

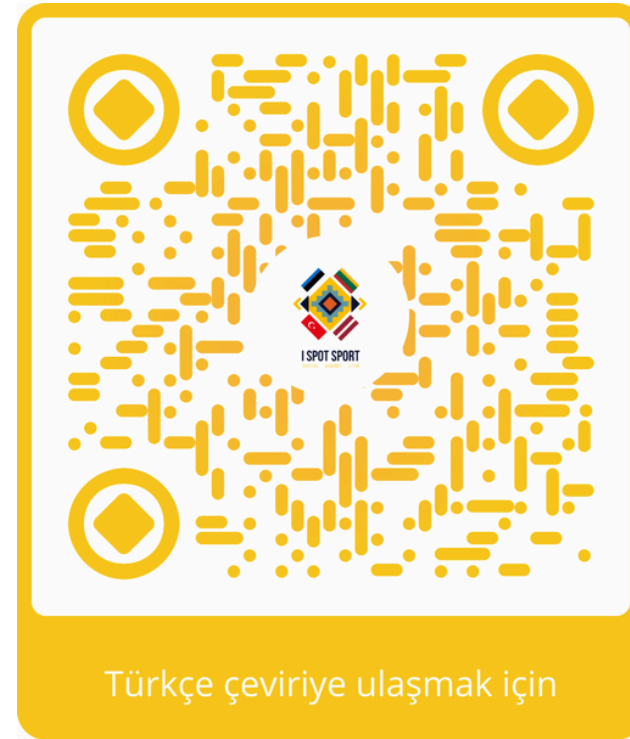
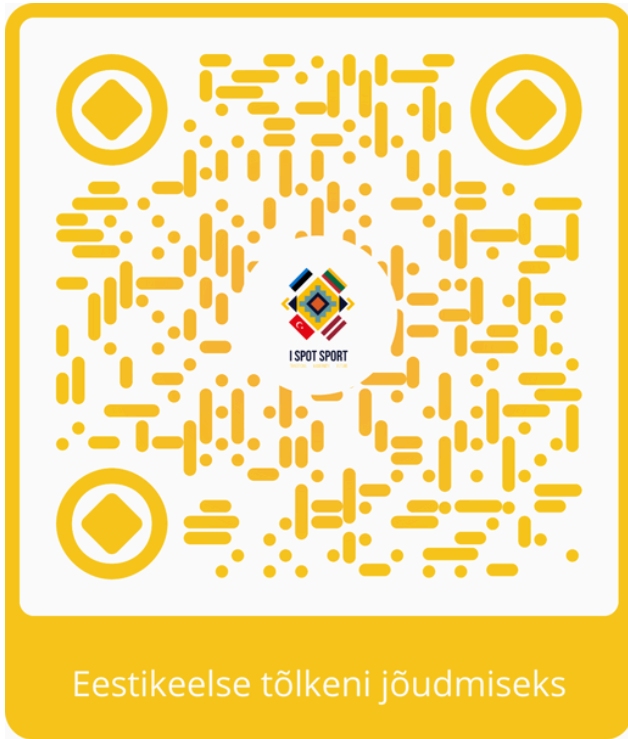
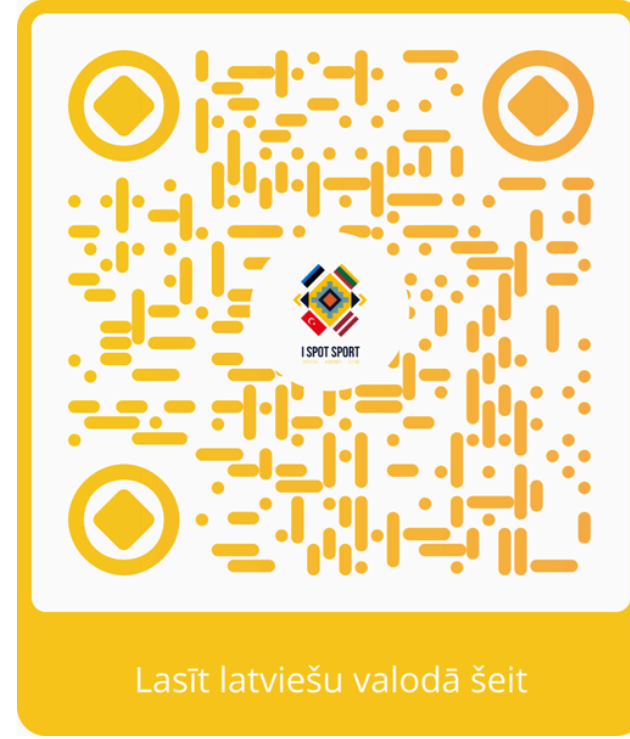
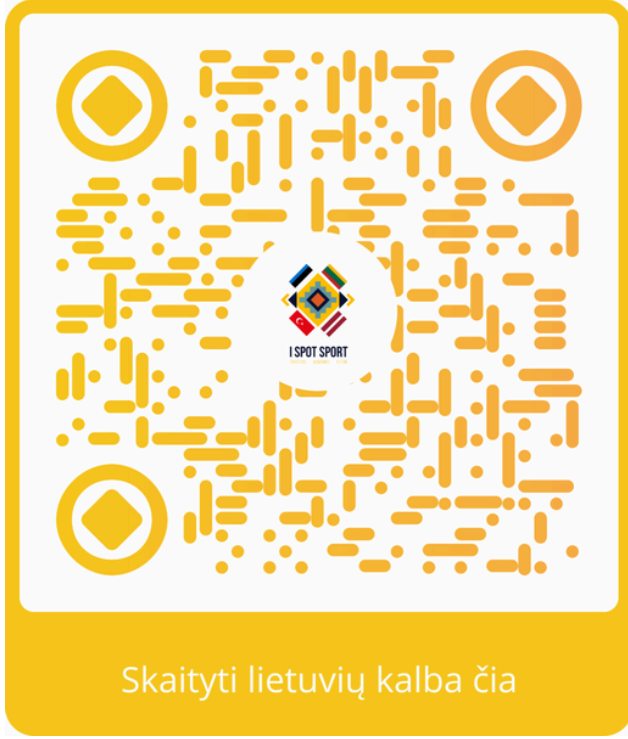


I SPOT SPORT

TRADITIONS · MODERNITY · FUTURE



Funded by
the European Union



The handbook is available in 4 languages in addition to English. Please scan the relevant QR code to access the translations.



INTRODUCTION

Dear Enthusiast,

Welcome to the I Spot Sport project journey!

In an increasingly interconnected world, the transformative power of sport serves as a universal language that bridges cultural, social and geographical divides. Recognizing this as partners, Lithuania (Lietuvos Etnosporto Komitetas), Türkiye (European Integration Group), Latvia (Latvijas Etnosporta Asociacija) and Estonia (Eesti Kiikinguliit), have launched a project ready to use the vitality of sport as a tool for youth participation and development.

At the heart of this project lies a multifaceted aim: to amplify the capacities of organizations in orchestrating European projects that intertwine youth work with the spirit of sports, thereby catalyzing a wave of innovation, inclusivity, and intercultural dialogue across the continent.

For this reason, we chose ethnosports which have a unique ability to promote cultural preservation, inclusiveness and community participation, as the cornerstone of our youth participation and sport project. Ethnosports, which encompass traditional and indigenous sports, celebrate and sustain the rich cultural heritage of diverse communities, thus providing young people with a deep sense of identity and belonging. These sports are inclusive and accessible in nature, requiring minimal equipment and facilities, which enables the participation of young people from different socio-economic backgrounds. Ethnosports also promote community participation and social cohesion through their communal nature and a high degree of social interaction. Participation in these activities not only improves physical health through improved fitness and coordination but also offers significant mental health benefits such as stress reduction and cognitive development.

Moreover, ethnosports promote basic life skills such as teamwork, respect and perseverance, which are crucial for personal and professional development. By introducing young people to traditional sports of various cultures, we also promote cultural diversity and understanding, strengthening an environment of inclusion and mutual respect. Our focus on ethnosports also helps revitalize traditional practices that are at risk of being forgotten, preserving valuable cultural heritage, giving historical continuity to the communities involved and, in doing so, ensuring that tradition meets modernity. Through this multifaceted approach, we aim to create a vibrant, harmonious and healthy society where young people can thrive and contribute positively to society.

The project sets forth to achieve a series of interconnected objectives. These include boosting the proficiency of participating organizations in designing, implementing, and managing sports-related initiatives, enriching the skillset of youths, youth workers, and trainers through innovative sports-based methodologies, and facilitating a vibrant exchange of knowledge and best practices among European counterparts. Furthermore, the project is dedicated to promoting intercultural understanding, enhancing youth participation in sports, especially among marginalized communities, and forging new alliances that pave the way for future collaborations. By broadcasting the successes and learnings of this project, the partners aim to ignite a broader conversation on the pivotal role of sports in youth work, thereby influencing policy and public perception alike.





The handbook you are reviewing was prepared by the partners within the scope of the project and includes informative and practical content on the partners' ethnosports for youth and youth workers. We believe that the Guide will be of effective use in guiding and practical implementation.

Lastly, we would like to introduce our valuable organizations that are committed to the project. Our organizations make both organizational and individual contributions to support young people become more integrated through sport. Here are our organizations:

The Lithuanian Ethnosport Committee (LEK) is an organisation founded in 2019 by ethnosport promoters and enthusiasts, who aim to preserve and develop traditional games, to foster cultural heritage and to integrate ethnosport into the Lithuanian education system. The Committee, headed by President Stanislav Bajurin, started its activities with the aim of encouraging the young generation to learn about and appreciate the traditions of their nation, to cherish the values of cultural heritage and to create new traditions of ethnosports in Lithuania. LEK started with a gathering of enthusiastic individuals who were convinced of the importance of ethnosport in cultural and educational fields. The resulting team took the initiative to organize ethno games aimed at popularising old Lithuanian games. Despite initial challenges, such as lack of funding, the committee took action in the education system to integrate ethnosport into the general physical education curriculum in schools.

The European Integration Group continues its operations as a non-profit organization working with Turkish and international youth groups in Türkiye as an informal group since 2016 and as an association since 2019. The main goal of the organization is to succeed in the integration of young individuals, start-up companies, institutions, NGOs, and as well corporate companies to European values and digitalizing world. With 36 volunteers, EIG focuses on peace, conflict resolution, sport & healthy life, digitalization, sustainability and entrepreneurship.

The Latvian Ethnosports Association was founded in 2008 with the aim to identify and promote the traditional active pastime activities – games, national sports and other active cultural traditions – of Latvian, Livonian, Russian, Ukrainian, etc. nationalities living in the territory of Latvia. The Latvian Ethnosports Association actively participates in the organization of the Bauska Regional Sports Games and events organized by the World Ethnosports Confederation. In addition to organizing traditional activities, the Latvian Ethnosport Association cooperates with specialists and NGO representing people with mental and functional disabilities to create entertainment and rehabilitation programmes based on the range of activities offered by ethnosport for people with mental and functional disabilities.

The Eesti Kiikinguliit is an organization that deals with the promotion, development and coordination of kiiking as a sport. The association unites sports clubs engaged in kiiking, sets records and top marks.

We wish you a pleasant reading.





INDEX

A. Introduction	1
B. Index	3
C. Philosophy of Ethnosports	5
D. Games:	
1) LITHUANIA	
a. Lithuanian Ritinis (“Ripka”)	6
i. Terminology.....	7
ii. History & Introduction.....	9
iii. Preparations & Equipment.....	10
iv. Warm up Exercises.....	11
v. How to Play.....	12
vi. Did You Know?.....	14
vii. Let’s Practice.....	15
viii. Good Practice.....	17
b. Lithuanian Folk Wrestling (“Ristynes”)	18
ix. Terminology.....	19
x. History & Introduction.....	20
xi. Preparations & Equipment.....	21
xii. Warm up Exercises.....	22
xiii. How to Play.....	23
xiv. Let’s Practice.....	24
xv. Good Practice.....	27
2) TÜRKIYE	
c. Mangala	28
i. Terminology.....	29
ii. History & Introduction.....	30
iii. Preparations & Equipment.....	31
iv. Warm up Exercises.....	31
v. How to Play.....	32
vi. Did You Know?.....	34
vii. Good Practice.....	35
d. Traditional Turkish Archery	36
viii. Terminology.....	37
ix. History & Introduction.....	38
x. Preparations & Equipment.....	39
xi. Warm up Exercises.....	40
xii. Attention, Safety First!.....	41
xiii. How to Play.....	42
xiv. Tips for the Beginners.....	45
xv. Did You Know?.....	46
xvi. Good Practice.....	47





INDEX

3) LATVIA	
e. Blind Checkers	48
i. Terminology.....	49
ii. History & Introduction.....	50
iii. Equipment.....	51
iv. Warm up Exercises.....	51
v. How to Play.....	52
vi. Let's Practice.....	55
vii. Did You Know?.....	57
viii. Good Practice.....	58
f. Stick Pulling	59
ix. Terminology.....	60
x. History & Introduction.....	61
xi. Preparations & Equipment.....	63
xii. Warm up Exercises.....	68
xiii. How to Play.....	69
xiv. Let's Practice.....	76
xv. Did You Know?.....	77
xvi. Good Practice.....	78
4) ESTONIA	
g. Liana Vault	79
i. Terminology.....	80
ii. History & Introduction.....	81
iii. Preparations & Equipment.....	82
iv. Warm up Exercises.....	83
v. How to Play.....	84
vi. Good Practice.....	86
h. Kiiking	87
vii. History & Introduction.....	88
viii. Preparations & Equipment.....	89
ix. Warm up Exercises.....	90
x. How to Play.....	91
xi. Let's Practice.....	92
xii. Did You Know?.....	93
Xiii. Good Practice.....	94
E. The Road Ahead I Sport Sport	95





PHILOSOPHY OF ETHNOSPORTS

Ethnosports, a category of sports and games characterized by activities passed down through generations that are deeply rooted in the traditional culture, practices, and identity of particular ethnic groups, communities, or nations, emerges as a vibrant alternative to the homogenizing forces of globalization, embodying a unique fusion of tradition and modernity. This concept transcends the mere act of sports; it's a lifestyle that marries local cultural identities with contemporary living, offering a fresh perspective on heritage and health. Ethnosport challenges the notion that modernity and tradition are mutually exclusive. Instead, it presents an opportunity to remain 'stylish' and healthy by embracing and celebrating one's cultural roots and traditions, making them relevant and appealing in today's fast-paced world.

The essence of ethnosport lies in its ability to breathe new life into traditional practices, ensuring they maintain their historical significance while appealing to modern sensibilities. It's about being proud of our heritage and simultaneously envisioning a future that honors our past –not as a relic to be observed from afar but as a living, breathing part of our daily lives. This dynamic interplay between the old and the new positions ethnosport at the confluence of various disciplines such as anthropology, cultural studies, sociology, and more, highlighting its interdisciplinary nature.

Ethnosport is not just an academic concept; it is a modern response to the prolonged crisis of classical sport and the assimilation of local identities and the unification of everyday life brought about by globalization. By integrating traditional games and cultural practices into the fabric of contemporary life, ethnosport offers a way to preserve and celebrate local identities without succumbing to the pressures of globalization. It's about finding balance and harmony in our modern existence, ensuring that the rich tapestry of human culture and history is not lost but instead flourishes alongside technological and social advancements.

The movement towards ethnosport is driven by a desire to reconnect with our ancestral heritage and foster a sense of national identity that coexists with global citizenship. This resurgence of interest in traditional games and cultural practices reflects a broader societal yearning for authenticity and rootedness in an increasingly disconnected world. Ethnosport, therefore, serves as a bridge between generations, enabling children to learn about and engage with the rituals, traditions, and games that have shaped their culture. Through ethnosport, the legacy of our ancestors is preserved and passed on, ensuring that future generations grow up with a strong sense of identity and belonging.

As we delve into the world of ethnosport, we embark on a journey of discovery, exploring the depths of our cultural heritage and its relevance in the modern age. This journey is not merely about physical activity but about embracing a holistic lifestyle that honors our past while forging a path towards a future where tradition and modernity coexist harmoniously. In doing so, ethnosport offers a compelling narrative of resilience, innovation, and cultural pride that resonates with people across the globe, making it a crucial endeavor for those looking to enrich their lives and communities with the essence of their cultural identity.





Funded by
the European Union

LITHUANIAN RITINIS ("RIPKA")



LITHUANIA



TERMINOLOGY

Attackers (in the game known as the second line) - 2 players who most often throw the ripka towards the opponent's goal.

Corner - when the ripka touched by players of the defending team goes out of boundaries over the sideline between the goal and control lines, a corner is awarded. In this case, a player of the attacking team rolls the ripka towards the goal of the defending team from behind the touchline, without crossing the touchline, through the side by which the ripka left the pitch.

Defenders (known as the front line) - 4 players stopping the ripka.

Gateway - a gate is placed on the goal line. It shall consist of one horizontal and two vertical posts equidistant from the corner flags and 7.32 m (measured internally) apart (football goals).

Goalkeeper - stands in the gate (the gate is the entire back line of the pitch).

Lithuanian "Ritinis" - it is an old Lithuanian team sports game, also known as the ripka, played using a circular wooden disc, which is thrown or rolled by two teams of players with their hands into the goal, passed to each other, and stopped with wooden sticks called "ritmusha".

Markings - the pitch shall be marked by lines not less than 12 cm in width, running in the same plane as the surface of the pitch. The long lines bounding the pitch shall be called the sidelines and the short lines are called as the goal lines. Flags shall be placed at the corners of the pitch on the shafts of flagpoles not less than 1 m in length. A center line shall be drawn across the pitch and the front lines of the initial roll shall be marked on both sides within 10 m of the center line, parallel to the center line. At a distance of 20 m from the goal line, control lines shall be drawn parallel to them. The area between the goal lines and the control lines is called the goal area. The intersection of the control lines with the side lines shall be marked with flags. The goal area is also called the goalkeeper's box. The width of the lines shall be included in the area of the pitch and the size of the pitches shall be limited by those lines.

Outskirts - an outskirts defines the condition when the ripka goes over the sideline and out of the pitch, regardless of where the player of the defending team was standing, in or off the pitch. If the ripka stops in, or even slightly touches the sideline, the ripka shall be counted as being in the pitch zone.

Pitch - the pitch is a field of a rectangle form, 80-110 m in length and 40-65 m in width. For the final match of the national championship, the pitch shall be at least 90 m in length.

Pitch referee - the main referee of a game. Before the start of the game, the referee must check if the pitch is prepared according to the rules, is correctly marked, the dimensions of the equipment are as stated in the rules, the clothing and footwear of the player comply with the rules, and that there are medical staff on duty. A referee is appointed for each match.

1. The referee shall enforce the rules of the game and shall rule on all disputes. The decision of the referee is final.
2. The authority of the referee to direct the game shall commence from the moment he signals the start of the game with the whistle. He may impose a penalty for offenses committed even when the game has been stopped or “the Ritinis” is not being played.
3. The referee shall have the right to suspend the game after any violation of the rules, and to suspend or terminate the game definitively in cases where he deems it necessary (bad weather, interference of spectators, and other reasons).
4. The referee has the right to remove a player from the pitch without prior warning, in case of unsportsmanlike conduct.

Ripka (definition) – shorter definition of Lithuanian “Ritinis” or the name of wooden/rubber disc;

Ripka (Eng. a disc) – the item with a diameter of 17 cm and a thickness of 2.5 cm (on the edges), which is used to play the game. In order to make it easier to hold, the ripka has circular cut-outs at both ends. The weight of the ripka is about 600–700 g. During the game, the ripka may only be replaced with the permission of the referee. Two ripkas may be selected for the game. When one rolls far out of boundaries, the other is played with. For women’s, children’s, and junior competitions, a smaller and lighter ripka with a diameter of 14 cm, a thickness of 2.2 cm, and a weight of 400–500 g may be used.

Ripka players – defenders, attackers, goalkeeper.

Ritmusha (eng. a stick for ripka) – a wooden stick with a curled end of not more than 150 cm. The stick shall not be wider than 10 cm at any point and the length of the curled end shall not exceed 40 cm. The goalkeeper’s stick may be up to 15 cm of width.

Rolling to the gate – when the referee awards a penalty – a rolling to the gate, the player of the attacking team shall take it from a distance of 16 meters. Only one goalkeeper may be in the goal area at the time of the penalty rolling. The throw-in shall be taken without running and without lifting the supporting leg off the ground. If the thrower violates the rules during the throw-in, the goalkeeper shall start the game from the 20-metre control line.

Side referees – two side referees are appointed to assist the referee. Their duties are to signal any violation of the competition rules with a wave of the flag, when the ripka crosses the sideline, and to raise the flag when the ripka crosses the goal line (when a point is won).

Timekeeper – the timekeeper shall keep tracking the time of the game and shall announce it to the referee with a whistle, at the end of the game. The timekeeper writes the match report, noting how many points the players of each team have scored, the substitutions of players, and the time spent by players sent off the pitch.



HISTORY & INTRODUCTION

As it is well known, games are not only a leisure activity for children or young people, but they are also an effective educational tool, important for developing physical strength and endurance for children. On the other hand, games cannot be regarded as a measure of physical education alone, since they also develop children's reactions, intelligence, discretion and other important mental qualities, develop thinking in general and, moreover, encourage sociability and socialize children. Therefore, games are also an important tool for the moral education of the younger generation. On the other hand, games have always had an important cultural function, not only for children.

Before the end of the First World War, traditional Lithuanian folk games were an important element of rural culture and the basis of the physical culture of its inhabitants. Movement sport games were considered to be a reasonable method of preparing children and young people for the world of adulthood. Games were also a way of regaining the strength lost in hard work.

