

Back Ball Relay

Teams line up. A goal (such as a chair) is placed about thirty feet in front of each team. The first two players in each line stand back-to-back. A ball, such as a basketball or a volleyball, is placed just above the belt line between them. With their arms folded in front of them, each pair must carry the ball around their goal and back to the line. Then the next two people in line go, and so on. The team that first gets all its players around the goal and back in line wins.

Three-Legged Race

Here is another favorite. Two players from each team stand side-by-side, and the left leg of one and the right leg of the other are tied together. They then race to the goal and back.

Balloon Bat Relay

Teams line up single file, and each team gets a balloon. The person at the front of each line bats the balloon with her or his hand between her or his legs, and each successive team member does the same until it reaches the last person. That person runs the balloon to the front of the line and bats the balloon down the line again. The first team to get back in its original order wins.

Back-to-Back Relay

Teams line up. The first couple in each line must stand back-to-back and be tied together with a short rope. One person runs forward, and the other runs backward to a goal. On the return trip, the person who ran forward runs backward, and vice versa. Then the next two people in line go, and so on. The team that first gets all its players around the goal and back in line wins.

Balloon Sweep Relay

Line up teams and give each team a broom and an inflated balloon. Set up a goal (such as a chair) for each team about thirty feet away. Using a broom, the first player in each line must sweep a balloon around a goal and back to the starting point. Then the next person takes the broom and balloon, and so on. The first team to get all its players around the goal and back in line wins.

Basketball Pass

Teams line up single file. The first player in each line is given a basketball. The first player passes it to the player behind him or her *over his*

or her head. The next person passes it *between his or her legs* to the person behind him or her, and so on. When the last person in line gets the ball, he or she goes to the front of the line and starts the process over again. The first team to get back in its original order wins.

Basketball Squat

Divide into teams and choose captains. Have each team line up relay style about seven feet away from its captain. Each captain throws a basketball to the first person in his or her line. That person returns the throw and then squats down. Each captain then throws the ball to the second person, who does the same, and so on, down the line. To start the process from *back to front*, each captain throws the ball back to the last person, who must stand to catch it and remain standing after throwing it back to the captain. The basketball moves up the line until everyone has received another pass. Anytime the ball is dropped, the team must start over again. The first team to get everybody standing up again is the winner.

Ski Relay

Construct "skis" out of plywood and nail old shoes to them. Divide your group into teams and line them up relay style. The first player in each line puts on the "skis," skis to a pole, goes around it, returns to his or her team, and passes the skis on to the next person in line. The first team to get all its players around the pole and back again wins.

Broom Twist Relay

Teams line up. About twenty or thirty feet away from each team, a team leader stands holding a broom. The first player in each line runs to his or her team leader, takes the broom, and holds it against his or her chest with the bristles over his or her head. Looking up at the broom, the player must turn around as fast as possible ten times, while the leader counts the number of turns. Then the player hands the broom back to the leader, dizzily runs back to the team, and tags the next player.

Message Relay

Divide each team in half and stand the two halves in parallel lines a distance (at least ten feet, preferably more) from each other. Write a crazy message on a piece of paper for each team (sample: "Sarah Sahara tells extraordinary information to very enterprising executives"). Give a copy to the first member of each team. The person on each team who has the message reads it, wads it up, throws it on the ground, runs across the distance to the first person on his or her team

in the *opposite* line, and whispers the message in his or her ear. That person then runs to the next team member in the opposite line and whispers the message to him or her, and so on, until the last person on the team hears the message. Then he or she runs to the game leader to whisper the message to him or her. The team whose final message is closest to the original message wins.

Hands Full Relay

Assemble two identical sets of at least twelve miscellaneous items (e.g., two brooms, two balls, two skillets, two rolls of bathroom tissue, two ladders). Place a set on each of two tables.

Line up a team for each table. The first player for each team runs to the team's table, picks up one item, and takes it back to the second player. Once picked up, an item cannot touch the table or the floor. The second player and each succeeding player carries the items collected by her or his teammates to the table, picks up one new item, and carries them all back to the next player. The game will begin rapidly, but the pace will slow as each player decides which item to add to a growing armload of items. It will also take increasingly longer for one player to pass her or his burden to the next player in line.

