



**Paralympics  
Australia**



# Participating in Paralympic Sports

## introduction

This resource includes a variety of practical learning activities designed to emulate Paralympic sports. The practical activities require basic sport equipment and do not require any specialist or adaptive equipment. The activities in this resource could be extended to cover a short unit of work or teachers can select activities for a one-off lesson. The practical lessons could also be run as a mini Paralympics for a day or over successive days.

It is suggested that teachers use the additional resources on the Paralympic Education Program website to build students' knowledge of the Paralympic Games and disability prior to completing these activities.



## RESOURCES

### For sitting volleyball:

- Volleyball or a similar soft ball.
- Volleyball net or string 1 metre off the floor. A line of chairs could also be used.
- Smooth or soft floor. Indoor gym floor works best but these activities could also work on carpet.

### For goalball:

- Blindfolds – sleep masks work well, or a piece of material tied around students' heads.
- Goalball (an audible ball) – to make your own, wrap a ball, for example a basketball, in a plastic bag. Otherwise soccer balls with bells inside can work as a goalball
- Smooth or soft floor. Indoor gym floor works best but these activities could also work on carpet.
- Tactile markings on the floor – can use gym mats, or masking tape that has been raised by pinching it together, or some string under masking tape.

### For Para-athletics:

- Measuring tape
- Space for running 100 or 200 metres
- Shot put, javelin and/or discuss (if unavailable use another ball or frisbee)
- Long jump pit/sand pit/flat grassed area
- Cones and/or string to mark out lanes and throwing areas
- Chairs
- Blindfolds
- Relay batons



## DIFFERENTIATION

- The rules of each sport can be adapted to suit the learners. For example, in sitting volleyball, reduce the number of points needed to win a set or allow students to catch the ball if they have difficulty hitting.
- The size of the sitting volleyball and goalball courts can be reduced, along with a lower net.
- Use different balls such as beach balls or balloons to slow the games down.



## AUSTRALIAN CURRICULUM LINKS

### Year 1 and 2

- Describe ways to include others to make them feel they belong (ACPPS019)
- Recognise similarities and differences in individuals and groups, and explore how these are celebrated and respected (ACPPS024)
- Create and participate in games with and without equipment (ACPMP027)
- Use strategies to work in group situations when participating in physical activities (ACPMP030)

### Year 3 and 4

- Practise and refine fundamental movement skills in a variety of movement sequences and situations (ACPMP043)
- Practise and apply movement concepts and strategies with and without equipment (ACPMP045)
- Adopt inclusive practices when participating in physical activities (ACPMP048)

### Year 5 and Year 6

- Identify how valuing diversity positively influences the wellbeing of the community (ACPPS060)
- Practise specialised movement skills and apply them in a variety of movement sequences and situations (ACPMP061)
- Propose and apply movement concepts and strategies with and without equipment (ACPMP063)
- Participate in physical activities from their own and others' cultures, and examine how involvement creates community connections and intercultural understanding (ACPMP066)
- Participate positively in groups and teams by encouraging others and negotiating roles and responsibilities (ACPMP067)



## TEACHING AND LEARNING ACTIVITIES

### Introduction

Teachers might like to show the following YouTube clips to explore what is Paralympic sport and who competes in Paralympic sport.

The International Paralympic Committee has a full list of Paralympic sports.



### 1 Goalball

**Before beginning the practical activities, teachers might like to show this YouTube clip which explains the sport of goalball.**

Goalball is a team sport for athletes with a vision impairment. All players are blindfolded to ensure that athletes with different levels of vision are competing on an even playing field. The ball is 1.25kg and has three small bells inside so players can hear it. The court lines are raised to help players orientate themselves. The aim of the game is to defend your own goal while attempting to score in your opponent's goal. The goals are nine metres long. Each team has three players on court at a time and the spectators must remain quiet while the game is in play so the athletes can hear the ball.