"Ritinis" is an old Lithuanian team sports game, also known as the ripka, played using a circular wooden disc, which is thrown or rolled by two teams of players with their hands into the goal, passed to each other, and stopped with wooden sticks called the ritmusha. It is already mentioned in 17th-century written sources as a pastime for soldiers, in the 19th century "the Ritinis" ("the Ripka") became widespread in Lithuanian villages. Children, young people and adult men played, and the best players were respected throughout the neighborhoods. As villages broke up into homesteads in the 20th century and new sports started prevailing, the ripka disappeared, but in the post-war period, was revived by enthusiasts, it moved to stadiums and flat meadows, and its rules were improved. Since 1961, national "Ritinis" ("the Ripka") championships have been held annually. In the current competition, teams of seven players play in stadiums according to the rules adopted by the Lithuanian Ritinis Sports Federation in 2004 and updated in 2023. Specially made ripkas are used in the matches, sometimes, especially in educational activities, old-style wooden disc with a metal hoop (also known as the ripka).

Nowadays, as a regularly practiced team game, Lithuanian "Ritinis" is widespread in the municipalities of Plungė, Kupiškis, Kaunas and Vilkaviškis. The tactics, history and tradition of "Ritinis" are cherished by enthusiasts of the sport, by club leaders, and passed on from generation to generation, usually by parents to their sons. The game has an important social function – the players of all ages train together, participate in sports clubs and socialize with each other. The developers of the tradition preserve this cultural heritage, create a dialogue between generations. Together with museums, schools and communities, they implement educational projects, share their experience with the Lithuanian National Youth Union or Lithuania Ethnosport Committee and practice the game of "Ripka" in camps and festivals.



PREPARATIONS & EQUIPMENT

- **Number of Players:** 7 to 7 (14 people in total)
 - **Defenders:** 4 players
 - **Attackers:** 2 players
 - **Goalkeeper:** 1 player
- **Number of Game:** 2 sets
- **Keeping Time:** 20 minutes
- **Break:** 1 break – 10 minutes
- **Location:** Football Pitch/Stadium/Artificial Surface
- **Ripka – Hard Rubber Disc:** 14-18 cm (diameter), 2.2-2.5 cm (width), 400-700 gr (weight)
For women/children or junior competitions, a smaller and lighter disc with a diameter of 14 cm may be used.
- **Ritmusha – A Wooden Stick With A Curved End:** The length shall not be more than 150 cm, the length of the curled end shall not exceed 40 cm and the width shall not exceed 10 cm (up to 15 cm for a goalkeeper)
- **Sportwear:** Comfortable clothing similar to the outfit for football or volleyball



WARM UP EXERCISES

The Ripka is a very demanding sports game that requires the body to be in excellent physical condition. The sport involves extended periods of high-intensity running interspersed with continuous running. The movements can involve rapid accelerations and a change of direction. In order to get the body prepared for such activities, a thorough warm-up is required.

The warm-up should start off at a low intensity, with a gradual progression from general and simple movements to more specific and higher-intensity actions for the game. Here is an example of what can be done, but the specifics can be adjusted to suit constraints such as limited space and time, and the conditions.

- 2 laps in the pitch at a slow run (including running sideways/backward, lifting knees up and kicking heels backward).
- 10 minutes of stretching – involving dynamic and static stretches.
- 5 × 20m length runs (work from 50% effort to maximum sprint).
- 5 zigzag runs (75% effort).
- Ripka-specific exercises are tackling, stopping and passing drills.
- The trainer can individually prescribe exercises for the trunk, waist and stretching. A few minutes for rest and recovery. During this time, “the Ripka” instructions are introduced.

Note: Paying more attention to the preparation of the shoulders, arms and legs is preferable. More effort for bridges, steeper runs.



HOW TO PLAY

Aim of the game:

The aim of the game is to roll the ripka over the opponent's defensive end line (1 point) or to roll the ripka into the net (3 points).

Shortened rules of Lithuanian "Ritinis":

1. The game is played on a football pitch (or other stadium) (dimensions of which are a rectangle of 80-110 m in length and 40-65 m in width); the playing area must be marked with flags (at least 1 m long) which are placed at the corners of the pitch, the center line is marked across the middle of the pitch and the lines of the initial roll are marked on both sides of the field 10 m from the center line, running parallel to the center line. At a distance of 20 m from the goal lines, the control lines parallel to the goal lines shall be marked across the square. The area between the goal line and the control line (line is 20 m long) is called the goalkeeper's box. On the goal line, equidistant from the corner flags, are the goal zone (inside 7.32 m - football goals).

2. Played with a rubber ripka with a diameter of 17-18 cm, a thickness of 2.5 cm and a weight of about 600-700 g. For women's, children's and junior competitions, a smaller and lighter rubber ripka with a diameter of 14 cm, a thickness of 2.2 cm and a weight of about 400-500 g may be used. Each player shall carry a ritmusha with a curled end of not more than 150 cm. The length of the stick shall not exceed 40 cm and the width shall not exceed 10 cm (the width of the goalkeeper's stick shall not exceed 15 cm).

3. Two teams of seven players (including the goalkeeper) line up in front of each other 15-20 meters apart. The aim of the game is to roll the ripka over the back-goal line (one point) or into the goal (three points).

4. Each team takes turns rolling the ripka (except when the rules are broken). The ripka shall be rolled by hand in any way, so that it rolls on the ground, and the players of the opposing team shall not be interfered with. The ripka may only be stopped by the ritmusha and not thrown out of the player's hand.

5. The ripka that is touched by the ritmusha stick but not stopped, may be stopped in any other way (hands, feet, etc.). The goalkeeper, being in the goalkeeper's box, may stop the ripka in any way (in another part of the pitch as a regular player).

6. The ripka can be rolled from the point at which it stops. The ripka may be carried, thrown or passed to another player of the team, but the ripka must be rolled towards the opposing team within 10 seconds of stopping and from the stopping point (the line across the pitch). In all cases, violations of the rules for rolling or stopping the ripka shall be penalized by the team passing the ripka to the opposing team and rolling it from the place of violation.

7. Only players of the defending team may be in the goalkeeper's box. If the team players break the rules in the goalkeeper's box, that team shall be penalized with a 16 m penalty shot on goal (two points), taken without acceleration.

8. Played in two rounds of 20 minutes each. A 10-minute break between rounds. The game starts with one of the teams (determined by lot) rolling the ripka from the baseline (10 m from the center line). During the initial roll, neither team may cross the lines of the initial roll (10 m from the center line). The team conceding a goal shall start the game from the baseline. A deliberate, flagrant violation of the rules or unsportsmanlike conduct during the match may result in a warning or exclusion from the field for 2 minutes, 5 minutes or until the end of the match.

9. The team with the highest score wins the match. 4 points are awarded for a win, 2 points for a draw and 1 - for a loss. The teams meet for 2 times, then the points are counted and the winner is declared.



DID YOU KNOW?



- *Ritinis, sometimes called ripka, is one of the most interesting (authentic) Lithuanian folklore games. It is the only game that was adapted to a stadium and turned into a sport. As a game, it was first mentioned in the XVII century by S. Daukantas, who extrapolated the game's benefits for physical health and strength. He wrote that "ritinis is the best way of training fighting skills for youngsters". Ritinis is also mentioned by XVIII-century author M. Valančius.*
- *Rules of ritinis were adapted to the stadium in the year 1923 by Karolis Dineika and the first sports events were held. Then several games were played, but it did not gain popularity. Ritinis was brought back to life after the World War II in year 1956 by Vytautas Steponaitis, a folk games enthusiast, and former guerilla fighter. He adapted game rules to football stadium, which made it more popular.*
- *Ripka is an old warrior game. The ripka disc should be rolled as if you were cutting with a sword.*

INTERESTING FACT

LET'S PRACTICE

- **Throws, passes, stopping**

Explanation of the techniques of throwing the ripka. Demonstration. The participants repeat the exercises in smaller groups.

1.1 Picking up, holding and throwing the ripka:



Figure 1

The movements of the ripka roller are very similar to those of a lance or grenade thrower. Good rolling is not only determined by strength, but also by dexterity, coordination and speed. The basic and most commonly used method of holding the ripka is shown in Figure 1.

The ripka is gripped tightly in a handful (like a discus) and thrown from the shoulder in an upright position (like a sword). There are other ways of rolling. In order to roll the ripka less sharply but accurately, it is grasped only with the thumb and forefinger. It is also possible to hold the ripka low and release it from the bottom. The latter method is rarely used in the game. The throwing motion of the disc must be wide and free. It should involve not only the muscles of the arm but also the muscles of the whole body. At the start of the run-up, the ripka and the arm shall be thrown as far back as possible. In the final steps, it is lifted sharply upwards at the shoulder, rotated through its vertical axis, and then thrown using the left leg (when throwing with the left hand, the right leg is used to finish the run-up) and thrown out with a sudden movement of the arm (as if crossing with a sword) (Figure 2).

Note: the air distance of throwing the ripka is limited to 12 meters. If the distance is longer, the ripka goes to the opponent and the opponent goes to the place where the ripka was thrown from.



Figure 2

1.2. Stopping the ripka:



Figure 3

Another important element of the game of “Ritinis” is the control of the ritmusha. The ritmusha is used to stop a fast-rolling ripka. It is simple and made of hard solid wood. Its weight is much higher than that of sticks used in other sports games (hockey, field hockey). The ritmusha is held firmly with both hands (Figure 3), the stick can also be held with one hand when stopping the ripka.

Not every player can learn to control the ritmusha immediately. It is difficult to stop the ripka from jumping over uneven ground and changing direction. The easiest way to catch the ripka is to grasp it near the ground (Figure 4). When catching it, do not keep the ritmusha bowl too far in front of the player, as a high-flying ripka can jump on the player. The goalkeeper stops the ripka with the ritmusha and can also stop it with the body (arms, legs, etc.) in the goalkeeper’s box.



Figure 4

NOTE:

1. Divide the participants into those who throw and those who stop the ripka. In the beginning, leave a space of 5-8 meters between teams. One throws, the other stops. Later exchange.
2. Practice throwing up to 12 m (in order to develop the skill and habit of not throwing further than 12 m);
3. In order to practice stopping the ripka with the body (arms, legs, etc.) (first with the ritmusha and then with the body part).

- **Pushing and pulling the opponent**

Explanation of the technical element of “the Ripka”. Demonstration. The participants repeat the exercises in smaller groups.

1. Divide the participants into teams of 4 to 7. Practice “pushing” and “pulling”.
2. Allow everyone to try being a goalkeeper and perform in the goalkeeper’s role. Take turns to practice taking penalty kicks.
3. Play at a reduced distance for 5-7 minutes. Increase emphasis on substitutions, goalkeeping and penalty kicks.

GOOD PRACTICE

Good practice in the case of this game extends beyond the process of the game itself to its wider impact on society and culture. Teamwork is essential to achieve the best results in competition, but it also promotes cooperation, solidarity and community. Conscious training of athletes is important not only in terms of physical skills but also in terms of psychological and strategic preparation. Developing a strategy to achieve the best results requires consistency, analysis and creativity.

It is important that the game is not only a sport but also a platform for learning and self-expression. Encouraging athletes to learn from defeats and to continuously improve is essential for their personal and team growth. Communication skills within the team are also essential, as they allow for effective communication, problem solving or strategy development.

The game perfectly reflects the cultural, historical and national identity and heritage of Lithuania, as it gives people the opportunity to immerse themselves in Lithuanian culture and traditions. It can also be a great integration tool for different age groups, from children, young people to seniors with a more active lifestyle, and for different social groups, including foreigners and war refugees. For example, ethno camps, which are attended by both locals and war refugees from Ukraine, provide an opportunity to get acquainted with the Lithuanian ritinis (ripka) and at the same time contribute to the development of the general culture and intercultural understanding.

We would like to congratulate that the first women's Lithuanian ritinis(ripka) championship held in Lithuania in 2023.





Funded by
the European Union

LITHUANIAN FOLK WRESTLING “RISTYNĖS”



LITHUANIA



TERMINOLOGY

- **Bridge and Half-Bridge Positions:** Bridge and Half-Bridge Positions are used for both defence and offence in combat.
- **Dynamic stretching:** Dynamic stretching exercises are designed to prepare muscles and joints for intense physical activity.
- **Formation Exercises:** Formation exercises are designed to teach basic positions and movements.
- **Lifting:** The lifting action is lifting the opponent's body off the ground so that no part of the body, arm or leg, is reaching the ground. Lifting is done with the whole body: in a half-squatting position with the back straight and keeping the grip as low and close to the centre of gravity as possible. When picking up an opponent, the gap between the action and the opponent shall be as small as possible to prevent the opponent from escaping.
- **On-the-spot Exercises:** On-the-spot exercises are designed to develop body strength, flexibility and balance.
- **Parterre:** A position in which the fighter may be on his back, bridge or half-bridge position, on his stomach, or with both folded limbs touching the ground.
- **Ristynes:** Traditional Lithuanian wrestling, recognised as the country's intangible cultural heritage.
- **Static Stretching:** Static stretching is to relax muscles after intense exercise.
- **Standing:** This is a fighting body position. The legs are slightly bent and stand shoulder-width apart, with one foot in front. This leg position is required to react, attack or defend. Everyone will find his or her own comfortable position. Arms bent and slightly extended forward to control the distance. Head slightly bent with forward.
- **Pushrod:** A strategic form of play designed to improve balance, strength and tactical positioning in combat.

HISTORY & INTRODUCTION

Ristynės in Lithuania, it is a testament to the country's rich cultural heritage. This traditional style of wrestling originates from different regions of Lithuania and reflects the unique conditions and customs of each area. The Lietuviškų ristynių federacija (LRF) has carefully developed the modern rules governing the sport based on historical descriptions of wrestling bouts. Stanislav Bajurin, together with Andrius Janionis, Tomas Gėrve and Jevgenij Belov, came together for this purpose. Stanislav is a famous Lithuanian freestyle wrestling representative whose experience was invaluable in shaping the modern system. "Rooted in the ancient traditions of freestyle wrestling, Ristynės embodies the essence of Lithuanian martial arts, emphasizing strategy, agility and strength. The initial and most important contribution to the revival of Ristynės was made by Tomas Gėrve together with Andrius Janionis. They found and collected all the historical and folkloric descriptions of the Ristynės that were available at the time.

The LRF was created with the aim of revitalising the Ristynės. The development concept was chosen using the opportunity to participate in large festivals organized in Lithuania. During the festival, it is organized educational events together with competitions. The competitions were made between festival visitors or fighters of different wrestling styles invited in advance. Over time, the necessary documents and materials are submitted to the Lithuanian National Centre for Culture in order to have Ristynės recognized as an intangible cultural heritage. As a further step, aimed to include traditional games in the Lithuanian school system and it is also successfully implemented.





PREPARATIONS & EQUIPMENT

The preparation of the Ristynes is based on minimal equipment that reflects its traditional origin and availability.

- **Sportwear:** Participants usually wear light, comfortable and mobile clothing, such as shorts and T-shirts. While special wrestling shoes can improve traction and stability, they are not necessary as Ristiness often takes place on natural surfaces.
- **Equipment:** Wrestling is mainly an individual sport, no special team equipment is required. However, for training purposes, basic wrestling mats or padded surfaces can be used to reduce impact and ensure safety during training.
- **Number of Players:** Wrestling can be practiced individually or in small groups, under the guidance of a coach or experienced professional. Individual training allows individuals to concentrate on technique and concentration, while group sessions provide the opportunity to spar and improve tactics. A minimum of two participants is usually ideal for meaningful training, promoting camaraderie and competition in a training environment.

WARM-UP EXERCISES

It is recommended to include a brisk run to raise the heart rate and prepare the body for physical activity.

- Perform various walking exercises focusing on different techniques and body positions.
- Engage in dynamic movements involving arm and leg actions.
- Practice walking with specific techniques suitable for the sport.
- Perform a short duration of running on toes to further activate lower body muscles.
- Engage in a series of exercises targeting different muscle groups, including circles rotations of the head, leg bends, torso rotations, etc.
- Learn and practice different stances essential for the sport, focusing on distributing body weight and readiness for grabs.
- Understand the positions and roles of participants in different situations, such as parterre positions.
- Learn and practice bridge and half-bridge positions, essential for defensive and offensive maneuvers.
- Study various techniques for grabbing and releasing opponents, including wrist grips, neck grabs, and torso clasps.
- Participate in team challenges to develop strength and teamwork.
- Engage in individual challenges to test and improve strength and agility.
- Conclude the lesson with gentle stretching exercises to relax muscles and improve flexibility.



HOW TO PLAY

The aim of the bout is to put the opponent on both scapulae of the back, which is considered a dangerous position. If the opponent can not leave the dangerous position within 5 seconds, the referee stops the match and the athlete who put his opponent on his back wins. The fight lasts 2 rounds of 2 minutes with a break of 30 seconds. During this time the winner will be declared the one who will collect more points. You can win early by putting on your back or by collecting a 10-point advantage. To put the opponent in the parterre and take a position behind the opponent is estimated at 1 point. All actions in the parterre that put the opponent in a dangerous position are evaluated in 2 points. Throws from the standing are evaluated in 3 points. Throws from the standing with a large amplitude of the throw is evaluated in 5 points. It is possible to grapt the opponent with hands only for the body above the waist, with feet it is possible to make pick-ups or hooks only for the legs of the opponent. It is not allowed to tail the clothes, to make blows, scratch, bite, spit, not to listen to the judge's remarks, grab the hair, talk, strangle and make joints break. In Lithuanian wrestling there is a belt that can be grabbed and various actions can be performed in order to put the opponent in a dangerous position.

Usually in Lithuania competitions are held in the street and fight on the hay, which is scattered in the form of a circle with a diameter of 6 meters. Leaving the fight beyond the boundaries of the territory of the fight is punished by one point, which the judge gives to the opponent who was the last to stay in the circle of the territory where the fight takes place. In parterre the judge gives usually 10 seconds of time to the opponents to make actions. If the actions that could lead to the result do not take place, the judge raises the opponents to the rack and there is a continuation of the fight.

To improve, we recommend watching videos of different wrestling styles to see which style is more interesting and then finding a wrestling club in your city.



LET'S PRACTISE

Practical sessions are designed to develop the necessary wrestling skills.

- **Acrobatic exercises:**

It is necessary to include acrobatic exercises in the preparation in order to develop the vestibular apparatus and the skill of falling correctly. It is suggested to include the most basic lower somersaults in the programme.

1. Forward lower somersaults (roll)

Technique:

- 1) Grouping. Squat down, back rounded, chin pressed against chest, arms straight with palms on the floor.
- 2) Pushing. Lean forward with your legs braced against each other, slowly straightening your legs and withdrawing your toes. Arms and legs are slightly bent.
- 3) Turn around. With a careful bend, but without resting your neck and head on the floor, perform a twist along the line of your spine. Your upper back should touch the floor for the first time (at about shoulder blade level). It is important that the body does not sway from side to side.
- 4) Lifting. Assume a sitting and lifting position, but keep your hands off the floor. Bend your knees, assume a standing position and raise your arms upwards.

With sufficient experience, the forward lower somersault can be performed several times in succession without stopping.

2. Lower somersaults in the back (roll):

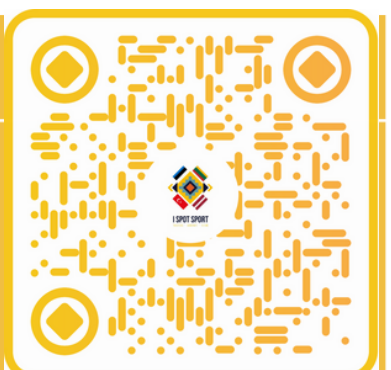
A more complex aerobic element. It is important to master the grouping technique and learn to roll forward before performing it. Speed is important in this exercise as the lower somersaults in the back is performed due to the inertia of the body.

Technique:

- 1) Assume a seated position, with your palms resting lightly on the floor, so that you can later perform the push-off. Keep your chin pressed against your chest.
- 2) For a strong enough push, shift the weight of the body to the arms. Push off, brace yourself and quickly turn back.
- 3) When your shoulder blades touch the mat, rest your hands on your shoulders, perform an overhead bend and return to the starting position.

3. Long forward lower somersaults (roll):

This is a combination of a flip and a jump. Use a strong initial push to perform it. This will increase the inertia of the body and the speed of the exercise.



ATTENTION:

Although it is a basic element of aerobatics, mistakes are often made while learning acrobatics because it is not easy. To get closer to your ideal result, follow your coach's instructions.

The worst mistake in a lower somersault is not pressing the chin to the chest and shifting the weight of the body to the head.

Other mistakes when performing the exercise:

- loose grouping;
- incorrect hug circumference in the back flip (too low or too high);
- elbows strongly separated;
- palms too close to the feet in the forward lower somersault;
- weak push;
- rolling too slowly;
- tilting the body to the side, over the shoulder.

TIPS FOR A BETTER TECHNIQUE:

- Perform the lower somersault from a half squat.
- After the push-off, bring your body forward and place your hands on the floor at least 60–80 cm from your toes.
- Perform the lower somersault in groups according to the technique described above. Bend your legs over your knees as your shoulder blades touch the floor.
- Do not perform a long somersault without proper preparation. This can be both intimidating and traumatic for beginners.

3. Bridge from lying position:

- 1) Lie on your back.
- 2) Raise your arms in front of you, as if you were resting your palms on the wall. Then gently lower your arms next to your head so that your elbows are pointing towards the ceiling and your fingers are pointing towards your feet.
- 3) Bend your legs over your knees, bringing your heels as close to your buttocks as possible.
- 4) Exhaling, push the body upwards, straightening the knees. Try to touch the carpet with your nose.
- 5) Hold the bridge as long as you can, then gently lower yourself to the floor.

4. Body control:

1. Wrist control: Standing upright, take each other's wrist. The aim is to get out of the hold and control the opponent's wrists. Initially there is little resistance. Then resistance can be increased.

2. Hand control: Standing one gives up one hand. The other takes the hand from outside. One hand takes under the armpit and the other hand takes the wrist. One holds the opponent's arm close to the body and keep it but not fully power. On the signal, the one who has given up his hand must to remove by hand, the one who has taken his hand must hold on and not let go of the hand.

The technique to escape from such a grab is to come closer to the opponent's body and to take the opponent's elbows and pull him towards you. By pulling the person towards you, the grab will be less strong and you can get out of the grab. Another way is to dig into the opponent's head with your free hand and push with his head and with your other pull towards you.