Any item that is dropped in transit or transfer must be returned to the table by the leader. No one may assist the giving and receiving players in the exchange of items, except through coaching. The first team to empty its table wins.

Caterpillar Relay

This is a good game for camp. Have the young people bring their sleeping bag and do races in them. Line up the teams relay style. The first person in each line gets in his or her sleeping bag head first and races to a certain point and back, listening to the shouted directions from his or her team. Then he or she tags the next person, and so on. The first team to finish is the winner.

Coin, Book, and Ball Relay

Each team is given one quarter, one tennis ball, and a book. Each team splits up, with half its members lining up at the starting line and half at the finish line. The first person on each team balances the book on his or her head, holds the quarter in an eye, places the ball between his or her knees and walks to the finish line. No hands are to be used. He or she passes the items to a teammate at the finish line, who then performs the same task going in the opposite direction. The team continues carrying the items back and forth until each person has played.

Egg Roll

Contestants roll a boiled egg along an obstacle course with their nose. If the egg cracks, a referee gives the player a new egg, and the player must start over. (Have someone peel the cracked eggs and prepare lunch!)

Frisbee Relay

This is a good outdoor relay. Divide the group into equal-size teams of five or six. Any number of teams can play at the same time. Give each team a Frisbee and have the teams spread out in a line with each team member about fifty feet or more apart. The first person throws the Frisbee to the second person, who allows the Frisbee to land, goes to where it landed, and throws it toward the third person. The object is to see which team can throw the Frisbee the greatest distance in the shortest time. Award points for throwing it the farthest and for finishing first.

Balloon Pop Relay

Teams line up single file. About twenty feet in front of each team, place a chair on which there is a balloon for each team member. One at a time, each team member runs to the chair, blows up a balloon, and sits on it to pop it. The team whose members do this in the shortest time wins.

Hand-in-Glove Relay

Teams stand in line and pass a pair of gloves from one end to the other. Use rubber kitchen gloves or large work gloves. Each person takes the gloves off the person in front of him or her and puts them on himself or herself. All the fingers of the hands must fit in the fingers of the gloves.

Lemon Relay

Teams line up in straight lines. The first person on each team is given a pencil and a lemon. He or she must push the lemon to the finish line and back using only the pencil. Then the next player goes, and so on. If the lemon goes out of a player's lane, he or she must start over.

Inner Tube Relay

Divide the group into two teams. Each team pairs off and lines up in different areas equidistant from the center of the room or the playing field. Two inner tubes are placed in the center of the playing area.

The first couple in each line runs to an inner tube, headfirst squeezes through it together, and tags the next couple, who performs the same task. The first team to have all the couples finish wins.

Lifesaver Relay

Teams line up relay style. Give each player a toothpick to hold in his or her teeth. Place a Lifesaver on the toothpick of the player at the head of each line. The team must pass the Lifesaver from toothpick to toothpick until it reaches the end of the line. If the Lifesaver is dropped before it reaches the end of the line, it must be started over again at the beginning of the line. The winning team is the one whose Lifesaver reaches the end of the line first.

Mad Relay

In this relay, each team member does something different. Teams line up single file behind a line. Opposite each team, place on a chair a bag containing slips of paper on which you have written instructions. The teams' instructions need not be identical, but make them comparable. At a signal, the first person of each team runs to the chair, draws a slip of paper, reads it, and follows the instructions on it as quickly as possible. Before returning to the team, the contestant must tag the chair. The contestant then runs back and tags the next runner. The team that uses all its instructions first is the winner. Here are a few sample instructions:

1. Run around the chair five times while continuously yelling, "The British are coming! The British are coming!"
2. Stand on one foot while holding the other in your hand, tilt your head back, and count, "10, 9, 8, 7, 6, 5, 4, 3, 2, 1, Blast off!"
3. Take your shoes off, put them on the wrong feet, and tag your nearest opponent.
4. Sit on the floor, cross your legs, and sing one verse of "Mary had a little lamb."
5. Go to an adult and make three different funny-face expressions.
6. Put your hands over your eyes and snort like a pig five times and meow like a cat five times.
7. Sit in the chair, fold your arms, and laugh loud for five seconds.
8. Run around the chair backward five times while clapping your hands.
9. Run to someone not on your team, kiss her or his hand, and gently pinch her or his cheek.

