.g. hopping like rabbits, scurrying like mice.

## Sticks

- Children could make 3D shapes by lashing sticks together.
- **Mapsticks:** Children find a length of stick and tie various woodland objects to it, to remind them of the different areas they pass through, e.g. leaf for leafy area, something blue for passing water etc. These could be made on the way and steps re-traced using the mapstick on the way back to school.
- Use matchstick puzzle games to extend this.





## Art attack

- This could be done on a large scale as a class.
- Pupils work together to make a giant sculpture or mural.
- Children can make frames for their pictures by lashing sticks together.
- Artwork can be based on themes such as seasons, colours, animals.
- For inspiration look at the work of Andrew Goldsworthy, an artist who collects natural objects and arranges them outside to make art. Example Goldsworthy sculptures:

## Circle activities

The activities below have been designed to be carried out as a group sitting in a circle.

- **Tree game:** Identify each child as either a leaf, branch, bark or root. When, for example, leaf is called out, all the leaves run around the circle back to their original spot. When the word tree is called out everyone runs around the circle back to their original position.
- **Create a group poem:** (Dependent on age, stage and ability of group.) Work together to use descriptive language to create a poem based upon what the children hear, see, smell and touch as they sit in their circle.
- **Reflective circle time:** This can be a calming activity, using any circle time games and activities similar to those used in the classroom. For example, a woodland object can be passed around, and each child in turn when holding the object can give their personal reflections on the Woodland Workout.

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Published by: Forestry Commission Scotland - March 2014

ISBN 978 0 85538 905 5

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Designed by Ian Kirkwood Design for Design and Interpretatio, Forestry Commission Scotland, Edinburgh  
FCMS112/FC-S(DIS)/21C/4K/MAR14