The exercise is given for a short time (15–20 seconds) then the other hand is used. Later on, the person who used to give up his hand now takes opponent hand.

3. Body Control: Standing in a standing position, opponents face each other and embrace. During the hug, one arm goes under the opponent's arm, the other over the opponent's arm. Head on the side where the arm goes over the opponent's arm. A task is given: one must not let go, the other must get out of the hold.

Technique to break out of the grab: with the arm which over the opponent's arm, bend and elbow the elbow of the opponent's arm at the bend and press the ground with all your weight to break the opponent's grab.

Allow time (15–20 seconds) for the charge to be completed and then take the other side. Afterwards, it changes what time the opponent has to get out of the hold by himself.

5. Lifting:

1. Behind the hull: position as described in pickup (3. Body Control). The aim is to lift the opponent first after the signal. The time to complete the task is given (15–20 seconds).

2. Behind the body, back to back: The position is similar to the one described in take-up (3 Body Control), except that they turn their backs to each other. Only they do not pick up by the body but embrace each other with their arms. The aim is to see who can lift the opponent first after the signal. The time to perform the task is given (15–20 seconds).

6. Develop a reaction:

1. Touch the opponent's leg: The goal is to touch the bend of the opponent's leg with your hand within a certain time. Time is allocated for the task (30–40 seconds).

2. Touch the leg with leg: Standing in a stance facing each other. Hands behind the back and they are not used during the task. The aim is to be able to stomp on the opponent's knees as much as possible together for a given time. Time to complete the task is given (30–40 seconds).

3. Put opponent on stomach: Stands on all fours as if to perform push-ups. The aim is to be able to knock the opponent down on their stomach as many times as possible using only their arms and without getting up. The knees must not touch the ground and the pelvis must not be raised high. In order to knock the opponent down you have to grab his hands. Time to complete the task is given (30–40 seconds).

4. Pushrod: Stand facing each other. Distance with outstretched hand. Legs stand in line (frontal stance). Aim is to force the opponent to move from the spot. Only palms may be touched on palms. Do not touch the opponent's body or grab a fingers.

Wrestling task:

They kneel down on their knees and, on the instructor's instructions, they have to lie completely on each other's backs. The students cannot stand on their feet. Time is given to complete the task (30–40 seconds).

GOOD PRACTICE

Before the pandemic, representatives of the Lietuviškų ristinų federacija (LRF) started organising a cycle of training sessions in Vilnius to promote this traditional Lithuanian sport. During the training sessions, people of all ages and social backgrounds had the opportunity to get acquainted with the world of ristinės (wrestling), promoting intercultural understanding and cooperation.

Although the pandemic temporarily put a stop to this activity, one of the participants of the ristinės training decided to take the initiative and organise summer camps for children. These camps were aimed at Ukrainian war refugee children to help them integrate into their new environment and learn about Lithuanian culture.

One day a week was dedicated to playing Lithuanian traditional games, which helped the children to better understand and get involved in the local culture. These activities not only gave them the opportunity to see Lithuania as a country of refuge, but also as a friendly and welcoming community.

By playing Lithuanian games, these children not only gained new skills and experiences but also felt more integrated into their new environment. This activity is a good example of how sport and culture can become a connecting factor for intercultural dialogue and social integration.





Funded by
the European Union

MANGALA



TÜRKİYE



TERMINOLOGY

Pits – is the name given to the 12 cavities on the game board. It is also called house or hollow.

Treasure Pit – Each of the 6 pits has a large pit on the side. These large pits are called treasures for the players. Each player collects his stones in these so-called treasure pit. The pits on the player's right side is the player's treasure.

Empty Pit – A pit with no stones.

Repeat – When a player wins the right to move again by making an addition to his own pit.





HISTORY & INTRODUCTION

As a respected game in Turkish culture, Mangala is not only a game of chance, but also a strategic and enjoyable pastime. Deeply rooted in the social and cultural fabric of Türkiye, this game has been a part of the country's history since the emergence of the coffeehouse culture in Istanbul in 1554. Drawing attention with its presence in historical records and its unique gameplay, Mangala is a symbol of Turkish heritage. Mangala game was found for the first time in history as a result of the researches conducted in Göbeklitepe. The fact that the mangala game field was found in the researches carried out in Göbeklitepe settlement, which is the oldest known cult structures in the world, located near Örencik village, 18 kilometres away from Şanlıurfa city centre, shows that the origin of the Mangala game is quite old. If we take the foundation year of Göbeklitepe as a basis, the mangala game has also exhibited an existence dating back to 11400 BC.

The game reflects the strategic thinking of the Turkish people. A saga woven through centuries of empire-building and defence, the history of the nomadic Turkish people is deeply intertwined with strategy and the art of war. This inherent relationship has not only shaped their historical narratives but has also left an indelible mark on the cultural landscape of the regions they have influenced. One of these traces, although part of a broader tradition of pit-based games of which 125 variants have been identified in Türkiye alone, Turkish Mangala differs from others in that the stones represent "soldiers" and the pits represent "castles". This distinguishes it from other pit-based games where the stones are called "seeds". Another difference is that one of the stones taken is left in its own pit. In other pit-based games, there is no dropping of stones into one's own pit. In Mangala, on the other hand, the rule of leaving a stone in one's own pit is a reflection of the tradition of protecting one's father's home in Turkish social life. The pairing procedure in mangala, or "Kılıç" rule in the Ottoman variation, is based on the principle that "there can be no double-headedness in the state". The administration of the state must always be single. The advice that double-headedness can cause discord and separation is tried to be given with this rule. According to the rule, if the last piece lands in an empty pit, the player adds all the pieces in the opponent's pit opposite the empty pit to his own treasure. This rule teaches the opponent not to rely on his presence and the player to always have hope. As can be seen, it is very important to understand the cultural context of Mangala in order to understand Turkish culture



PREPARATIONS & EQUIPMENT

Mangala is a two-player strategy game that requires minimal equipment and can be enjoyed easily.

Number of Player: 2 players

Mangala Board: This can be a traditional wooden board with 12 pits (two rows of six) or a commercially available set made of plastic or other materials.

48 Stones: These can be pebbles, beads, shells, or any small objects of equal size. Traditionally, some sets use seeds for the stones.



WARM-UP EXERCISES

Before delving into a game of Mangala, players can benefit from mental and strategic warm-up exercises.

Duration: 10– 15 minutes

Workshop Structure:

Alternate Nostril Breathing (Nadi Shodhana): Close your right nostril with your thumb and inhale slowly through your left nostril. Hold your breath for a comfortable count of 4, then close your left nostril with your ring finger and exhale slowly through your right nostril. Repeat this process, inhaling through the right nostril and exhaling through the left. Continue for several cycles, focusing on the sensation of your breath.

Duration: 10 – 15 minutes

Workshop Structure:

The "5 Senses" Game: Ask participants to close their eyes and focus on their senses. Have them identify 5 things they can see, hear, smell, taste (if appropriate), and touch in the surrounding environment.

Duration: 5 – 10 minutes

Workshop Structure:

The "Counting Backwards" Challenge: Challenge participants to count backwards from a random number (like 100) by a specific interval (like 3s) while avoiding distractions.



HOW TO PLAY

Game Setup:

The game is played with 2 people and consists of a board with 12 small pits and two large treasure pits, arranged in two rows of 6 pits each. Each player has 6 of these small pits and one treasure pit. The game starts with 48 stones and each player has 24 stones evenly distributed (4 in each pit). The treasure pits shall be left empty.

Objective:

The aim is to collect as many stones as possible in their treasure pits. The winner is the player who has the most stones in his treasure pit at the end of the game.

Main Rules:

1 – Last Stone Rule & Last Stone Falls into Its Own Treasure Pit:

Players drop one of the stones from any pit on their side into the pit from which they took the stones and distribute the remaining stones, one at a time, to the counterclockwise pits (i.e. to the right). If the last stone drops into their treasure pit, they get the right to play again. If a player has only one stone in his pit, he can move it to the pit to his right. In such a case, it is the opponent's turn to move. As you can see, the last stone always decides fate.

2- Stone Capturing:

After dropping a stone from his own pit, the player distributes the remaining stones counterclockwise and continues to drop the remaining stones one by one into the opponent's pits, even if he still has a stone left after dropping a stone into his treasure chest. If there is an even number of stones in the opponent's pit (together with the last dropped stone) (2-4-6-8), the player captures all the stones in that pit and puts them in the treasure chest. In such a case, it is the opponent's turn to move.

3- Empty Pit Rule: If the last stone is left in an empty pit on the player's side and there are stones in the opposite pit on the opponent's side, the player captures the stones in both his own and the opponent's pit and puts them in the treasure pit. In such a case, it is the opponent's turn to move.

4 – The End of the Game: The game ends when all the pits on one side are empty. The first player to empty his side captures all the stones remaining on his opponent's side and puts them in his treasure chest.



Important: If a player distributes the stones from his own pits and still has stones left in his hand even after he has distributed his stones to the opponent's pits, he cannot drop any stones into the opponent's treasure pit, he continues to distribute the remaining stones counterclockwise to his own pits.

The game ends when one side has emptied all its stones; the player with the most stones in his treasury wins.

Mangala is played in sets of 5 games and points are awarded for a win, a loss and a draw. 1 point is awarded for a win, 0 points for a loss and 0.5 points for a draw.

Alternative Gameplay: Castle Rule

This variation introduces the concept of a "castle" pit, changing the way players capture stones and establish control over the pits. In this way of playing, rules 1 and 2 described above apply, while rules 3 and 4 do not. Instead, when a player distributes the stones, if the last stone is dropped into one of the opponent's pits and the number of stones in the pit reaches 3 (together with the one dropped), the pit is captured by the player who dropped the stone. Players can build only 1 castle per set and cannot build a castle in pit 6 (the pit to the far right of each player, before the treasure).

The capture of an opponent's pit means the following:

"To be the owner of any stones that your opponent or yourself may put in the future."

When applying the Castle Rule, the rule of leaving stones in the treasury during the distribution of stones is abolished. This does not necessarily mean that rule 1 is invalid. If the last stone goes to the treasury, rule 1 applies in the same way. However, if, for example, a player has more than one stone in his hand despite having left one stone in each of his own pits, the player continues to distribute stones to the opponent's pits without leaving any stones in his treasury.

The game ends when one of the players runs out of stones. Unlike the other game, when a player runs out of stones, he cannot take his opponent's stones; the remaining player puts his stones in his own treasury.

The game ends when one side finishes all its stones, the player with the most stones in his treasury wins.



DID YOU KNOW?



Mangala, inscribed on the UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage List in 2020, features 12 pits symbolizing months and 4 stones per pit representing weeks, with the left and right treasures alluding to East and West.

INTERESTING FACT



GOOD PRACTICE

The 'Mangala ile Engelleri Yıkılım" project, organized by Denizli Municipality City Council Youth Group for Communication without Barriers and supported by the European Union, implemented by the City Council Youth Assembly in 2013 to promote and spotlight Mangala, a strategy and intelligence game with a long history in Turkish communities. And to raise awareness in the lives of disabled individuals, mangala trainings were given to approximately 35 people from 3 different disabled associations through the City Council Disability Assembly. 10 trainers from Balıkesir Youth Center, one of the project partners, provided trainings on the game for 4 days.

During these sessions, young people from three different disability groups, namely physical, visual and hearing, and Youth Assembly volunteers came together for 4 days. During this time, young people who carried out a wide variety of activities together ingeniously crafted Mangala Sets from plastic bottles and cardboard, fostering effective teamwork.

The project concluded with a well-attended Mangala Tournament at the City Council Building, where 18 disabled and 14 non-disabled individuals competed.

The main purpose of the project was to bring disabled and non-disabled individuals together with the Traditional Turkish Game Mangala and to enable them to collaborate and at the same time to eliminate the existing prejudices. On the other hand, to raise awareness by increasing the revitalize the interest for the forgotten Mangala Game.

Denizli Municipality City Council opened all its doors to all citizens, regardless of disabilities and invited everyone to learn and play the historical Mangala Game, emphasizing inclusivity and community engagement.





Funded by
the European Union

TRADITIONAL TURKISH ARCHERY



TÜRKİYE





TERMINOLOGY

- **Anchor Point:** A consistent spot on the archer's face (e.g., corner of the mouth, under the chin) where the hand or string comes to rest when the bow is fully drawn.
- **Flight Archery:** A discipline focusing on shooting arrows over the longest possible distance, at which Turkish archers historically excelled.
- **Nocking the Arrow:** The process of placing the arrow on the bow's arrow rest and attaching the arrow's nock to the bowstring.
- **Recurve Bow:** A type of bow where the tips curve away from the archer when unstrung, storing more energy for a powerful shot. The Turkish recurve bow is renowned for its efficiency and compact design.
- **Target Archery:** Shooting arrows at a fixed target at known distances, practiced in various forms in Turkey for centuries.
- **Three-Under:** A bowstring hold and release technique where the archer places three fingers under the arrow nock, often used for better control and alignment.
- **Thumb Ring ("Zihgir"):** A protective ring worn on the thumb used in drawing the bowstring in the Turkish and other Eastern archery traditions.
- **Quiver:** A container for holding arrows. Turkish archers historically used decorative and functional quivers.





HISTORY & INTRODUCTION

Archery, an ancient practice dating back tens of thousands of years, holds a significant place in human history and continues to be relevant in the modern world. Its importance transcends the mere act of shooting arrows from a bow; it encompasses cultural, historical, psychological, and physical dimensions, making it a multifaceted discipline that offers a range of benefits and insights.

Archery is a sport, art, and skill of using a bow to propel arrows. The origins of archery can be traced back to the Stone Age (around 20,000 BC) for hunting and warfare. As civilizations advanced, so did the techniques and importance of archery.

Archery has been integral to many cultures around the globe, from the ancient Egyptians and Chinese to the Native Americans and the Mongols, who considered it not only a critical survival skill but also a central aspect of their military prowess. In medieval Europe, archery was pivotal in warfare—English longbowmen, for instance, played a decisive role in the Hundred Years' War. The bow and arrow have also been prominent in mythology, folklore, and literature, symbolizing various themes such as love (Cupid's bow), freedom, and heroism.

In many societies, archery has evolved into a ceremonial and competitive sport, with traditions and rituals that reinforce communal bonds and cultural identity. Turkish archery, for example, is celebrated for its historical significance and as a demonstration of skill and discipline. Similarly, Japanese Kyudo is considered a form of moving meditation, emphasizing the spiritual journey over hitting the target.

A significant chapter in the history of archery is the development of Turkish archery, which became renowned during the times of the Ottoman Empire. Turkish archery is renowned for its emphasis on technique, speed and skill in shooting at long distances particularly in historical contexts where archers fired rapidly from horseback. Their equipment, particularly the Turkish recurve bow, was highly specialized for mobility and efficiency, featuring a compact design that made it ideal for use on horseback. Practitioners of Turkish archery also followed a spiritual and philosophical approach, viewing archery as a discipline for character development and meditation. The Ottomans also established archery as a science and an art, with detailed manuals on technique, training, and bow construction.

Archery involves the bow, the arrow, and the archer. The key to mastering archery lies in understanding the equipment and developing the skill to use it effectively.



PREPARATIONS & EQUIPMENT

Number of Player: It can be done individually or as a group.

Turkish Bow: Characterized by its recurve design, the Turkish bow is known for its power and portability.

Arrows: Lightweight and carefully crafted to match the bow's draw strength and the archer's draw length.

Thumb Ring: Essential for the traditional thumb draw technique, protecting the archer's thumb during release.

Target: As a sport, the aim of archery is to hit the target. For this reason a target is needed.

Sportswear: Clothes and sports shoes are recommended to ensure comfortable movement during archery.





WARM – UP EXERCISES

Proper warm-up and conditioning are crucial in archery to prevent injuries and improve performance. Exercises should focus on the upper body, especially the arms, shoulders, and back. Please note that the warm-up movements here are beginner level, if you are going to apply an intensive programme, it is recommended to do more repetitive and varied warm-up movements.

Rotator Cuff Warm-Up is essential for shoulder health, involving light weights or resistance bands.

- Extend the arms forward parallel to the floor, rise on the fingertips and pull them to the sides. (15 Repetitions)
- Draw small circles with your shoulders. (15 Repetitions for each)
- Draw small circles on the arms parallel to the ground on the side (15 Repetitions for each).
- In the same position, move the arms back and forth from the shoulder (shoulder blades will open and close) (15 Repetitions)

Planks and Core Exercises is important for a strong core to improve stability and posture during shooting. (5 minutes)

One-arm Dumbbell Lateral Raises: Archers shall develop strong back, shoulder, and arm muscles to handle the bow's draw weight effectively. Grab your weight (or start without). Stand with your feet shoulder-width apart. Now put your other arm on your waist for support. Lift the other arm up and to the side at a ninety-degree angle. (3 sets x10 repetitions)

Multi-plane Head Movement Sequence: Slowly tilt the head forward, backward left and then right. Finally look over your left shoulder and then over your right. (15 Repetitions)

Pushing the wall with hands (30 sec.)

Hands under the chin and pulling and twisting for a certain period of time (1 min.)

ATTENTION, SAFETY FIRST!

The most important issue in archery is safety. For this reason, safety precautions shall be strictly observed. ***Please do not try shooting without an instructor and follow the instructions.***



- **Never drawing a bow without an arrow,**
- **Never pointing a bow at another person,**
- **Do not shoot when there's someone in front of you,**
- **Do not go to collect arrows until everyone has finished shooting in case of group arrow shooting**

HOW TO PLAY

1- Stance:

Stance looks like the easiest part of archery, on the other hand, a proper stance is the basis of a shooting arrow and a good shot. The most common stance is the square stance, where you stand perpendicular to the target with your feet shoulder-width apart, parallel to the shooting line and feet should be angled 10 degrees outwards. Shoulders, waist, hips and feet should be towards the target. It means that when you open your arms to two sides, it should be parallel to the aim. And also the body weight should be distributed evenly on both feet.

This position offers stability and balance, making it easier to align the body and aim consistently.

ATTENTION:

- If the stance is too wide, the lower part of the body builds upper tension and this effects the whole body negatively.
- If the shoulders are not in the right position, it won't be possible to maintain a proper body axis and spoils the straight-up posture.
- If the waist is not in the proper position, the inflexible muscles that form the waist relax and waist starts turning during the shot.
- If the feet degrees are more than 10 degree, the hip bone will widen and the center of the body will shift towards the heels and the chest will elevate. In case the feet degrees are less than 10 degree, the center of the body will shift to the front.
- If the body weight cannot be distributed on both feet, the archer moves unconsciously at full draw.

2-Gripping the Bow:

Holding the bow correctly is crucial for control and accuracy. The grip on the bow handle should be relaxed to prevent torque, which can twist the bow and affect the arrow's flight. The nods should be at a 45-degree angle to the bow, and the pressure should be on the base of the thumb, not the palm. While shooting, all the fingers gripping the bow in the meantime should be relaxed. Use a relaxed grip to hold the bow with the non-dominant hand. The direction of the force applied on the bow handle should be right toward the center of the target.

- If the force or the tension is felt on the fingers, the palm will start feeling the same tension. In this case, the archer feels the pressure on the arm holding the bow.



3-Nocking the Arrow:

While taking the arrow out of the quiver, it should be held close to the nocking point with only two fingers. Place the arrow on the arrow rest of your bow and clip the arrow's nock onto the bowstring under the nocking point. Ensure the arrow is seated properly on the nocking point, be sure that the knot is set on the string right and that the orientation of the cock feather is correct to avoid contact with the bow upon release.

4-Bowstring:

The bowstring should be placed on the 1st nodes of the index, middle and ring fingers. According to the hand types, the first nodes are different. On the other hand, the archer should align the first nodes of the index, middle and ring fingers. For this, the archer should usually bend the middle finger more than the other fingers.

- It is very important to practice the bowstring before drawing the bow.

TIME TO SHOOT!

5-Be Ready for Shooting:

Locate the body properly and relax. The arm holding the bow should be slightly turned clockwise to activate the rear arm and shoulder muscles. It will help to stabilize the shoulder holding the bow before drawing. This also helps to prevent the bowstring from hitting the bow holding arm.

Archer should raise his/her arms, from the front, the bow hand, the drawing hand, and the elbow should be seen in line.

For the correct position, follow the instructions of the instructor. The instructor will give the instructions as follows:

- Bring your body in an upright position,
- Make sure your feet stand at a 10-degree angle
- Open your arms to two sides, shoulders should be in a straight way and relaxed
- Turn your heads towards the target,
- Draw the bow

6-Drawing the Bow: Drawing the bow refers to pulling back the bowstring. The archer should use the dominant hand to draw, and employ the muscles in the back rather than just the arm. This is achieved by engaging the shoulder blades and pulling them together as his/her draw the string back to the anchor point—a consistent spot on the face, such as the corner of the mouth or slightly under the chin.

The bow should be held vertically and not be tilted in other directions. If the archer tilts the bow to other directions, it will affect the shoot negatively. Besides, not only draw the string but also the archer should push the bow toward target with the arm holding the bow.

The power balance should be maintained between the two arms (the one holding the bow and the one drawing the bowstring) equally. From the front, the bow, arrow and the drawing arm should be in the same line toward the aim.

7-Anchor Point: The anchor point is where your hand or string comes to rest on your face. Consistency in your anchor point is critical for accuracy. Many archers have multiple anchor points, such as touching the tip of the nose with the string and the index finger under the chin.

- If the string does not touch the center of the nose and touch the right, the sight will be too far to the left, so the arrow might hit the right side of the target.
- If the string does not touch the center of the nose and touch the left, the sight will be too far to the right, so the arrow might hit the left side of the target.

8-Aiming and Focus: For a proper aim, the eye, the bowstring, the sight, and the target should be in the same line. Besides, not to start aiming from the bottom is very important to aim better.

- If the string is on the right, the arrow might hit the left.
- If the string is on the left side, the arrow might hit the right.

9-Releasing the Arrow: The release should be smooth and consistent. Use a back-tension release method, where the force of drawing the bow is held with the back muscles, and the fingers relax to let the string slip out. This minimizes movement and results in a cleaner shot. Hand movement should finish right under the ear. The release should be made when drawing the elbow back and opening the fingers at the same time.