### Warm-up activities:

1. To develop listening skills - the teacher sets out four corners of the playing space. One player stands in the middle of the open space and they wear a blindfold or close their eyes. They count down loudly from 10 while the other players move around the room and pick a corner to stand in before the person counting reaches zero. As soon as the person counting gets to zero, they need to point to the corner they think has the most people standing in it. Those people are out. Continue the game with the same person in the middle until there is one person left as the winner.
2. Walking/running under blindfold - in pairs, one person wears a blindfold while the other is sighted. The sighted person guides the blindfolded person around the room before swapping roles.  
  
Try this first with contact between the pairs, for example by holding hands, then try the same activity but students cannot touch each other and need to rely on their communication skills.

## Skill development:

1. Blindfolded over under – in groups of 4-8, students stand in a straight line with their hands on each other's shoulders with all students wearing a blindfold. The leader of the line holds a ball. They pass the ball over their head to the person behind them. This person then passes the ball under their legs to the next person. The team continues alternating between passing the ball over their head and under their legs. Once the ball reaches the last person, they need to make their way to the front of the line to start again. Continue until the starting leader is at the front of the line again.

Encourage students to talk to one another when they are moving to the front of the line and passing the ball. It also helps for students to run their hand along each shoulder to find their way to the front.

2. Blindfolded tunnel ball – played the same way as above, but students have the legs spread in their line and the leader rolls the ball under everyone's legs for the last person to catch before running to the front of the line.

3. Throwing under blindfold – set up some targets on the floor between 5 and 15 metres away from students. Cones or chairs make good targets. Students take turns throwing the ball like a bowling ball while under blindfold aiming to hit the targets.

Teachers could run this activity like a relay with each student having to hit the target before another team member tries.

To help students, have a person stand near the target and clap their hands or call the thrower's name.

4. Defending under blindfold – have students in a crouching position or sitting on their hip (whichever side they prefer). Either the teacher calls left or right and students need to dive out that direction with their arms and feet extended, or the teacher can use an audible cue and students dive to the side where they hear the noise.

To extend this, a teacher or student can gently throw a ball at either side of the defending student for them to dive and block.

## Playing the game:

1. To set up – using a volleyball sized court (18m x 9m), on the 9 metre base lines place cones on the corners. These are the goals. About 1.5 metres from each base line place three tactile markings. The centre marking should be a little in front of the markings either side.
2. Divide students into teams of three with all players blindfolded. Teams who are not playing can spread themselves around the court and throw the ball back in when it goes out. Remind students not playing they need to be quite while the ball is rolling so the players can hear it.
3. Each team takes turn rolling the ball to the other team trying to get it past their goal line. The defending team needs to dive out and stop the ball from going past.
4. When throwing, it is important that students roll the ball on the ground rather than throwing it through the air.
5. A full-length game is two 12 minute halves, however teachers can shorten the game to suit their needs. After the time has elapsed, the



## 2 Sitting Volleyball

**Before beginning the practical activities, teachers might like to show this [YouTube clip](#) which explains the sport of sitting volleyball.**

The rules of sitting volleyball are very similar to able-bodied volleyball, but two main differences are a lower net height and smaller court and players must have one buttock on the floor whenever they make contact with the ball.

The Paralympic court is 10 metres x 6 metres and the net is 1.15 metres high for men and 1.05 metres high for women. Teachers can alter the size of the court and height of the net depending on their resources and students.



### Warm-up activities:

1. Shuffling relay – split the class into groups and have each group in half facing each other. Instead of running a relay to another member of their group, students shuffle on their bottom. They can use their hands and feet however they want but their buttocks must remain in contact with the floor.

Variations:

- Shuffle tag
- Shuffle piggy in the middle.

2. Chair passing – to get students used to throwing and catching a ball from a seated position, have all students sitting in a chair or on the floor. In pairs or small groups, they can begin by throwing a ball back and forth to their partner. Once they are confident, they can progress to hitting the ball to each other trying not to grab it.

### Skill development:

1. Sitting in pairs facing each other, using a volleyball, light ball or balloon depending on students' skill level, see how long they can keep the ball in the air by hitting it to each other with one or two hands without it touching the ground. Each student can't hit the ball more than once in a row.

Students can use their feet and hands to shuffle around but make sure they always keep their buttocks in contact with the floor.