Paper Chase

Set up races in which each person is given two pieces of paper and must travel between two points stepping only on the paper.

Ping-Pong Race

Each player gets a party blower that uncoils when blown. She or he pushes a Ping-Pong ball across the floor using only the blower. The first player to blow her or his Ping-Pong ball across the finish line wins.

Potato Relay

Teams line up. Each player must push the potato along the floor to a goal and back using only his or her nose.

Sack Race

Get some old burlap bags and run some sack races. Have the young people step inside their bag, hold it up, and hop to a goal and back.

Broom Jump Relay

Team members should stand two abreast. The first couple on each team is given a broom. On "go," each one grabs one end of the broom, and they run back through their team, holding the broom just above the floor. Everyone must jump over the broom. When the couple reaches the back of the line, they must pass the broom back to the front of the line, using hands only. Then each couple repeats the relay. The first team with the original couple at the head of the line wins.

Sock Tail Relay

Make several "sock tails" and give one to each team. A sock tail consists of a belt with a sock tied onto it and a baseball in the end of the sock as a weight. By each team, put a small football on the floor. (Buy or borrow children's footballs for this relay.) The first person on each team puts on the tail with the sock hanging down behind. At a signal, the player must push the football on the floor to a goal and back with the sock tail. The next player attaches the sock, performs the task, and so on, until each team member has played. If a player touches the football with his or her feet or hands, he or she must start over.

Spoon Relay

Teams line up. Each player holds a plastic spoon in her or his mouth. The leader places a marble on the spoon of the player at the head of each line. It is passed from spoon to spoon until it reaches the end of the line. The team that gets its marble to the end of the line first is the winner.

Sucker Relay

Teams line up. Each person has a paper straw. The first person in each line picks up a piece of paper about four inches square by sucking on the straw. The paper is carried around a goal and back. Then the next person performs the task, and so on. If a player drops the paper, he or she must start over.

Thimble Relay

Teams form a line, and each player holds a straw upright in his or her mouth. The relay is started by placing a thimble on the straw of the first person in each line. The thimble is passed from player to player. The team that gets its thimble to the end of the line first is the winner.

Waddle Relay

In this relay, teams race with players carrying a small coin between their knees. Without using their hands, they must successfully drop a coin into a milk bottle or a jar placed fifteen or twenty feet away. If a player drops the coin along the way, he or she must start over.

Wagon Relay

For this game, you will need a children's wagon for each team. Also set up a slalom course for each team. Divide the group into teams and have each team pair off. Line up the teams at the start of their course and have the first couple from each team race. One person sits in the wagon and uses the handle to steer while the other person pushes him or her. When one couple finishes, the next begins. The first team to have everyone complete the course wins.

A variation is to have one person sit in the wagon while the other steers and pushes the wagon backward through the course.

Wild Wheelbarrow Race

This race requires two or more real wheelbarrows. Have your group pair off. One person pushes the wheelbarrow and the other rides in it. The pairs must travel around a goal and back. However, the wheelbarrow driver is blindfolded, and the person sitting in the wheelbarrow must give her or him directions.

Cotton Ball Relay

Each team needs a number of cotton balls in a container (such as a dish or a pan), a spatula, and an egg carton. Teams line up.

At a signal, the first person in each line picks up a cotton ball with the spatula and keeps it balanced on the spatula while running to a goal and back. If he or she loses the cotton ball, he or she must start over. When the player returns to his or her team, he or she places the cotton ball in the egg carton. Then the next player goes, and so on. The first team to fill its egg carton wins.

Weird-Barrow Race

Have your group pair off for this variation of a wheelbarrow race. Typically, in a wheelbarrow race, player 1 becomes the wheelbarrow by walking on her or his hands while player 2 uses player 1's feet as handles and runs along behind. In this race, the added difficulty is that the wheelbarrow (player 1) must push a volleyball along the ground with her or his nose.