- The release should be made with equal power on the push and pull movement.

10-Follow-Through: The shot is not complete when the arrow shoots out of the bow, it does when the arrow hits the target.

Shooting Procedures: Archers shoot in order, following designated commands to shoot and retrieve arrows. Without commands, archers shall not shoot.

Scoring: Targets are marked with rings, each with a point value. The closer to the center, the higher the score. Scoring may change according to the type of competition.

TIPS FOR THE BEGINNERS



Equipment Choice: Start with equipment that matches your physical capabilities and the style of archery you wish to pursue.

Learn Proper Form: Focus on mastering the basics of stance, grip, draw, and release.

Consistent Practice: Regular practice is essential for improvement.

Mindfulness and Patience: Archery is as much a mental skill as a physical one. Develop focus, patience, and discipline.

Coaching: Seek guidance from experienced archers or coaches.

Use technology and feedback to your advantage. High-speed cameras can help analyze your technique in slow motion, revealing areas for improvement. Apps and software designed for archers can track your performance over time. Be open to adjusting your technique based on feedback from coaches, experienced archers, or your own observations.

DID YOU KNOW?



- Bows and arrows have served various purposes beyond warfare, including as tools for divination. For example, the Huns would collect straight sorghum wood sticks into bundles. On specific days, they would separate these sticks to cast spells and predict future events.
- In Turkish culture, archery isn't just about warfare; it's deeply symbolic. Proverbs like "The arrow came out of the bow" represent irreversible actions, while "It pierced my liver like an arrow" conveys deep upset. "To rush out like an arrow." means to get up suddenly from one's place and rush forward quickly.
- Old Turkish poetry often drew parallels between beauty and archery. Poets likened their lovers' dimples and eyelashes to arrows. In parallel to this, they likened her eyebrows to a bow.
- In old Turkish texts like the "Book of Dede Korkut," young Turkmen men dedicated their leisure time to mastering archery. Wedding festivities often featured competitions, including one where the groom and his friends organized arrow races. An intriguing tradition involved an archery contest between the groom and the woman he wished to marry. If the man won in contests such as horseback riding, archery, and wrestling, it showed he was fit for marriage, allowing him to marry.

INTERESTING FACT



GOOD PRACTICE

Kemankeş Project” was launched on October 19, 2017 with the slogan “Turkish Archery on the World Stage!” in cooperation with the Archers Foundation and Yunus Emre Institute.

The Kemankeş Turkish archery exhibition took place in Okmeydanı, where the heart of this sport beat in history. In Okmeydanı, which Sultan Mehmet the Conqueror dedicated to the archers in his army, archery was at the highest level of all nations on earth. In recent years, the lodge hosted the first archery exhibition with original materials, many of which will be seen for the first time in the world.

In addition to the exhibition, Turkish Archery training courses were provided in 32 countries within the scope of the project. The project began with the training of 32 trainees who participated in the 1st Turkish archery courses held in 16 countries. These trainees later attended the 2nd Turkish archery training of trainees program and the Kemankeş Project World Mix Finals. Malaysian archers claimed the top position in the finals, followed by teams from Germany and Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The Kemankeş Project initially commenced at Yunus Emre Institute's branches in 16 countries in 2018, including Germany (Berlin), Bosnia and Herzegovina (Mostar), Morocco (Rabat), Palestine (Ramallah), Iran (Tehran), Japan (Tokyo), Qatar (Doha), Kazakhstan (Nur-Sultan), Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (Nicosia), Lebanon (Tripoli), Malaysia (Kuala Lumpur), Egypt (Cairo), Poland (Warsaw), Serbia (Belgrade, Novi Pazar), Sudan (Khartoum), and Jordan (Amman). Archers from these countries participated in the first two archery training courses.

Following discussions between Yunus Emre Institute and the Archers' Foundation, the Kemankeş Project expanded to 10 more countries where Yunus Emre Institute was active. Turkish archery training courses were introduced in Albania (Tirana), Australia (Melbourne), Azerbaijan (Baku), Bosnia and Herzegovina (Sarajevo), Georgia (Tbilisi), Croatia (Zagreb), Montenegro (Podgorica), Hungary (Budapest), Macedonia (Skopje), Pakistan (Lahore), and Tunisia (Tunis).

Moreover, 11 exhibitions were held on the themes of “Turkish Archery in the Ottoman Period with Miniatures”, “Archery Heritage in Turkish-Islamic Civilization”, “Turkish Archery with Documents”, “Historical Adventure of Turkish Archery” in addition to the “Kemankeş Turkish Archery” exhibition.

Also, Turkish Archery was included in the curriculum in Malaysia, and approximately 350 high school students took Turkish Archery as an elective course in 2018-2019, 2019-2020 and 2020-2021 academic years at the International Idrissi Schools.





Funded by
the European Union

BLIND CHECKERS



LATVIA



TERMINOLOGY

- **Board:** The square game board consisting of 64 alternating dark and light squares arranged in an 8x8 grid.
- **Combination:** A strategic sequence where sacrificing pieces leads to gaining a numerical or positional advantage over the opponent, ultimately aiming for a favorable outcome or winning position.
- **Endgame:** The phase of a checkers game where most pieces have been captured, and the remaining pieces are strategically maneuvered to achieve a winning position or force a draw.
- **Jump:** A move in which one piece leaps over an opponent's piece, capturing it, and landing on an empty square immediately beyond it. Multiple jumps can be executed consecutively in a single turn if possible. A jump can be performed backward as well.
- **Middlegame:** The phase between the opening and the endgame where players transition from their initial setups to executing tactical plans, controlling key squares, and preparing for the final stage of the game.
- **Opening:** The initial phase where players make early moves to establish control and position their pieces advantageously.
- **Piece:** The game tokens used in checkers, typically round and flat, differing in color to represent each player's pieces.
- **Queen:** A crowned piece in checkers, achieved by reaching the opponent's back rank. Queens have enhanced movement capabilities, allowing them to move multiple squares diagonally both forward and backward.
- **Bocce:** Bocce, sometimes anglicized as bocce ball, bocci, or boccie, is a ball sport belonging to the boules family.

HISTORY & INTRODUCTION

Let us recall that checkers-like games were known several thousand years ago. A game table dating back some 5000 years has been found in the excavations of ancient Ur, game tables and pieces have been found in ancient Egyptian burials, and the game is mentioned in the works of Plato and Homer.

In the modern sense of checkers, World Champions in international checkers have been proclaimed since 1897. The International Checkers Federation was also founded in 1947 by four countries – France, the Netherlands, Belgium and Switzerland.

When we ask ourselves why should we pay more attention to checkers, the answer is impressive. Like bocce, board games such as checkers and chess tend to level the playing field – no matter how fast and strong you are, physical ability is not a factor in mind games. However, there are types of disability for which board games also need to be adapted to equalise athletes' abilities. In this case, we are talking about blind people. Blind people usually use either adapted tools or the environment to enable them to compete. In chess and checkers, this is not easy because the figures are usually distinguished by colour, but the black and white figures are identical in shape.

The simplest way to make distinctions in blind sport is to carve grooves or other distinctions at the base of the figures. In this case, existing shapes are taken and worked. The main problem is that the blind player has to spend time after each move and check by touching the bases of the pieces what has changed on the court. Obviously the official view is that these games are played in the mind, not on the court, and the player has to be able to work out what is going on in the mind, but in reality most players are looking at the court and cannot keep everything just in the mind.

To level the playing field, Bauskas Prātnieks came up with an idea called "Blind Checkers", which at the same time immediately created a prototype of the game – pieces that can be identified by just putting a hand on them, but which are recognisable enough not to cause problems for other players to distinguish between them. Thus, while it usually takes blind people up to ten seconds or more to understand what is happening on the field when modifying conventional pieces, with the new prototype pieces it takes only a few seconds. The prototype was also rated quite highly by the experts, but unfortunately the project did not go any further because of the reasons such as the blind players who already play chess and checkers are used to the current way of playing and do not want to switch to a new way, even if it would be more profitable or such pieces are relatively expensive, like anything else applied to disability sport and can cost several hundred euros to make one set out of wood.

EQUIPMENT

Special checkers equipment is necessary.



Blind checkers board and pieces



It's important for blind checkers pieces and board to have dents to separate the "whites" and "blacks" by touch

The so-called 'Russian checkers' are popular in Latvia. The game requires a table with two coloured squares (black and white) – 64 in total – and 12 black and 12 white pieces. As checkers is played using only black squares, 'blind' checkers requires a table with circular holes in the diameter of the pieces in the black squares to lock and prevent the pieces from accidentally shifting, it's also important that the "white" and "black" pieces have designs easily distinguishable by touch. Special blind checkers sets can be bought online on big retail sites like Amazon or ordered from wood makers, but the first option will be much less costly.

WARM UP EXERCISES

In contrast to physical sports, no specific warm-up exercises are required. However, in top-level competitions, the most important thing is to be mentally prepared to spend the next several hours at the table before the game starts.

However, it should be remembered that an active lifestyle and good physical condition also have a direct impact on the functioning of the mind. Therefore, moderate physical exercise together with mental exercises that help to develop concentration and 'virtual' memory (when one is able to keep the whole game in one's head) are extremely important for a checkers player.

HOW TO PLAY

The aim of the game is to develop logical thinking, promote understanding of causal reasoning and train memory!

Players play against each other. The player without pieces remaining or who cannot move due to being blocked, loses the game. The white pieces always start the game.

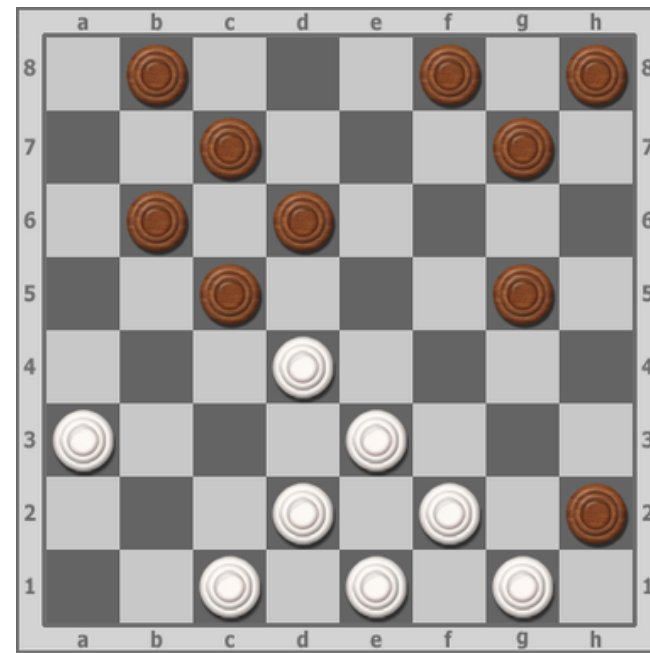
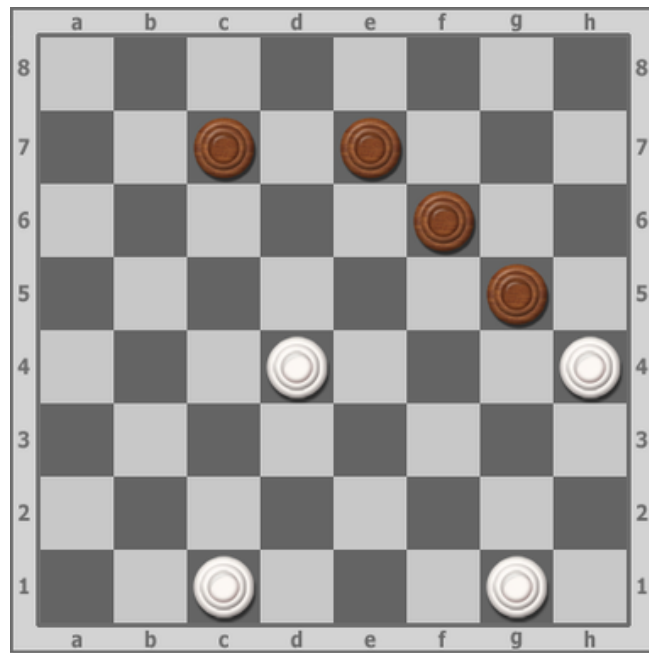
The normal checkers piece goes forward diagonally to the adjacent free black square. White starts the game or makes the first move. If the piece reaches the last square on the opposite side, it turns into a queen. The queen can move diagonally several squares in either direction, forwards or backwards. It may not jump over its own pieces.

It is compulsory to hit the opponent's piece if it is on an adjacent square and the square behind the opponent's piece is free. The hitting player shall stand on this vacant square, jump over the opponent's piece and remove the opponent's piece. The dice are kicked backwards and forwards. In one stroke, the piece must hit as many of the opponent's pieces as are in the path of the striker's piece. This is one move.

The full rules of checkers can be found on the International Checkers Federation website (www.fmjd.org)

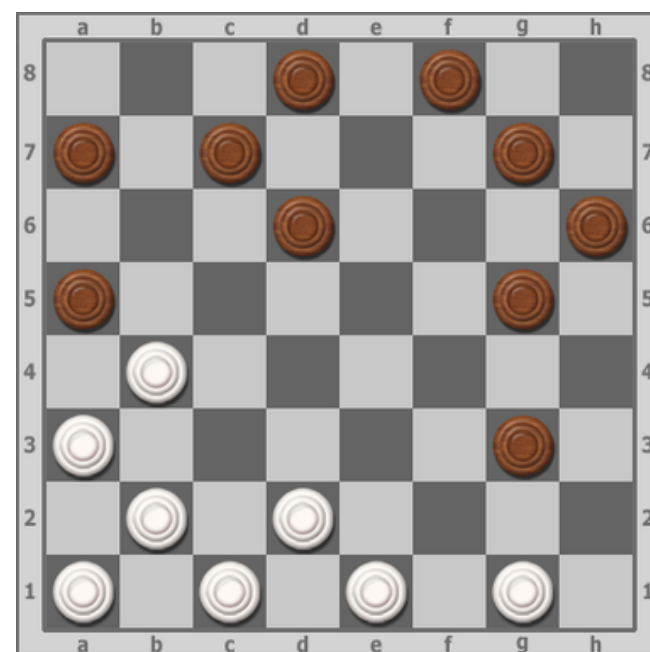
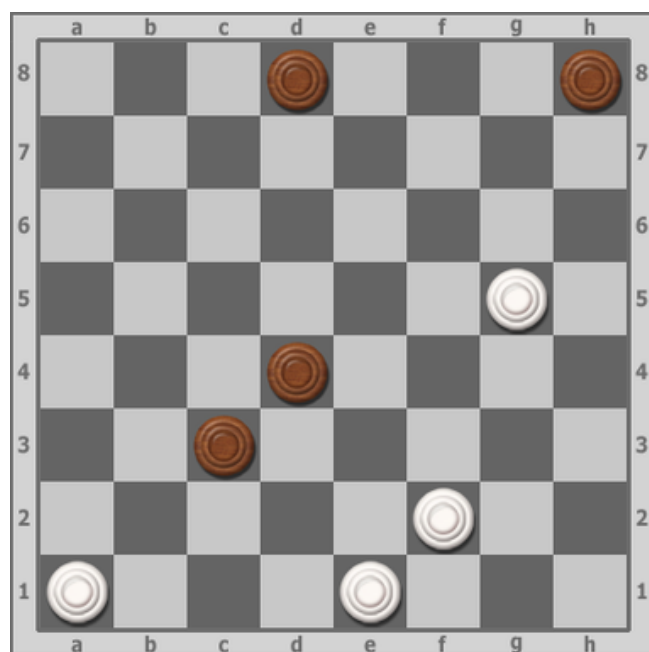
The association "Bauskas Prātņieks" provides an effective training process for future athletes. There are five stages in the process, which in turn are also different depending on the complexity of the tasks. A simple and a very complex example of these steps can be seen in the attached material prepared by the association, which is intended to introduce the game of checkers in 30 minutes. Introductory material is not the same as training – depending on the ability and stamina of each individual, training can last from an hour to two hours or more.

1. The first stage of the training is solving combinations. Again, there are different levels of difficulty – one-move combination, two-move combination, three-move combination and multi-move combination. Here are some examples of combinations. In all combinations, White starts and wins. In the combination on the left it is a win in one preparatory move. The combination on the right, on the other hand, is already of a high degree of difficulty – if you can solve it in a minute, it's worth thinking about serious checkers training and opening up your impressive potential.



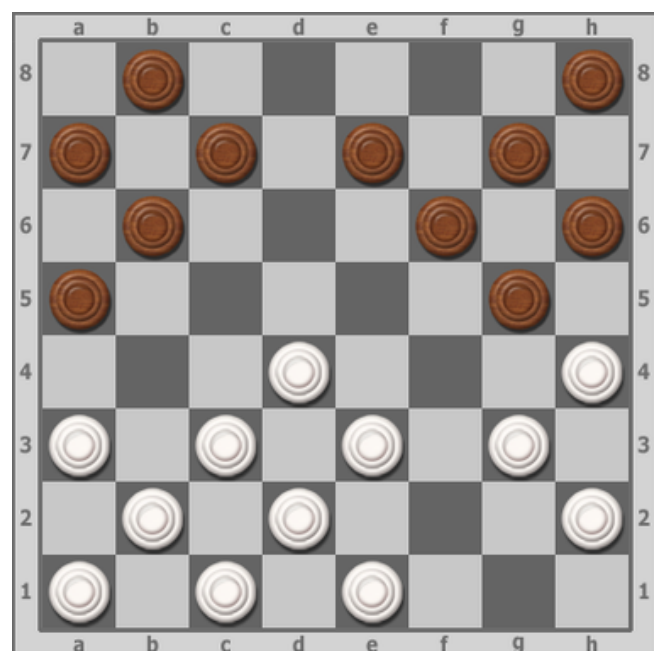
2. The second stage of training is , where the athletes train to finish the match called the endgame. Here there are often ten or more versions of the moves, which means that a lot of thought has to go into all the solutions. In a way, this section is like programming – you have to find a series of consecutive moves and be able to remember which of these moves are right and which are wrong. The example on the left is a very simple ending, but even there you have to work out how to end the game correctly.

3. The third stage is called controlling the game – when the players are already aware of the dangers of different types of combinations and endings and start playing to try to control the court and force their opponents to make mistakes. For example, in a situation on the right, White should take advantage of Black's mistake in trying to knock down White's piece, rather than trying to defend his own piece



4. Level 4 involves many random elements of the game – athletes learn to find familiar solutions and invent new possibilities for themselves in random situations that are repeated quite often. These are systems for catching one with three queens, one with four queens and so on, or different rules for how not to start the game, so as not to create a hopeless situation from the very beginning. Such a situation is seen here in the example on the left, where Black made a mistake and abandoned two queen positions early in the game, which allows White to make at least four winning combinations in this game.

5. Finally, the fifth level is related to the game openings. Athletes learn to remember the best ways to start a game, how to achieve them and how to avoid mistakes when starting a game. In the example on the right, beginners are given the opportunity to start the game based on the pieces according to the coordinates of the playing area until they reach a situation where White has a winning position. Opening practice is best for training long-term memory – it is not enough to find the best solution on the board, you also need to remember it in the future so that you don't waste time at the beginning of the game to find the best move.