This activity can also be played with the class sitting in a circle. Give the class a target number of hits to reach. For big classes, divide the class into groups and take turns seeing which group can get to that number first.

### Playing the game:

1. Split the class into teams of six. All players must be seated at all times. Their buttocks must always be on the floor.
2. Teams aim to hit the ball over the net so that it lands within the opponent's court.
3. Teams are allowed a maximum of three hits before the ball must go over the net.
4. Points are awarded if the ball touches the ground in the opponent's half, the team hits the ball out, the ball doesn't make it over the net.
5. The first team to 25 points wins a set as long as they win by two clear points.
6. The first team to win three sets wins the match.

### 3 Para-athletics

**Before beginning the practical activities, teachers might like to show this [YouTube clip](#) which explains how Para-athletics works.**

Athletes with a physical impairment, vision impairment or intellectual disability can compete in Para-athletics. Para-athletes compete in track and field events like able-bodied athletes with some minor adaptations which might include the use of a racing wheelchair, throwing chair, prosthetics or using a guide for athletes with a vision impairment.

The activities below will help students experience Para-athletics and how sports can be adapted to suit a range of abilities. Teachers should introduce students to these adapted versions of familiar track and field events and allow students to experience it for themselves.



1. Guided Running – Some athletes with a vision impairment use a guide to compete in track events. Set up a 100 or 200 metre running race. In pairs, students are to run with one student blindfolded and the other acting as guide.

To guide, students could:

- Hold hands
- The blindfolded runner could hold the shoulder of the guide
- Use a piece of string or circular sash and both runners hold it with one hand each.

Make sure students practise walking with their guide before running full speed.

2. Seated shotput/javelin/discuss – set up a throwing area using cones or string and lay out the measuring tape. Set a chair at the end of the measuring tape. Students throw the shotput/javelin/discuss or another object as far as they can seated in the chair.

3. Amputee relay – for this activity students are to use their non-dominant hand only. Their dominant hand must always remain behind their back. In groups students run a relay by running a distance before passing on a baton or similar object.

4. Amputee or blindfolded long jump – set up a running space and a sand pit or space for jumping. A string or flat board should be placed at the start of the jumping space. Students are to jump as far as they can without crossing the mark.

For blindfolded long jump, students should close their eyes or wear a blindfold and another student they trust should stand behind the jumping area. The guiding student should clap or call the blindfolded student as they run and tell them when they are coming close to the jumping mark.

For amputee long jump, students are to complete the activity with one or both hands behind their back the whole time.

## 4 Discussion and Reflection Questions:

- What did you find challenging when you were participating in the various Para-sports?
- How did you overcome some of these challenges?
- Do you think someone with a disability might face and overcome similar challenges in their daily life?
- It was easy to adapt these sports and activities to ensure people of all abilities could play. What could we change in our own lives to ensure people with a disability are included?
- Why is it important that people of all abilities are given opportunities to participate in sport?







## EXTENSION ACTIVITIES

**1** In groups, students can investigate selected Paralympic Summer and Winter sports and present a sports profile on the sports from research on the web.

Teachers can decide how many sports they would like students to research. Teachers and students can choose the mode of delivery for their presentation e.g. practical demonstration, multi-media presentation, cardboard or models.

The sports profile should include:

- Name of the sport
- Summary of the rules of the sport
- Descriptions and illustrations of the uniforms
- The equipment that is used, in particular adaptive equipment for athletes with disabilities
- What disability groups compete in the sport?
- What are some of the challenges for athletes in the sport?
- At least one picture of athletes competing in the sport.
- Identify at least one Australian Paralympian for your selected sport.
- Identify the websites that were used to gain this information



**2** Create a new Paralympic sport to be debuted at the Paris 2024 Paralympic Game or Milano Cortina 2026 Paralympic Winter Games.

Your sport should be for either athletes with a physical or visual impairment. This could either be an adapted version of an existing sport or an entirely new sport. Think about what specific rules and equipment the sport will need to make it accessible for athletes with a disability.

Students could present their work to the class using visuals or teach their peers how to play.