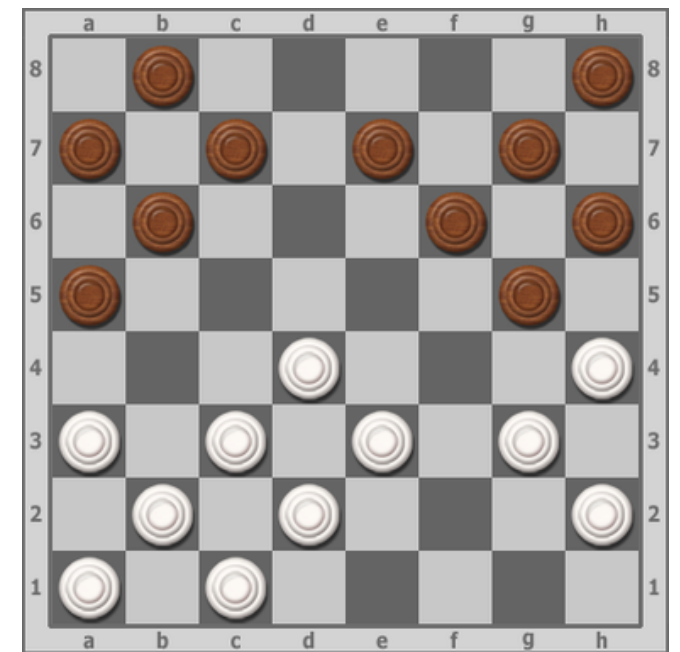
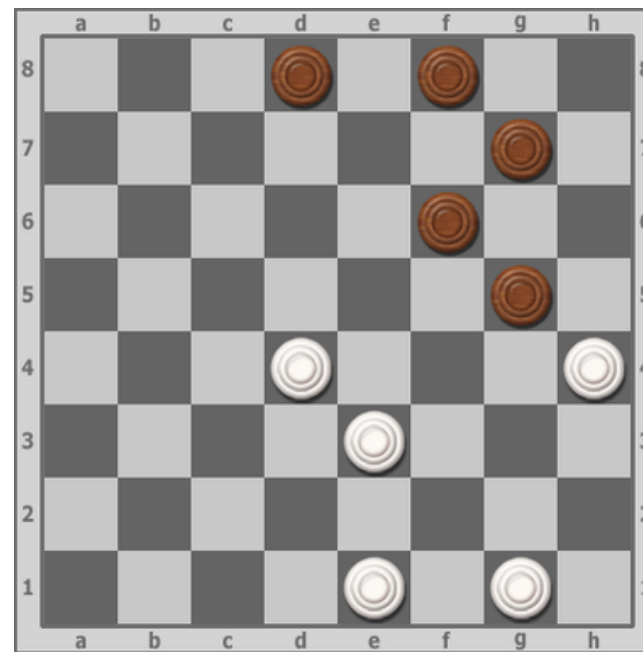
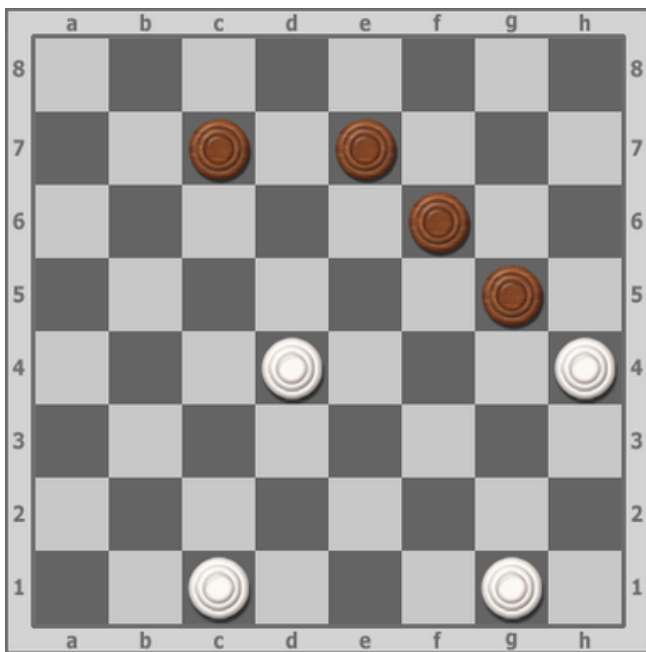
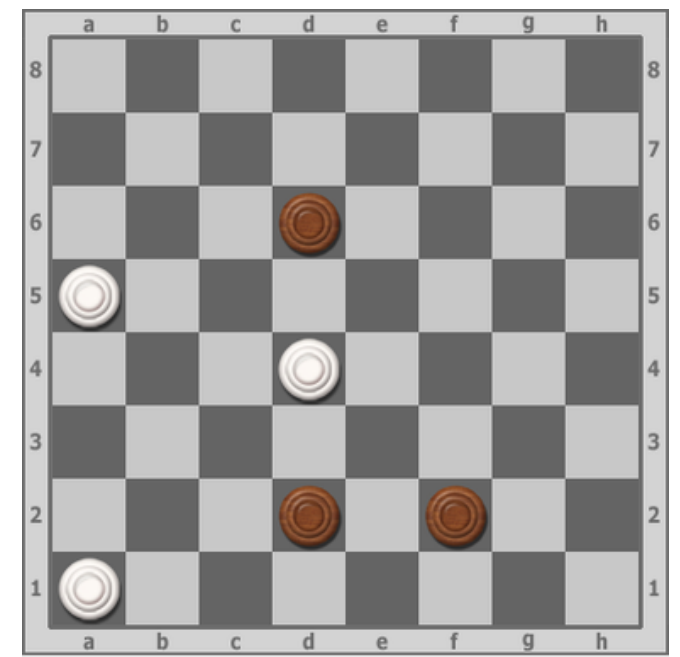
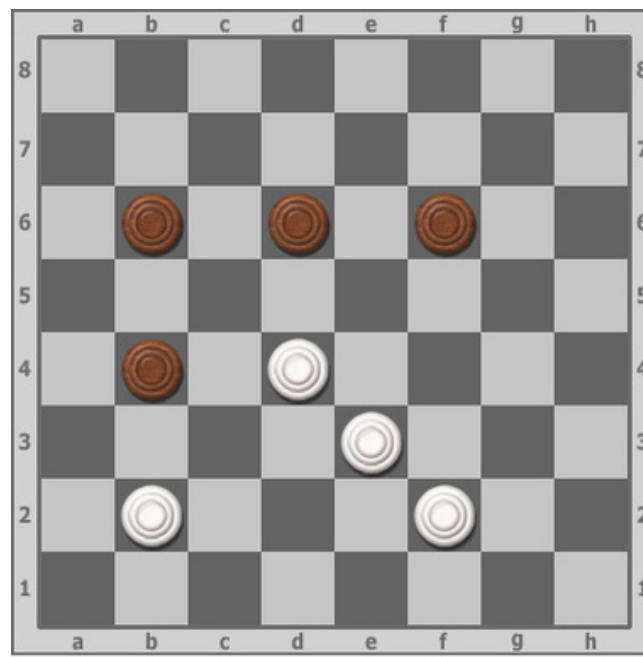
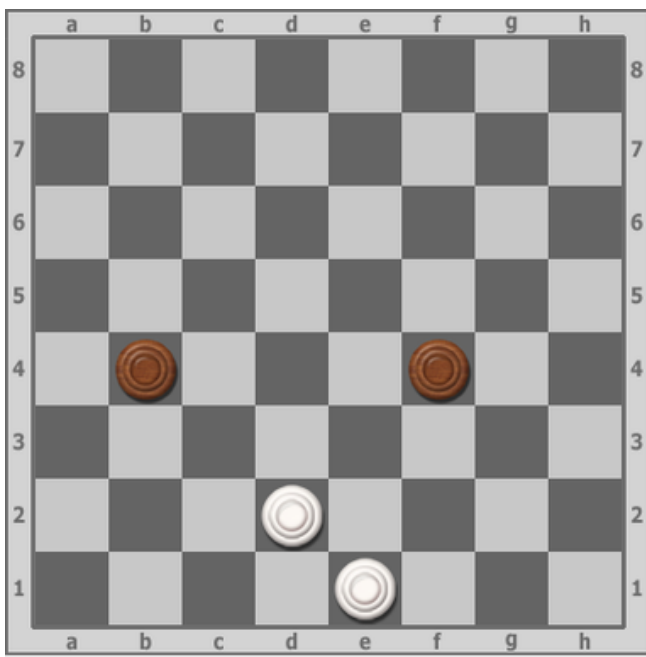
c3-b4 b6-a5
b2-c3 f6-g5
b4-c5 d6:b4
a3:c5 c7-b6
a1-b2 b6:d4
e3:c5 g5-h4
b2-a3 b8-c7

The association "Bauskas Prātnieks" implements the training process in checkers gradually, giving young athletes different examples depending on the difficulty level. Along with the training process, the association "Bauskas Prātnieks" provides tournaments for beginners in checkers, which creates interest in this sport. Unlike the Latvian championship and other large-scale competitions, the beginners' tournaments are graded according to their abilities, and all players receive diplomas and small prizes. A number of young athletes have started their careers in this type of competition and are now competing for medals in Latvian championships.

LET'S PRACTICE

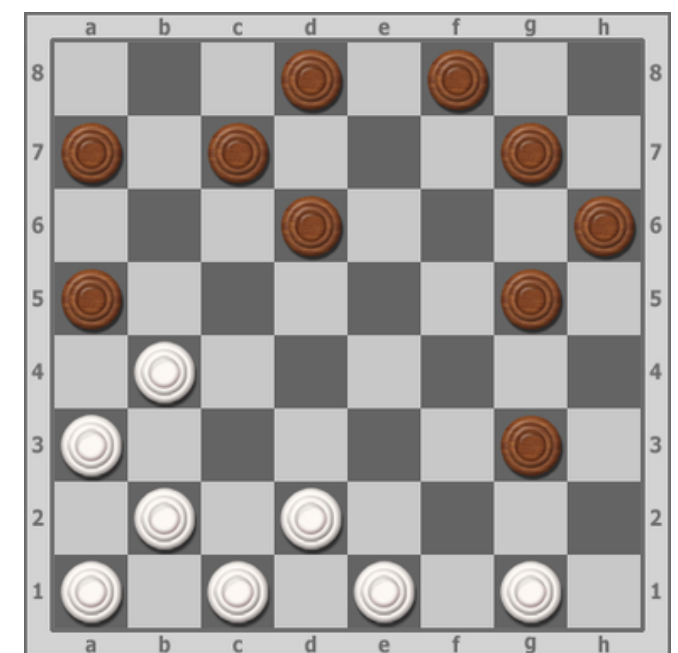
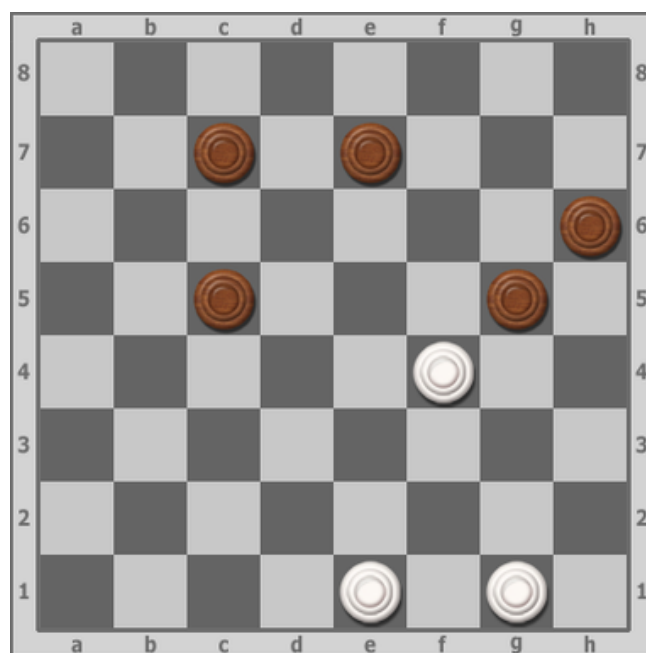
If you want to take your checkers game to the next level and make the existing checkers masters shine, we have prepared a number of exercises that will help you develop your mesitar skills. Here are some examples of checkers games - combinations and situations that will help you start the next step towards becoming a master in this game.

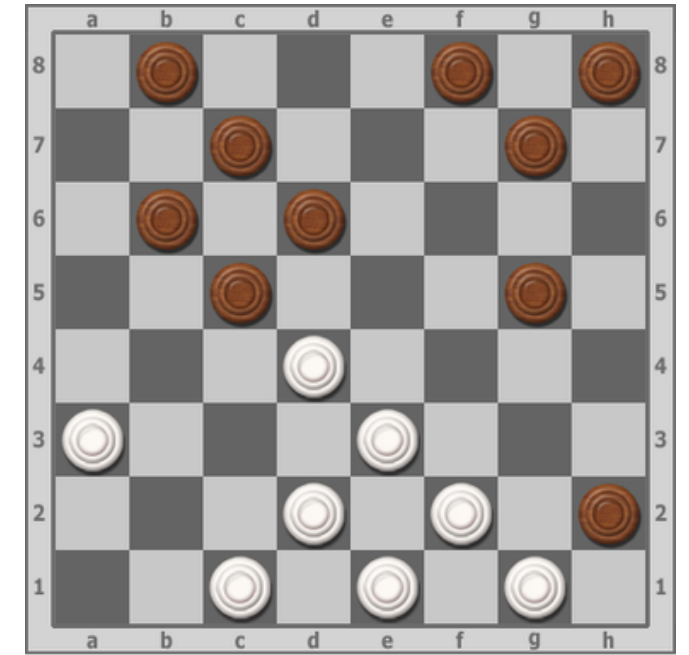
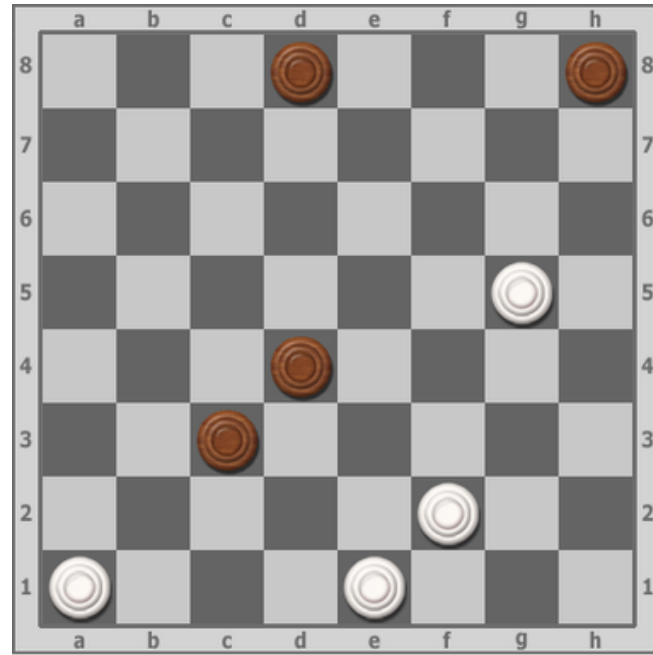
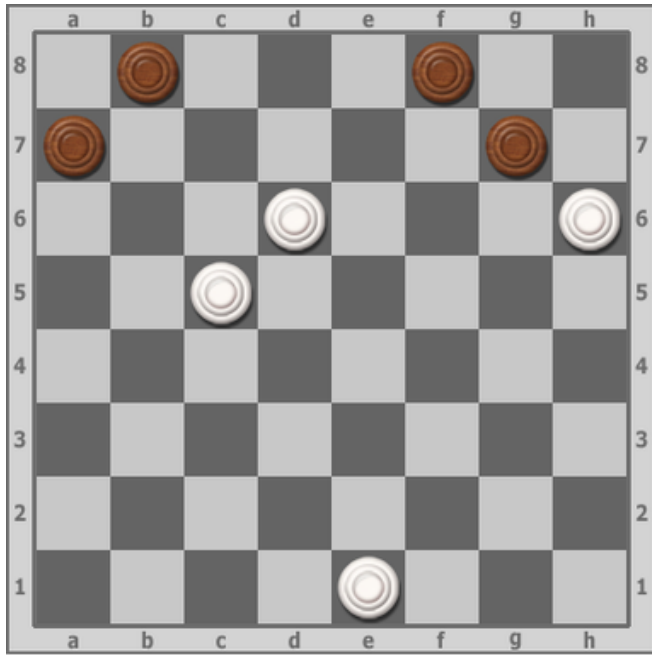
Examples of checkers game for beginners - situations and positions



Examples of checkers game - openings, endgames, positions

- c3-b4**
- b2-c3**
- b4-c5**
- a3:c5**
- a1-b2**
- e3:c5**
- b2-a3**
- b6-a5**
- f6-g5**
- d6:b4**
- c7-b6**
- b6:d4**
- g5-h4**
- b8-c7**





DID YOU KNOW?



- In 2014, Ton Sijbrand set the record for blind simultaneous play, playing on 32 tables simultaneously. The games lasted over 48 hours and Sijbrandt's score was 46/64 (71.90%);
- There are many different types of checkers and some online platforms (e.g. playashshi.ru) allow you to play more than 50 different types of checkers;
- In 1952 the first computer checkers software was developed and in 2003 the Russian checkers software "Tosha" was able to beat the best players in the world. It is worth mentioning that checkers has received considerable attention in the field of artificial intelligence research.

INTERESTING FACT

GOOD PRACTICE

The representatives of the association "Bauskas Prātnieks" have been working in the field of checkers and training for more than ten years. During these years, clear trends have emerged that show exactly how checkers training helps. The main thing emphasized by all parents of young people whose children train hard in checkers is that their mathematical skills improve. Parents bring several young people to practice for this very reason so that it will be easier for them to study mathematics at school. Checkers are characterized by logical chains in thinking and the need to keep a large amount of data in the head, which as a result helps to better navigate mathematical problems. One of the best checkers players in the Bauska region, who studies at secondary school, is the winner of the Bauska region mathematics Olympiad and the winner of the region physics Olympiad. One of the few young women from Bauska, who came second in the Latvian Mathematics Olympiad and took part in the World Mathematics Olympiad, also practiced playing checkers at school.

The first and main advantage of blind checkers, however, is the socialization of blind people. They take part in tournaments, meet new people, engage in conversations, make new acquaintances. At least, this is the experience of the association "Bauskas Prātnieks". This is a very important factor for older people.

The best benefit of blind checkers would of course be for blind children and schoolchildren, because it would train the mind in the same way as for sighted people. Blind people have taken part in the Latvian Adult Checkers Championship. For sighted people, blind checkers is one of the ways of training – to be able to perceive a checkerboard square without sight, figuring out all the combinations and layouts on the square, thus training spatial thinking, memory and logic.

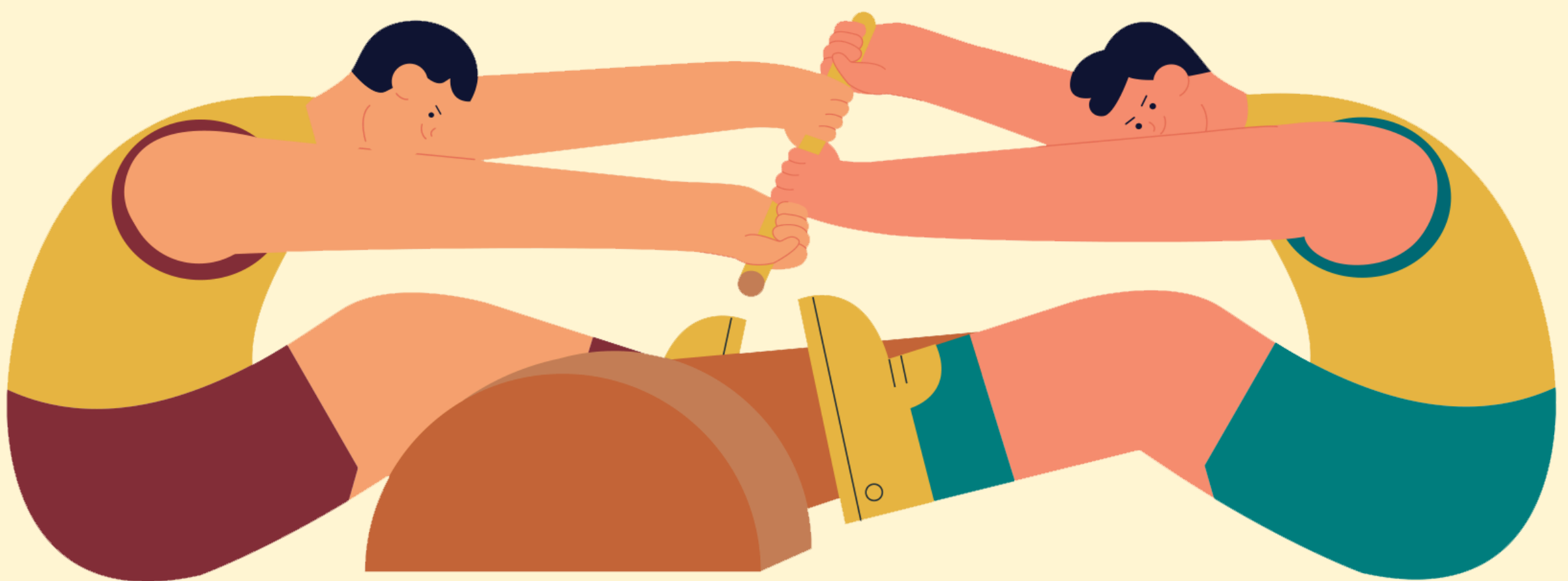


Funded by
the European Union

STICK PULLING



LATVIA



TERMINOLOGY

- **Board** – a special board used in Yakut (mas-wrestling) and Eskimo stick pilling. The function of the divider board is to provide support for the legs of the athletes to increase the variety and dynamics of the fighting techniques.
- **Grip** – a way, how the athlete takes a firm hold or a tight grasp and holds the stick.
- **Set, Wrestling area**– specially equipped place for stick-pulling competition.
- **Stick** – an object made of wood with a specific length and diameter. Each type of stick pulling has a specially made sticks in specific sizes.
- **Stick pulling** – the objective is to pull the stick away from the other player while keeping a strong grip on the dowel at all times.
- **Types of stick pulling** –Eskimo, American Indian, Yakut or Mas-wrestling. Types of stick pulling differ by the number and type of grips used to compete. There are two hands grip and one-hand grip stick pulling. For example, the American Indian stick pulling represents grabbing a slippery salmon, and was used traditionally to develop hand and arm strength.

HISTORY & INTRODUCTION

*...The other day the two giants walked not far from Saulis' house to a small clearing and decided to pull a tree, because that was the best way to see who was stronger...**

Thus begins one of the Latvian legends, which mentions that the activity we know today as 'stick-pulling' was a favorite way of testing strength, agility, and endurance among our ancestors.

The traditional use of objects for pulling activities (sticks, whips, leather, boards, spears, lassoes) has been common at all times and for practically all nations of the world. The Yakuts call it mas tardyhyy, the Turks agach guresh, the Swedes dräg' hank. Several forms of stick-pulling are a big part of Arctic Aboriginal games. Even Joseph Smith, the founder of the Mormon Church, was an avid stick-pulling enthusiast.

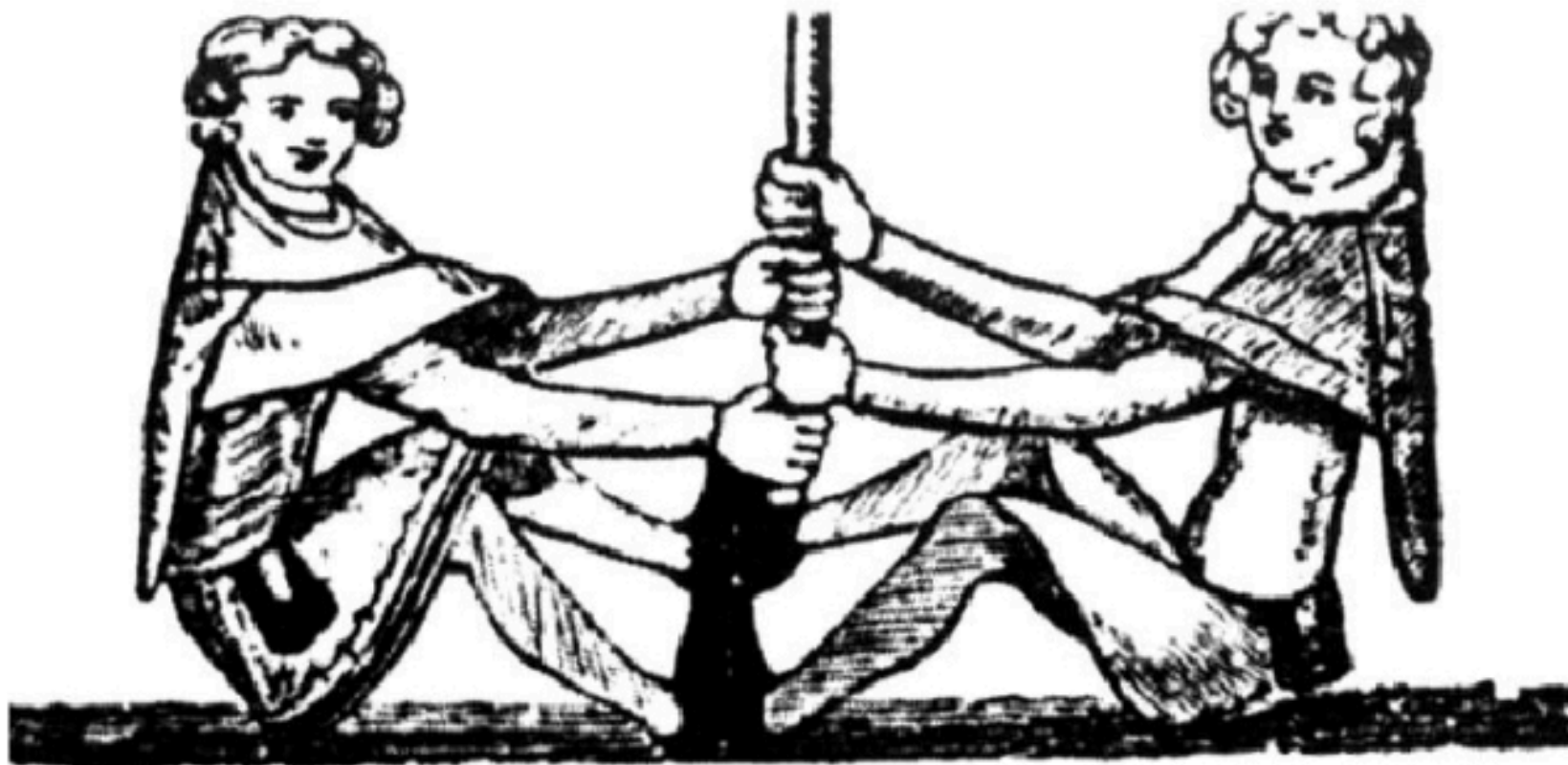


Figure 1 : 14th century engraving

Seemingly simple, stick-pulling is a highly dynamic activity involving all the muscles of the body, which can be used not only for fun, but also for general physical development and even rehabilitation. Stick-pulling develops strength, agility and endurance. It encourages decision-making, tactics and reacting to quick changes in the situation.

The basic principles of all forms of stick-pulling are to either (1) pull the opponent over to your side or (2) pull the object to be pulled (in our case the stick) out of the opponent's hands.

The winner of a stick-pulling competition is usually decided in two or three rounds, with one of the opponents winning 2 of them.

*Page. 261. Giant Saulis. Latvian folktales, Latvian SSR Academy of Sciences publication, Rīga, 1961

The types of stick pulling can be divided into 2 groups and 6 subgroups (Table 1). The two-handed version can be played not only in pairs, but also in a group, regardless of the chosen standing or sitting position.

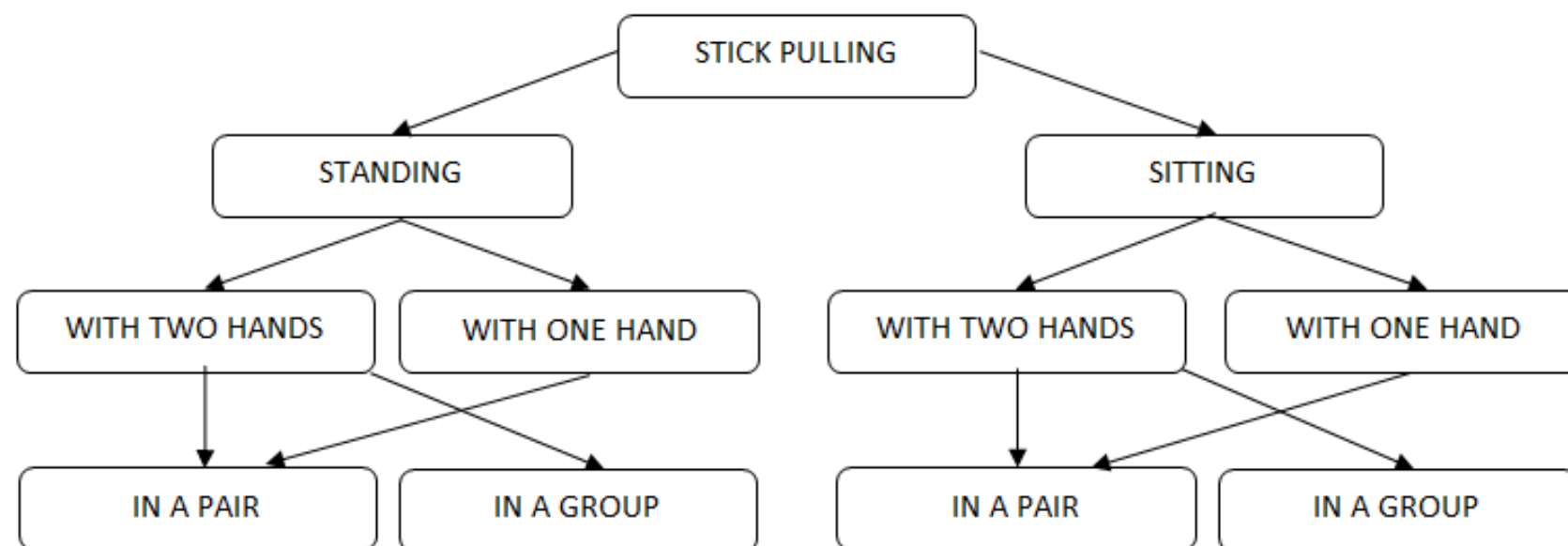


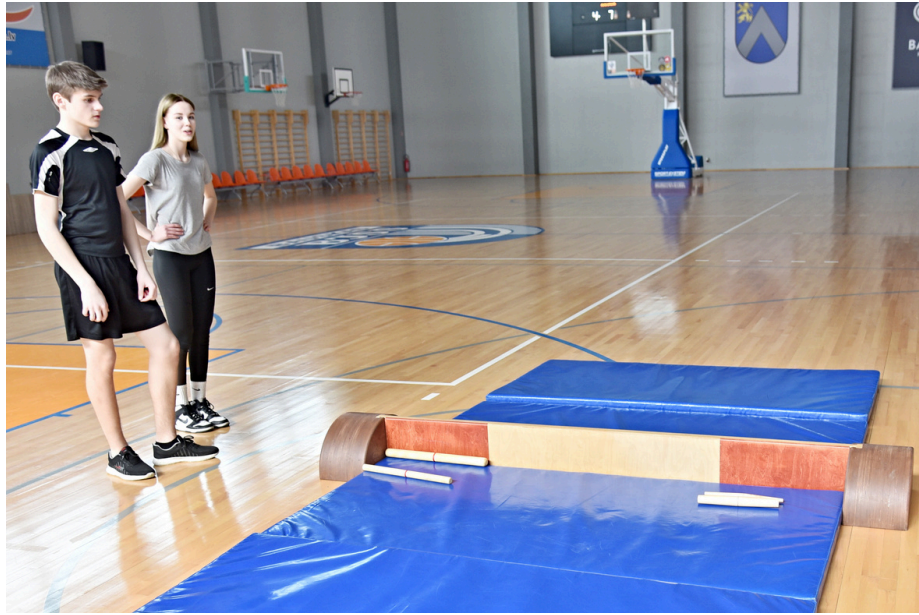
Table 1: Types of Stick Pulling

The variety of stick-pulling types and the simplicity of the rules allow people even with mental and functional disabilities to participate in competitions.

It should be noted that stick-pulling has transcended the format of festive entertainment and, thanks to the Yakuts, under the name of 'mas-wrestling' (Yakut '*mas*' - stick and English '*wrestling*' - wrestling) has developed into a world-renowned professional sport with its own Continental and World Championships, complex training methodologies, wrestling tactics and sporting awards.

In this handbook, we will look at 3 of the more common forms of stick-pulling, touch on the training process and give some suggestions on how stick-pulling can be adopted by people with mental and functional disabilities.

PREPARATIONS & EQUIPMENT



Traditional stick-pulling area with equipment



Young people using traditional stick-pulling equipment

Traditional Stick Pulling:

Venue: Free space (~1,5x2 m)

A Wooden Stick: A wooden stick of a length and diameter that allows you to comfortably grip it with 4 palms.

If you want to take your stick-pulling to a more serious level, you will need to take care of special equipment consisting of (1) a unified sized stick, (2) a board, (3) a specially organised spot wrestling area and (4) a uniform.



Traditional stick pulling stick

1-Stick: Thanks to the efforts of Yakuts to promote their own type of stick-pulling (mas-wrestling), the use of unified equipment size standards in stick-pulling classes and competitions is becoming more common around the world. Thus, the length of the stick used in mas-wrestling varies between 450-500 mm, while the diameter of the stick exceeds 34 mm. The stick is made of any hardwood - birch, apple, etc. Also experience shows that a stick with a diameter of 20-25 mm would be more suitable for children under 12 years.

2-Board: The length of the board can vary from 150 cm for traditional events to 210 cm for professional mas-wrestling competitions. The height of the board can vary from 15 cm to 24 cm for professional mas-wrestling competitions as mentioned before. The board is made of 15-20 mm thick hardwood (birch, maple, oak, apple) or thick veneer (40-60 mm) for mas-wrestling competitions.

Stakes driven into the ground or other types of fixing devices can be used to fix the board. In the case of mas-wrestling, it is 2 fixed blocks weighing at least 10-15 kg to keep the backboard stationary during professional competitions.



Board and board support for traditional stick pulling



3-Venue: The size of the wrestling area depends on the type of activity, the age of the participants and the status of the competition (traditional or professional). The size of the wrestling area varies from 100x200 cm to 240x400 cm for mas-wrestling. It should be remembered that as the dynamics of the competition increases, a larger safety zone around the wrestling area must be ensured so that neither the athletes nor the fans are harmed! Everything from hay and roll mats to all types of sports mats can be used to cover the pitch. In the case of mas-wrestling, colour marking is used to distinguish the opposing sides, with each side of the court traditionally marked with red and blue. The colour palette can be changed to match the symbolism of the overall event or to better record the venue and equipment in the surrounding environment.

4-Uniform: You can do stick-pulling in any athletic attire, using sports shoes without metal studs. For the mas-wrestling competitions, a special set of sports clothing consisting of sports shorts and a t-shirt (top for women) is provided. Each athlete must be wearing a licensed sports uniform in red and blue.



PREPARATIONS & EQUIPMENT



Standing American Indian Stick pulling



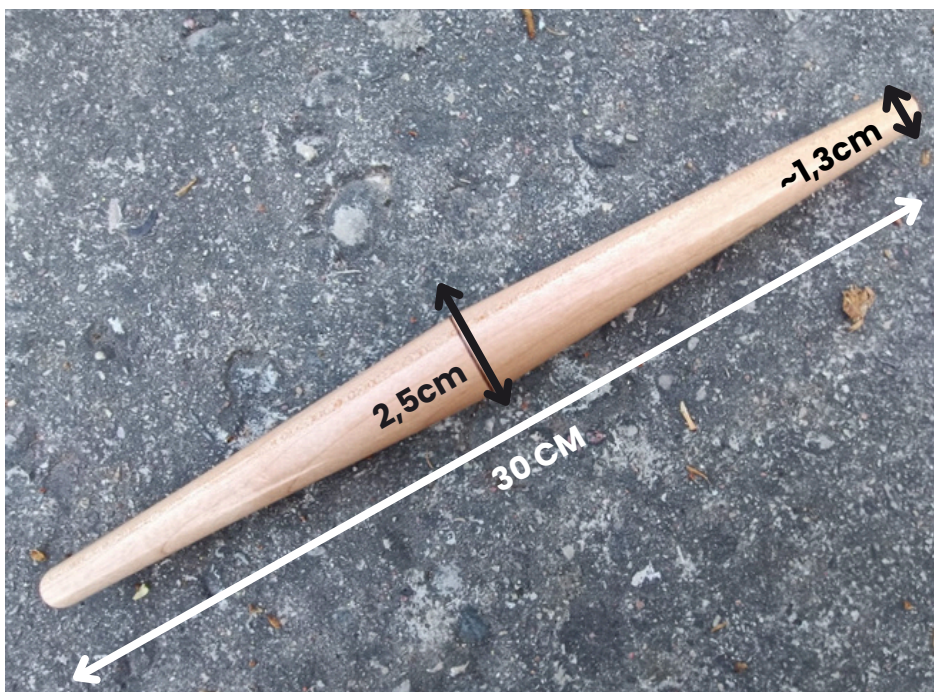
Sitting American Indian Stick Pulling

American Indian Stick Pulling:

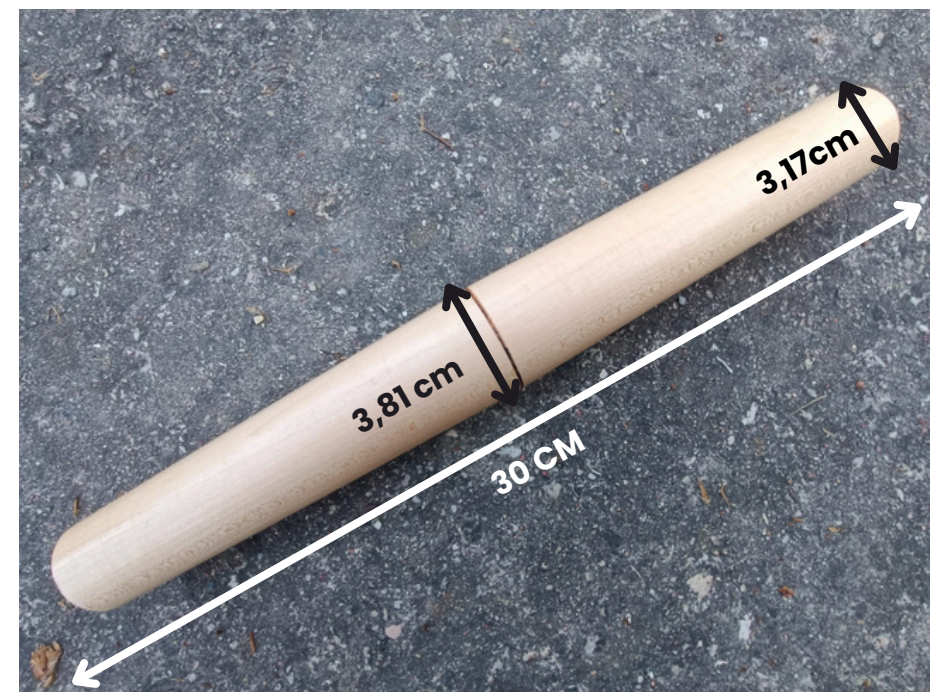
For Indian stick-pulling competitions you will need: (1) a specially shaped stick, (2) a flat area of ~1.5x2 m, (3) cream or other lubricant and (4) a uniform.

1. The Stick:

Sizes and specifics:



Stick for Standing American Indian Stick Pulling



Stick for Sitting American Indian Stick Pulling

- Made of Spruce, Pine or Birch the stick should be shaved to a size that can be gripped comfortably;
- Stick's measures: 30cm long with a center diameter at 2.5cm, the stick tapers off approx. 1.3cm at each end (this measure suits for Standing American Indian Stick Pulling);
- The stick must be polished smoothly to avoid injury;
- The stick shall either have 1 or 3 (optional) marked lines. One at the center point and the other two 1.3cm on both sides of the center line

2. Venue: The Indian stick-pulling competition does not require a specially equipped area. This would be a ~1.5x2 m patch with a starting line where the legs of both athletes meet.

3. Cream / Oil: The special feature of the American Indian stick-pulling is to make it as difficult as possible to grip the stick. Therefore, before the competition, the stick is coated with a cream-like substance, butter or oil to make it as slippery as possible. A paper towel must be available on the court for athletes to clean up after wrestling.



For the American Indian Stick, use fatty cream/oil as a stick "lubricant", butter is also good! Don't forget that participants must also clean their hands afterwards!



The game leader hands over the already greased stick to the participants, it is only grabbed on the leader's command!

4. Uniform: You can do Indian stick-pulling in any athletic attire, using sports shoes without metal studs.

PREPARATIONS & EQUIPMENT

Sitting American Indian Stick Pulling:

The equipment and competition principle of the *Sitting* American Indian Stick Pulling is different from traditional stick pulling and is similar to the *Standing* American Indian Stick Pulling, where the stick is coated with a special cream during the competition to make it as slippery as possible. It requires (1) a spatially shaped stick, (2) a flat area of ~1x1,5 m, (3) a cream and (4) a uniform.

1-The Stick:

Size and specifics:

- Made of Spruce, Pine, or Birch stick should be shaved to a size that can be gripped comfortably;
- The measures: 30cm long with a center diameter of 3.81cm, the stick tapers off approx. 3.17cm at each end;
- The stick shall be polished smoothly to avoid injury;
- The stick shall either have 1 or 3 (optional) marked lines. One at the center point and the other two 1.3cm on both sides of the center line

2-Venue: The Indian stick-pulling competition does not require a specially equipped area at all. Anything ~1x1,5 m without special markings would be suitable.

3-Cream / Oil : The special feature of the Sitting American Indian Stick Pulling is to make it as difficult as possible to grip the pole. Therefore, before the competition, the stick is coated with a cream-like substance or oil to make it as slippery as possible. A paper towel must be available on the court for athletes to clean up after wrestling.

4. The uniform: Stick-pulling may be practiced in any athletic attire, using athletic shoes without metal studs.

WARM UP EXERCISES

It is important to begin each session with proper warm up. This warm-up is suitable for all types of stick pulling and will help you avoid unpleasant injuries.

The warm up usually consists of a number of exercises that are designed to:

1. Stretch the muscles to prevent injury such as muscle strain or tear.
2. Increase the blood and muscle temperature ... to loosen up.
3. To improve flexibility and performance.

A good warm up should take about 15–20 minutes and is the most important part of any physical activity class.

Following is a list of some general warm-ups followed by more detailed exercises:

1. Light jog of 5–10 minutes.
2. Neck rotation – Stand feet apart, back straight, hands on hips. Rotate the neck slowly first one way and then the other.
3. Trunk rotation – Same position as above. Rotate the trunk (at waist) slowly in one direction and then the other.
4. Arm circles – Extend arms out from your sides to form a 90 degree angle. Elbows must be straight at all times. Begin to rotate arms slowly from small circles to big circles. Change direction.
5. Toe touching – With feet apart, touch toes. Don't bend knees or wrench muscles. Hold the stretch for a few seconds and then relax.
6. Hurdler's stretch – In a sitting position, fully extend one leg forward and bend the other at the hip and knee. Bend slowly at the waist, *reaching forward to touch both hands to extended foot. This stretches the hamstring muscles at the back of the thigh. Hold the stretch and then relax. Change legs and repeat.
7. Leg stretch – Stand approximately 3 to 4 feet from wall, facing it. Keeping the body as straight as possible, lean into the wall with arms extended and feet flat on the floor. Hold for a count of 10. Stretch should be felt at back of legs.

8. Sit-Ups – The best way to work on the abdominal muscles is not to have your feet hooked under an object. The closer the heels are to the body, the harder it is on the abdominals. Doing sit-ups with legs straight out puts undue pressure on the lower back.

9. Push-Ups – Do 10 to 25 repetitions. For girls, push-ups can be made from the knees. To make push-ups harder, extend arms further out from body.

10. 90 Degree Wall Sits – Sit against wall with back flat against the surface. Slide down until the legs are at a 90 degree angle to the floor. Hold for one minute. Loosen muscles and shake legs out. Increase time.

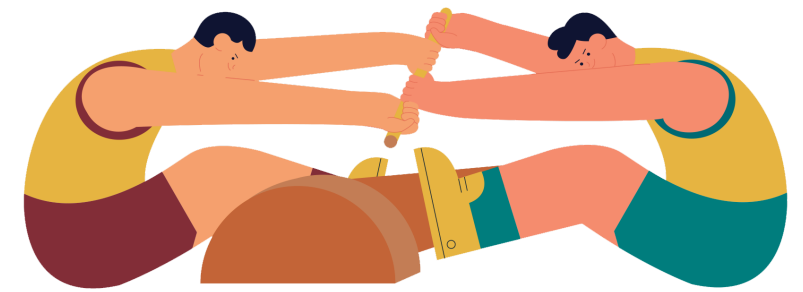


HOW TO PLAY

CLASSIC or ESKIMOSU STICK PULLING and MAS-WRESTLING

Taking Position:

Both athletes, grasping the stick with both hands, sit opposite each other, leaning against the feet of the opponent. If special equipment is used in the competition, the athletes support their feet against the board.



Stick Grip:

There are 3 types of grips in classical stick pulling. Each type is defined by the traditions of a particular region of origin. However, it should be remembered that each grip has a different set of techniques that can be applied in the course of a game. These functional differences in grips can significantly alter the course of a game, making it more static or more dynamic. It should be remembered that different types of grips have different risks of injury, so when organising public activities it is useful to consider in advance which types of grips to use and when with participants of different ages and physical abilities!

Now let's take a look at the 3 most common stick grips variations.

1-Traditional Grip:



Alternating grip with palm down

Type 1 : The most common grip in the old pictures is the alternating palm-down grip: first athlete's hand palm-down - second athlete's hand palm-down - first athlete's hand palm-down - second athlete's hand palm-down. A similar grip is used for the Hungarian stick-pulling in the standing position.

Type 2: Another traditional grip that is more popular and less traumatic is the symmetrical grip, where one athlete grips both sides of the stick with both palms down and the other athlete grips the middle of the stick with both palms down: first athlete's hand palm down - second athlete's both hands palms down - first athlete's hand palm down.



Symmetrical grip

2-Sports Grip:



Mass wrestling grip

Type 1: The grip used in mas-wrestling, which makes stick-pulling competitions more dynamic but, at the same time, increases the chance of injury among particularly unprepared participants.

The grip pattern in mas-wrestling is as follows: first athlete's left hand palm up – second athlete's right hand palm down – second athlete's left hand palm up – first athlete's right hand palm down.

Type 2: In sports competitions, the so-called symmetrical grip is also used, where both athletic palms are turned downwards, just like in second type of traditional stick pulling.

Start of a Match:

After both athletes have chosen one of the grips (traditional symmetrical grip or mas-wrestling symmetrical grip) by prior agreement, they use a lottery to determine which grip – outside or inside – each athlete will start the first round.

When all the formalities have been completed and both athletes grip the stick with both hands, the referee shall ensure that the stick is directly in the middle between the two athletes and signal the start of the game by voice or whistle.

Each nation has its own system of regulating the game according to its own traditions and language. Therefore, these commands in Latvian might sound like:

- 'Prepare for a game' – take a position and grasp the stick with both hands;
- 'Attention!' – prepare to pull the stick;
- 'Start!' or 'Go!' – to start the game;
- 'Stop!' – to stop the game. After that command, the referee shall inform the spectators loudly of the reason for stopping the game by pointing with the hand to the offender or the winner of the round / whole game.

After each round, the athletes change their grip. For example, if in the first round one of the athletes used the outside grip, in the next round he changes it to the inside grip.

The duration of the game, depending on the performance of the athletes, can last 2 or 3 rounds until one of the athletes wins 2 victories. There is no time limit for rounds.

If it is felt that the two athletes are equal, a time limit may be introduced or one of the athletes may be penalized for passivity, where if the athlete receives 2 demerits for passivity, he automatically loses the game.

If either athlete commits an offense or wins, the referee shall, by voice or whistle, stop the game and announce the imposition of a penalty [points] or announce the winner of each round.

When one of the athletes has won 2 rounds, the referee shall stop the game and announce the final winner of the whole match.

Cautions and Prohibited Activities:

Depending on the degree of danger to the athletes, all infringements can be divided into 2 parts – (1) cautions (an athlete can receive up to 2 cautions for the whole game) and (2) violations for which a technical loss is counted against the athlete who committed the offence.

During the game it is prohibited:

Cautions:

- The athlete uses only passive defence, blocks the opponent's activities without even trying to 'attack';
- When dragging the stick, turn it in the vertical plane more than 90 degrees to the ground or the board;
- Kicks opponent with feet;
- Use footwear that is not suitable for pulling the stick (shoes with metal studs, etc.)

Violations:

- Rude behaviour – not greeting an opponent, using foul language or otherwise disrupting the competition;
- Letting go of the stick (forfeit);
- Participate in the competition under the influence of alcohol, psychotropic or other intoxicating substances;
- Intentionally causes injury to an opponent.

Each of the violations, depending on the frequency and intensity of its occurrence, may be grounds for stopping the game and awarding victory to the opponent against whom the violation or series of violations was committed.

The full rules of the game of the professional Mas-Wrestling in English can be found on the website of the International Mas-Wrestling Federation.

Team Stick Pulling:

The stick-pulling event can also be played in two teams, in standing and sitting positions. The principle of the game (choice of grip, rules, etc.) is the same as in traditional stick pulling. Players are divided into two teams. Each team nominates a team captain, who will also provide the grip. In team competitions, a symmetrical grip with palms down is better chosen.

Both teams then sit down on the floor in a single line. The captains take the standard stick-pulling position, grasping the stick. The other team members hold each other tightly by the waist. On the command 'Start', both teams, assisted by their captains, try to pull the opponent team over to their side. Each team must have the same number of players and weight.

Determination of the winner :

The winner is the team which:

- drags the other team to its side
- got more than one person to stand upright
- snatched the stick from the hands of the captain of the opposing team.

AMERICAN INDIAN STICK PULLING:

The two competitors stand side by side, facing each other, with their hips close enough to make contact. The two inside feet of the competitors are also side by side, with the outsides of their feet making contact. In the American Indian version of the stick-pulling, athletes grip the stick with one hand. To win, the athlete must pull the stick out of the opponent's hand. The competition continues with the exchange of hands until one wrestler has won twice.

The equipment and competition principle of American Indian stick pulling is different from traditional stick pulling. This is because all Arctic Aboriginal sporting activities have a practical purpose.

For example, the aim of American Indian Stick Pulling is to develop the dexterity and wrist grip to be able to pull and hold a large and slippery fish by the tail out of the water in all kinds of weather. This is why the stick is coated with a special cream during the competition to make it as slippery as possible.

Start Position:

Competitors should stand with feet shoulder-width apart and the right foot of one participant will touch the right foot of the other participant.

Competitors then extend their right arms to their waist and open their hands. The arms must be fully extended and straight. Competitors can place their left hand on their waist for balance or out to their side.



The Grip:



The game leader passes the stick to the players



Players grasp the stick on the game leader's command

After the competitors have assumed the proper position and the stick has been greased, the referee assistant can bring the stick into position by holding the stick at the ends. Competitors must use only bare hands.

Competitors shall keep their hands open so the assistant can place the stick into position. When the stick is into position competitors are asked to "Grip" the stick with their hands at the same distance from the center mark of the stick. If the positioning is incorrect, the competitors are asked to un-grip, clean their hands, the stick is re-greased and the setup begins again.

Start of the Game, Penalties and Announcement of the Winner:

- Two players start facing one another, and on the referee's signal, "Ready, Pull", the competitors begin to try and pull the stick out of each other's hand.
- No body contact between the two players is allowed and players are not to try and twist or turn the stick from their competitor. The proper technique is a hard steady pull with the hand braced against the hip. If these infractions are broken during a game, the participant is warned and if it happens again they lose that particular game.
- A taped line will be placed on the floor for the feet, movement of the feet passed the line will result in the player being disqualified.
- The grip is set at the beginning of the pull, players cannot initiate movement of the hands forward after the grip is set.
- The stick shall be horizontal during the pull at all times.
- The competition consists of the best out of three pulls. The first pull is with the right hand, the second pull is with the left hand and if necessary the pulling hands of the last pull will be determined by a coin flip.
- The winner of the pull is declared when the stick is pulled from the hands of the opponent.

SITTING AMERICAN INDIAN STICK PULLING:

The principle of the Indian stick pull in the sitting position is similar to the Indian stick pull in the standing position.

Start Position:



Start position for a one hand sitting stick pulling



With their free hand the player grabs the opponents ankle

Two competitors sit on the floor facing each other with one leg over and one leg under their opponent's leg.

Using the arm on the same side of the leg that is over the opponent's leg, the competitors will extend their right arms to their waist and open their hands. The free hand is placed on the opponent's ankle.

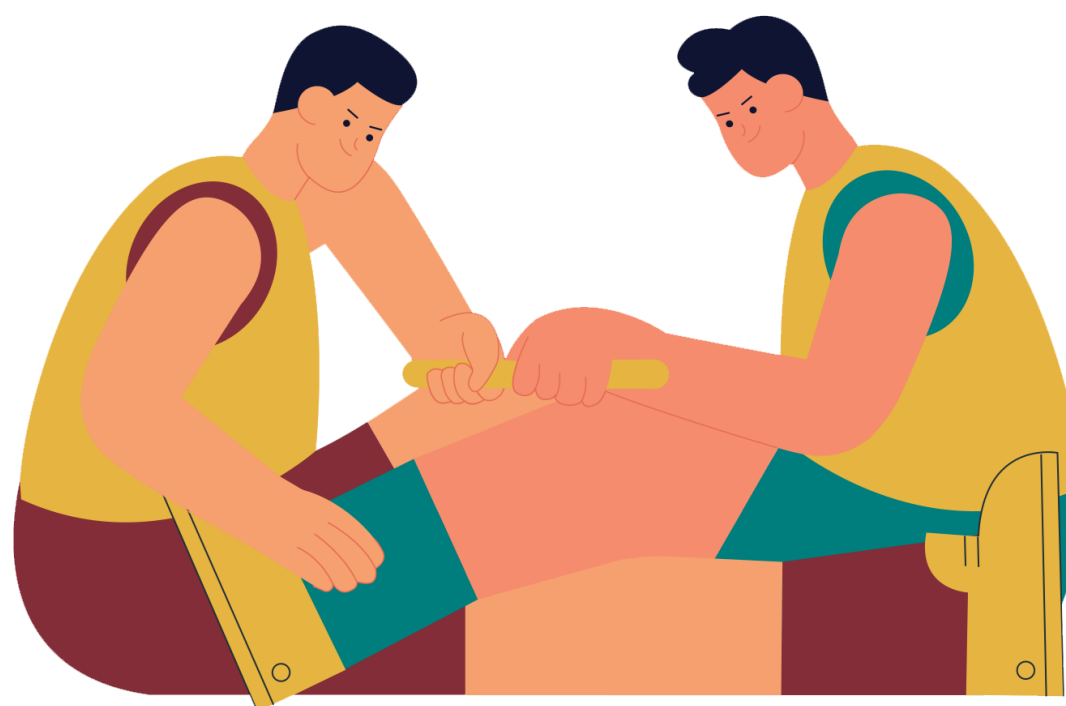
The Grip:

After the competitors have assumed the proper position and the stick has been greased, the referee assistant can bring the stick into position by holding the stick at the ends. Competitors must use only bare hands.

Competitors shall keep their hands open so the assistant can place the stick into position. When the stick is into position competitors are asked to "Grip" the stick with their hands at the same distance from the center mark of the stick.

If the positioning is incorrect, the competitors are asked to un-grip, clean their hands, the stick is re-greased and the setup begins again.

Start of the Game, Penalties and Announcement of the Winner:



- Two players start facing one another, and on the referee's signal, the competitors begin to try and pull the stick out of each other's hand.
- On a signal from the floor official "Ready, Pull" both competitors begin pulling straight back with no jerking, re-gripping or twisting. The competitors must pull their opponent's arm straight or pull them over. The second round they alternate arm and leg positions. In the event of a tie they will pull with the arm they won with. Ruling is best out of three using a double elimination bracket.
- No body contact between the two players is allowed (except holding ones ankle) and players are not to try and twist or turn the stick from the their competitor. The proper technique is a hard steady pull with the hand braced against the hip. If these infractions are broken during a game, the participant is warned and if it happens again they lose that particular game.
- The grip is set at the beginning of the pull, players cannot initiate movement of the hands forward after the grip is set.
- The stick shall be horizontal during the pull at all times.
- The competition consists of the best out of three pulls. The first pull is with the right hand, the second pull is with the left hand and if necessary the pulling hands of the last pull will be determined by a coin flip.
- The winner of the pull is declared when the stick is pulled from the hands of the opponent.

All of the types of stick-pulling discussed in this chapter can be adopted by people with special needs.

For example, the traditional form of stick pulling with a synchronous grip can be practised using an Eskimo variation where 6 volunteers use their legs to hold both opponents upright on all sides.

One-handed Indian stick pulling in standing and sitting positions also offers a wide range of possibilities. With a few adjustments to the wrestling area, a universal competition venue can be created on which people with different types of disabilities can actively compete.

The key is to talk to the parents or carers of young people with mental and physical disorders before engaging them in physical activities, to see what activities they can be involved in.

The physical and mental condition of these people should be monitored very carefully so that they can stop struggling in time and avoid recurrent and unnecessary injuries.

In any case, when forming such groups, it is necessary to get to know all the participants and to consult the Paralympic coaches and physicians about the dynamics and the degree of stress of such groups.

LET'S PRACTICE

Now, let's take a look at 3 lessons plan and some suggestions on how to better organise the training process for all ages.

Let's start with some general suggestions that we think would help to get young people more involved in the stick-pulling process.

How to start?

- Know the age, sex, number, and ability of the children and youngsters you are going to teach.
- Try to involve all the participants at all times as possible. Avoid line-ups where children and youngsters have to wait their turn.
- Look for the children who are not participating and include them.
- Try to get the children working in pairs sometimes so that they can interact with one another.
- Group the children in a formation that enable all of them to see and hear you. If the players are huddled, they tend to become more enthusiastic and will get more fun out of playing.
- Use games that everyone can play. Change from active to quiet games so that the players can have a breather. Use a wide variety of games and let the players pick their favorites occasionally.
- Whenever possible, arrange competing teams so that they are equal in strength and skill. Avoid letting the children always pick their own teams since this becomes time-consuming and is not always fair.
- In order to provide more activity, divide the large group into smaller ones if the game allows.
- Instead of eliminating children from a game when they are tagged or can no longer reach the level of competition, allow them to remain in the game (if game allows) or try to keep them active in another area of the gym.
- Use the shortest possible method of changing from one formation to another. If the first game is in a circle, for example, and the second game calls for two teams, the leader may want to divide the circle in half.

HOW TO HOLD A TOURNAMENT:

Traditionally, most of Ethnosports games were played for fun and not for competition. Rules were not heavily enforced. Since some Ethnosports games have been incorporated into a recognized sports movement, however, rules and guidelines had to be made.

Most of the Ethnosports individual games scoring system involves the best out of three attempts with the person reaching, kicking, jumping, or pulling the hardest or farthest being the winner. In case of necessity, modern sports scoring systems can be used instead of traditional ones.

DID YOU KNOW?



- Stick-pulling is one of the few ethno-activities known worldwide.
- The most ardent stick pullers live in the Arctic Circle and stick pulling is included in all Circum-Polar sports games!
- Pulling a stick with a double grip can be compared to a deadlift in powerlifting.

INTERESTING FACT



GOOD PRACTICE

Ethno-sport activities can address 2 important issues at the same time – finding your identity and being active. A big plus of ethnosport activities is the possibility to actively involve people with physical and mental disabilities.

The easy adaptation of ethnosport activities to different levels of difficulty and physiological abilities of the participants allows to use this system for physical development, rehabilitation and fun.

As an example of good practice, the ethnosports programme has been applied in several Latvian children's camps in Latgale (one of Latvia's historical lands) and Kurzeme (another of Latvia's historical lands), where ethnosports activities have fostered friendships between children of different nationalities, thus contributing to the process of cultural integration.

Ethnosport activities fit well into the programmes of town and regional festivals. In the tradition of fairs, ethnosports help to test one's strength in a fun way and to get acquainted with the local cultural and traditional heritage. That is why ethnosport activities are popular in Riga, the capital of the country, as well as in the regions – Bauska, Daugavpils, etc.





Funded by
the European Union

LIANA VAULT



ESTONIA



TERMINOLOGY

- **Bar:** This refers to the cross bar that is suspended above the ground by the standards.
- **Drive Knee:** During the phase of the jump, the knee is actually driven forward at the time of "takeoff" to actually help propel the vaulter upward.
- **Elastic crossbar:** Same as bar, but it's elastic and for training purposes
- **Grip:** Where vaulter's top hand is on the liana rope.
- **Jump Foot:** This is also known as take-off foot. It is actually the foot that vaulter uses to leave the ground as he begins his vault.
- **Liana rope:** A rope that is used for a vault.
- **Pit/Landing area:** The mats used for landing in the liana vault.
- **Standards:** The equipment that holds the bar at a particular height above the ground. Standards may be adjusted to raise and lower the bar and also to adjust the horizontal position of the bar.
- **Ramp:** Liana ramp is 7 meters long and it goes down from 60 cm to 0 cm.
- **Steps:** Vaulters need to adjust their approach accordingly in order to make sure they are in the proper position when attempting the vault.
- **Swing Leg or Trail Leg:** The trail leg or the swing leg is also the jump foot. After the vaulter has actually left the ground, the leg that was touching the ground last stays extended and swings forward to assist propel the vaulter upwards.
- **Take off:** The place where jumper takes off from the ground.



HISTORY & INTRODUCTION

Liana vault is a fun and engaging form of exercise that develops the jumper's athletic qualities in a versatile way. In the liana vault, you can experience how it feels to rise to heights with the help of a liana rope. At the same time, you get to test your own limits in a challenging and somewhat daring way!

The jumping performance consists of acceleration, take-off, swing, crossing the bar and coming down. The jumper takes four to five steps down the gentle slope and makes an effort to hang onto the liana rope, which changes the jumper's forward motion upward according to the liana's swing arc. When the liana's swinging speed stops, the jumper crosses the bar, throws off the liana rope, and falls to the descent mattress.

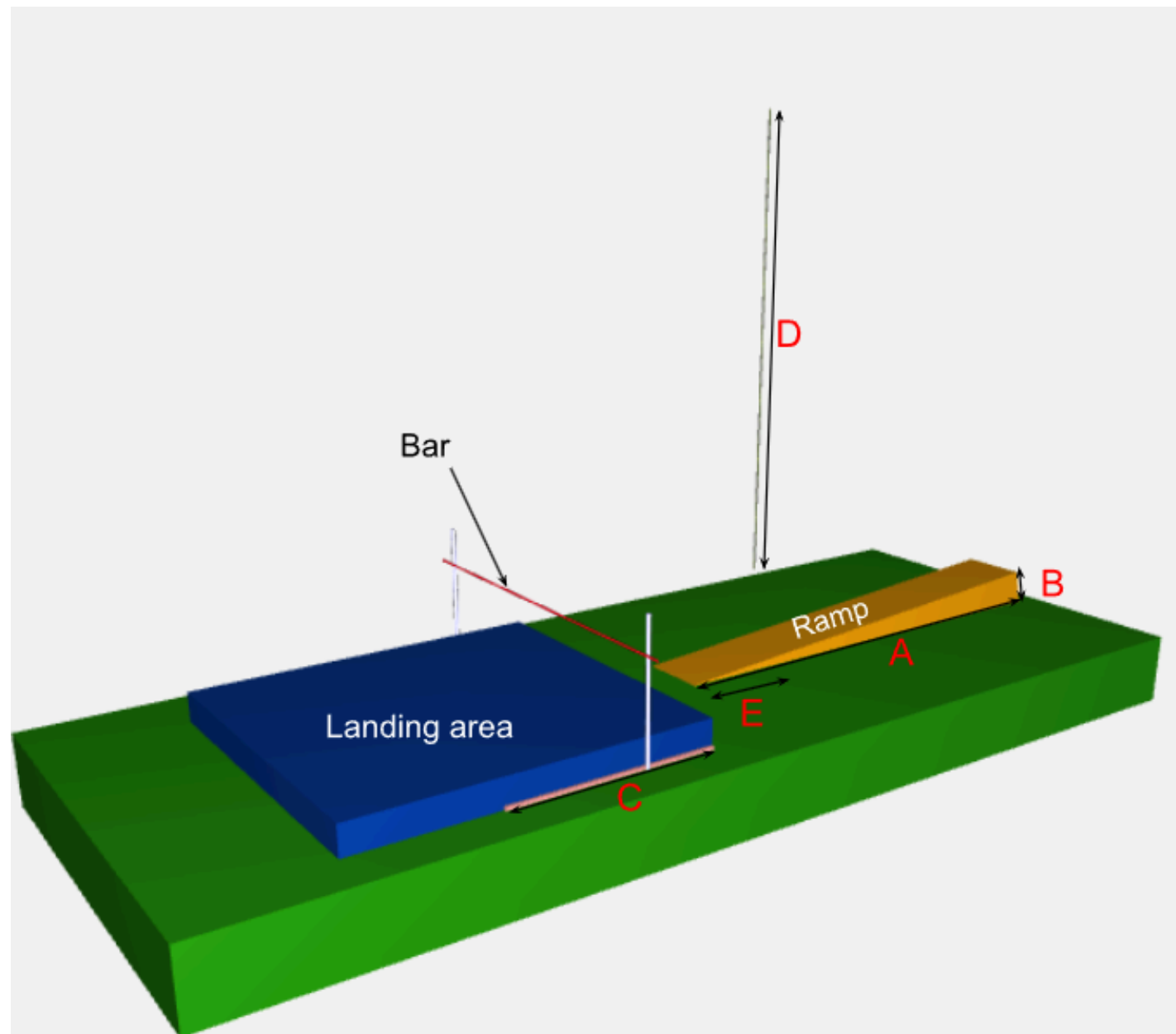
In addition to the fact that the liana vault is fun, it is also a very developing form of exercise. It develops body control and musculature in a versatile way. Acceleration and effort develop the speed and strength of the legs. Hanging from the rope and crossing the bar develop the musculature of the middle and upper body. Liana Vault follows the principles of core-centered motor learning. Perhaps the best thing about the sport is that it comprehensively develops body control and the seamless cooperation of the muscles in the different stages of the performance.

Liana vault is a sport invented in Finland in the beginning of the 2000s by Pasi Pitkänen, the aim of which is to pass over a bar as high as possible with the help of liana rope.



PREPARATIONS & EQUIPMENT

- **Number of Players:** Liana vault can be done individually.
- In order to try the Liana Vault there are different options.
 - 1- Find a place with a proper equipment



A- ramp length (7 meters) and at least 0,8m wide

B- ramp height (0,6 meters)

C- bar adjustment range from the ramp side (0-3 meters)

D- liana rope distance from ground (9,5 meters), height from the ramp 0,8m

E- liana rope distance from the ramp (1,9 meters)

*Distance between the ramp and landing area is (0,8-1,0 meters)

*Landing area size (3,5-4m x 5-6m)

2- Be creative using the existing equipment such as high jump or pole vault inventory

In Finland there are places where it is possible to try the liana vault. The locations and contact information can be found on the webpage: www.liaani.fi.

The second option is to be creative. For the liana rope it is possible to use the usual rope that has got a good grip for the hands. Below there is a drawing that helps to create a liana vault arena.

WARM UP EXERCISES

The warm-up for the Liana Vault consists of three parts (cardiovascular activation, dynamic flexibility, and sport-specific drills for Liana Vault) that can be modified according to the conditions.

Warm-up exercises for the liana vault are identical to the other track and field sports.

For Liana Vault lesson;

First Part – Cardiovascular Activation (~5 minutes)

Light jog: Start with a slow jog around the track or field, gradually increasing your pace for the last 2–3 minutes.

Walking drills: Include high knees, butt kicks, heel kicks, and ankle skips to raise your heart rate and engage leg muscles.

Dynamic stretches: Perform controlled movements like leg swings, arm circles, torso twists, and walking lunges to increase blood flow and prepare your joints.

Second part – Dynamic Flexibility (~10 minutes):

Walking lunges: Focus on proper form with a 90-degree bend in both knees and keep your torso upright.

High knees: Drive your knees up towards your chest while maintaining a tall posture.

Butt kicks: Run with your heels reaching towards your glutes, keeping your core engaged.

Heel flicks: Briefly tap your heels to your glutes with a quick flicking motion.

Skip C: Combine a high knee with a heel kick on the same leg, creating a "C" shape with your leg movement.

Arm circles: Make large, controlled circles with both arms forward and backward to loosen your shoulders and upper body.

Third part – Sport-Specific Drills for Liana Vault (~5 minutes):

Sprints: Short accelerations with proper mechanics, gradually increasing intensity.

Jumping drills: Practice jump-specific drills like jump squats, depth jumps, or single-leg hops to activate leg muscles.

HOW TO PLAY

The aim of the sport for individuals is to be active and surpass oneself depending on the level of experience.

1. A bar is used, which the jumper tries to cross with the help of a liana rope.
2. The jumper will run down the gentle downhill with speed, the slope of which can be no more than five degrees. During acceleration, the jumper must be in contact with the liana rope with at least one hand.
3. The length of the speed-taking track is no more than 7 meters away from the bar, measured from the point where the liana rope hangs free and motionless. The jumper can take off from the pace-taking track from any point he wants.
4. The jump is rejected:
 - a) if the bar falls from the brackets and the reason is the competitor's own performance.
 - b) if the jumper leaves the ground on the liana rope, but does not try to cross the bar, but returns on the liana back to the acceleration track or crosses the zero line formed by the front edge of the landing mats by touching the mats. In children's competitions (P/TII and younger), the performance is not rejected if the jumper clearly crosses the bar, even if the liana rope drops the bar. In unclear situations, the competitor can be given a new (substitute) company.
 - c) if the competitor picks up speed in two directions, i.e. runs first uphill and then downhill again.
 - d) if the competitor changes the grip after leaving the ground, i.e. climbs up the liana after the effort.

In the protocol, an accepted jump is marked O and an unsuccessful performance X (- = did not jump). See an example of the high/pole jump protocol in connection with the resolution of a tie.

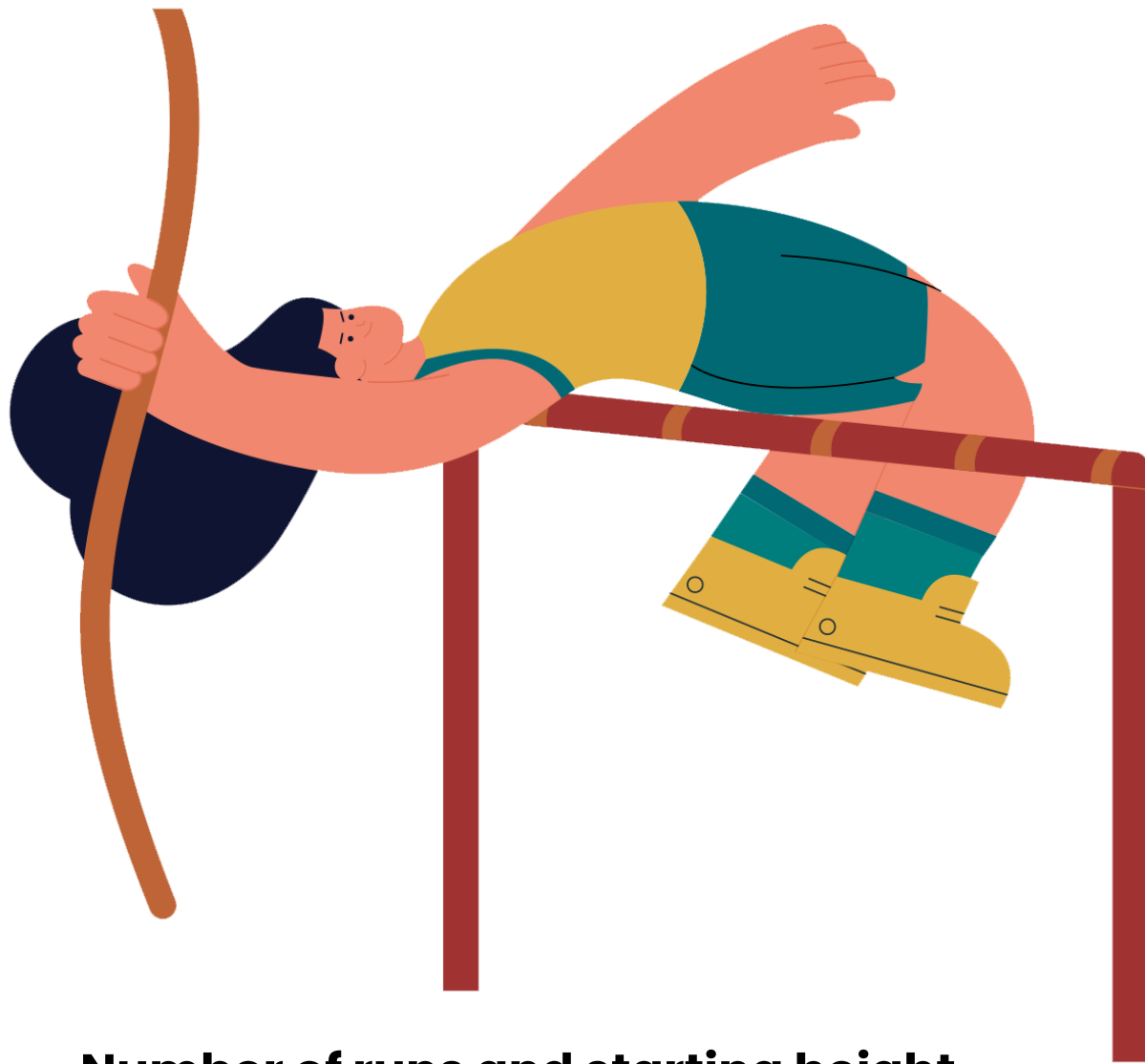
Rack spacing

1. The distance of the liana jump racks can be moved in the direction of the acceleration track from 50 to 300 cm forward. The distance is calculated by the so-called from the zero line, which runs at the front edge of the landing mattresses.
2. The competitor must inform the judge of the distance he wants before the start of his performance. The distance declared by the competitor is recorded in the protocol.

Rima withdrawals

1. The judges determine the amount of bar raises in advance. The size of the withdrawals must be announced to the competitors before the start of the competition.
2. The bar must be raised at least 5 cm at a time
3. 5-10 cm is recommended for raising the bar.





4. If there are a lot of competitors, the first 2-3 withdrawals can be larger than those mentioned above.

5. When there is only one competitor left in the competition, he can decide to what height the bar will be raised.

6. The height of the bar should be checked with a separate measuring stick. At the lowest heights, you can use a tape measure for the check measurement.

Number of runs and starting height

1. The competitor has three attempts at each height. However, after three consecutive unsuccessful attempts, the competitor is eliminated from the competition.

2. Before the start of the competition, the jumpers inform the judges of their starting height, which they can choose themselves. Lifting sets should be determined in advance.

3. If desired, the jumper can skip jump heights. He must inform the judge of this in good time before his turn to jump.

4. If a competitor interrupts the speed run for the third time, it can be judged directly as one attempt in children's competitions, because the performance time clock is not necessarily in use.

A tie

1. The competitor with the least number of jumps from the height where the tie occurred will be placed higher.

2. If several competitors have exceeded the resulting height in the same attempt, the number of unsuccessful attempts during the entire competition will win = the competitor who has fallen

3. If the tie still persists and concerns anything except first place, the ranking will be divided. There will be a separate replay of the win.

4. If a replay regarding the first place is arranged, competitors in a tie will receive one additional company height, which is the height following the competitor's tie in the original raising series of the competition. If this does not bring a solution, the bar is lowered and raised by 5 cm. Competitors get one attempt at each height until a tie is broken.



GOOD PRACTICE

Liana vault has been present in physical education and various children's camps in Finland to develop children's physical capabilities, especially body control and muscle strength. In 2024 to celebrate the 20th anniversary of the establishment of the area, the liana vault was introduced to Estonians during the multi-stage liana vault tour in the event "Ojaääre völlikas 2024".

Each year there are competitions in Finland to offer young athletes and sport enthusiasts to try out liana vault.





Funded by
the European Union

KIIKING



ESTONIA



HISTORY & INTRODUCTION

Swinging is one of the oldest forms of entertainment for many nations. Both the young and the old have swung in groups and alone. The tradition has been a part of the Estonian village culture for centuries. One of the main reasons why kiiking is close to Estonians' hearts is that our great-great-grandparents very likely met each other on a swing- this is where we began. Swings have brought Estonians together for centuries. Boys and men often competed against each other to impress their sweethearts. Swinging also helped people to forget their worries, relax and to discuss their day.

Kiiking is a sport invented in Estonia, the aim of which is to pass over the spindle with the swing. The first kiiking swing was made in 1993 by Ado Kosk from Pärnu, Estonia.

There are several aspects that distinguish a kiiking swing from a regular swing. First and foremost, you can change the height of the swing, which is measured by the height of the swing shafts that connect the swing seat to the spindle. Moreover, swinging on kiiking swings is generally done in an upright position and by using a specific squatting technique, which differs greatly from regular swinging methods.

It is not possible to swing over the spindle with a regular swing and its aim is rather on enjoying leisure time, whereas with kiiking, the main goal is to swing over the spindle and the element of competition plays an important role.

Unlike other adrenaline-charged sports, kiiking is safe and secure. In order to ensure safety, your hands and feet are fastened to the shafts and the swing seat with special straps. On top of that, kiiking will simultaneously challenge your physical as well as your mental form – kiiking technique, control of the body and overcoming fear are also really important in addition to muscle strength and physical endurance. Thus, a situation where a young woman is significantly more successful at kiiking than a big muscular man is not a rare sight at kiiking events.

PREPARATIONS & EQUIPMENT

The preparation part to try out kiiking is crucial as it is not possible to experience kiiking fully without the special equipment and certified instructor to keep it safe. In order to try kiiking there are 2 options:

1. Find the place with the kiiking swing
2. Hire the personnel together with the kiiking swing

Both options can be done through the Eesti Kiikinguliit webpage: www.kiiking.ee. For a small group of people, it will be more convenient to find a place, but for a wider audience such as schools or company events, the second option is more suitable.

Approximately 6-10 people can try kiiking in one hour with one swing. Kiiking swings can be found in different European countries such as Finland, Germany, Netherlands, Hungary etc.

There are different swing models varying in size that can be found as seen below:



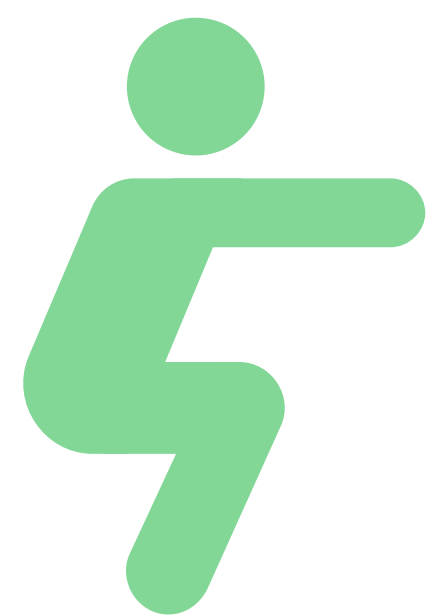
Image 1: Kiiking swings and adjustment interval: KIKI-1(green) 3-4m, KIKI-2(orange) 4-6m, KIKI-3(blue) 4-6m & 6-8m

WARM-UP EXERCISES

Kiiking is a physically demanding sport that requires a good warm-up for the entire body to avoid injuries.

The warm-up should start off from a lower intensity and gradually increase to higher intensity. Here is an example of different exercises to warm-up:

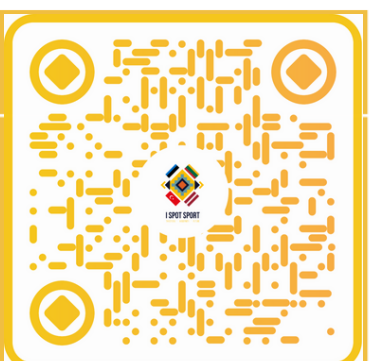
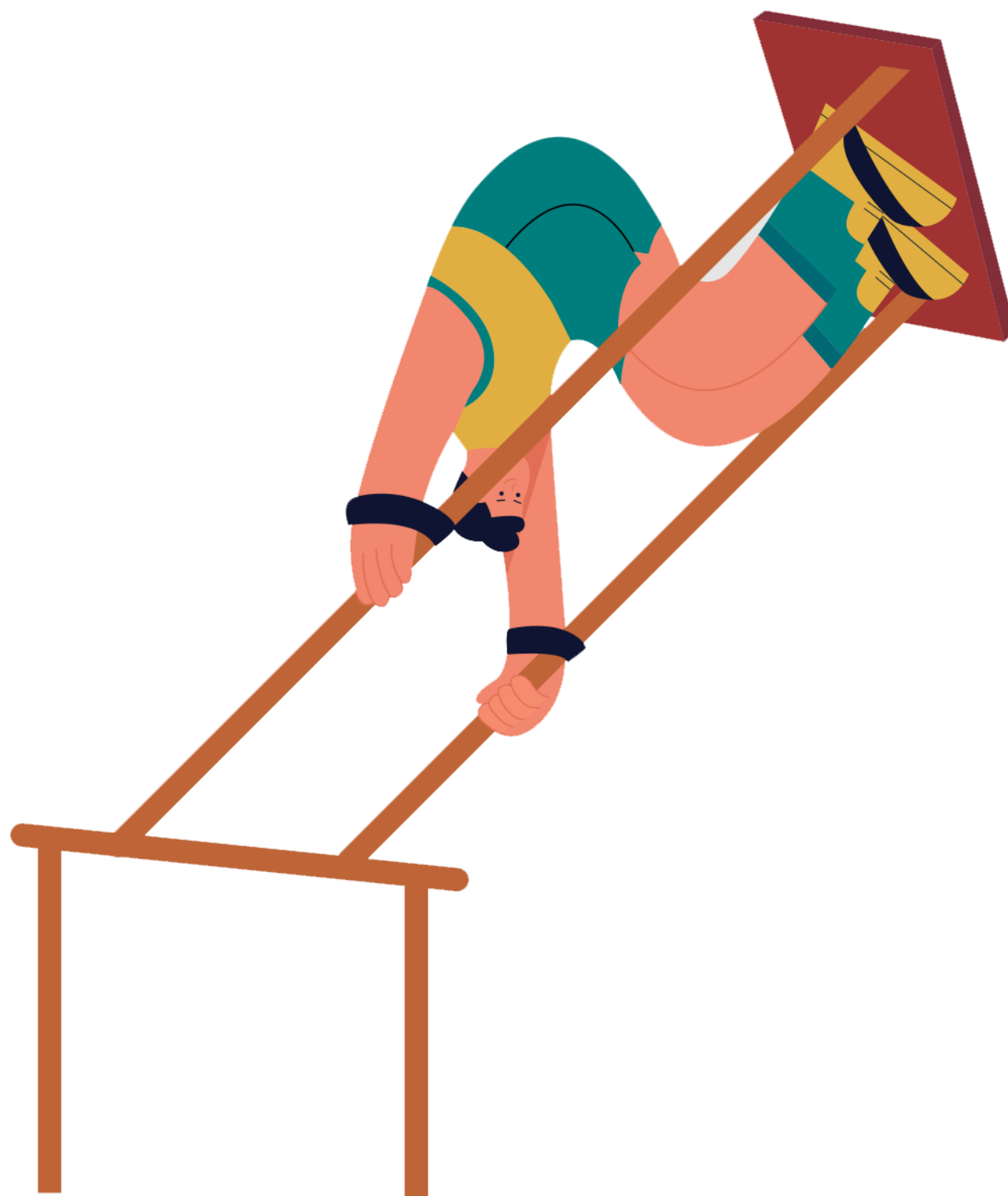
- Light jog for 5 minutes.
- Walking drills for 5 minutes: Include high knees, butt kicks, heel kicks, and ankle skips to raise your heart rate and engage leg muscles.
- Dynamic stretches for 5 minutes: Perform controlled movements like leg swings, arm circles, torso twists, squats and walking lunges to increase blood flow and prepare your joints.
- Short accelerations 5 x 30 meters with proper mechanics, gradually increasing intensity.



HOW TO PLAY

The aim of the sport for individuals is to be active and surpass oneself depending on the level of experience. There are various levels to achieve that.

1. **Out of comfort zone level**- make a first 360 degrees with a kiiingu swing. This is suitable for people who have not any experience or have previously failed to get over the spindle. This level applies to the events such as festivals, birthdays, company parties or school sports days.
2. **Human spinner level**- once the first step is achieved it is possible to make as many rotations as the person on the swing has the energy. For the beginners it is recommended to stay in the safe zone(not pushing the limits) as it is important to control the body posture to avoid injuries.
3. **Inquisitive swinger**- learning to control the movements and making rotations one way and another. This step is important to learn to swing more efficiently.
4. **Energy efficient swinger**- this involves fast movements with proper timing to make the rotation as fast as possible.
5. **Competition level**- pushing the limits and trying the maximum height that can be achieved to make the rotation with the swing.





LET'S PRACTICE

The best way to learn is to practice. For the beginners the most suitable swing would be a swing with a height between 3 and 4 meters. For the children an even smaller kiiking swing called MIKI-1 is available with the 2,3 meters height.

The workshop with the proper equipment(1 kiiking swing and 1-2 instructors) can last about an hour and it is meant for 7-10 people. If more people are on the waiting list, it would be wise to divide them into groups so the rest of the people can do other activities at the same time.

When there is no kiiking swing nearby it is also possible to imitate the movements using a toad wall or other available equipment where it is possible to hold on to. It gives an opportunity to practice similar movements as on the swing by squatting and standing up while at the same time coordinating the arm movements by pushing or pulling the body at the same time. Also, it is important to learn to listen while learning kiiking as it is usual that people can not follow simple orders(up&down) while being tied on the swing therefore the timing is not correct and it makes it harder to swing.



DID YOU KNOW?



- Newby–McMahon Building referred as the “World’s littlest skyscraper” is 12 meters tall which is lower than the person can be on the kiiing swing while at the upper position.
- At the beginning of kiiing people were not tied on the swing, which made the sport dangerous.
- In Guinness World Records: The longest successful 360° kiiing swing (male) is 7.43 m (24 ft 4.5 in), and was achieved by Sven Saarpere (Estonia), in Tallinn, Estonia, on 27 August 2022. This is almost the height of a 5-storey building.
- Rowing provides a good premise to have a good technique at kiiing.
- Height and weight are playing an important role in the final result while kiiing at the competition level.
- Kiiing swing was installed upside-down on 27.12.2018 for the “EV100 Spordiaasta Tähed 2018” award gala.
- Highest building where kiiing has been done is 122m in Tallinn.
- Youngest person who has completed a successful 360° swing was a 4 year old boy.
- Oldest person who actively participates in kiiing competitions is over 70 years old.
- Person who has done kiiing in more countries is Jaan Särg with 17 countries: Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Netherlands, Poland, Slovakia, Slovenia, Switzerland and Sweden.

INTERESTING FACT



GOOD PRACTICE

The project “Everybody Swing” took place in the years 2012–2019 in different cities in Estonia. The main goal of the “Everybody Swing” was to offer more kiiiking opportunities and to increase the number of kiiiking enthusiasts. Over the years, thousands of people have had a chance to experience the feeling that kiiiking offers.

Kiiiking has been one of the many activities in various events such as Midsummer’s Eve or different sport events. For example Student Summer Games is a sport-entertaining event where all students from higher education institutions and their youthful and athletic staff and alumni can participate. The aim of the Games is to provide a tense, sportive and relaxed entertainment program and to popularize both common and individual sports activities among the students. Kiiiking was in the programme from 2014 to 2022. Similar event called “Suvespartakiaad” for the companies are held each Summer and kiiiking has been one of the activities on the years 2017–2020, 2023 and 2024.

As an example of good practice, kiiiking swings have been in the schools as a part of PE lesson to help children to get over the fears of heights and motion sickness and to help to control the movement of the body.





THE ROAD AHEAD I SPOT SPORT

As we draw the curtains on this remarkable journey, we stand in awe of the transformative power that sports, particularly within the realm of ethnosports, holds for our societies. From the passionate endeavors of the Lietuvos Etnosporto Komitetas to the dynamic initiatives of the European Integration Group, the Latvijas Etnosporta Asociacija, and the Eesti Kiikinguliit, our collaborative efforts have illuminated the inherent value of culture-intertwined with physical activity.

We firmly believe that the methodologies of these distinct branches of sports not only enrich the lives of individuals but also contribute significantly to the fabric of our societies. Engaging youth with their cultural heritage through physical activity fosters a sense of pride and belonging, instilling in them a profound appreciation for their country's past while actively contributing to its future prosperity.

Understanding that the preservation and transmission of values from generation to generation form the cornerstone of societal cohesion, we recognize the pivotal role that active engagement with one's history and culture plays in fostering strong bonds within communities. Indeed, taking pride in one's heritage and culture is an integral part of a healthy civic mindset.

On behalf of all the partners involved in the I Spot Sport project, we extend our heartfelt gratitude for your unwavering dedication and enthusiastic participation.

May the spirit of sportsmanship and camaraderie that has characterized our journey together continue to inspire you in all your future endeavors.





ISpot Sport
TRADITIONS · MODERNITY · FUTURE



**Funded by
the European Union**

"The European Commission's support for the production of this publication does not constitute an endorsement of the contents, which reflect the views only of the authors, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein."



**Funded by
the European Union**



I SPOT SPORT

TRADITIONS · MODERNITY · FUTURE



**Funded by
the European Union**