

# Movement



A grey wagtail

## 1. Bird movement games

Copying the ways different birds move and solve problems, particularly without using your arms and hands, offers a whole series of activities and challenges that young people can carry out.

In the examples that follow we must assume that arms are the equivalent of wings and hands the tips of wings. Therefore the use of hands and fingers to solve problems should not be encouraged.

We do not recommend teaching children to fly, particularly jumping from high places.

## 1.1. The bird physical warm up

To survive an attack from a predator you will need to be constantly on the look out for danger and be able to escape quickly. Having had a quiet night perched in a bush we recommend the following stretches to warm your body up for the day.

Purpose	Exercise
<p>You will need to be able to keep a look out for predator activity in all directions. A cat might be sneaking up from behind you or a sparrowhawk diving from above.</p>	<p>Keeping the rest of your body still, gently move your head in different directions to see what area you can keep an eye on.</p> <p>If you keep your body still you will find that you have some blind spots, particularly behind you and straight above.</p> <p>This time keep your lower body and legs still, feet pointing to the front, and rotate the top part of your body and gently bend backwards. This should help you increase your range of observation.</p> <p>Now you can use your legs and slowly walk around making sure you keep an eye out for predators.</p>
<p>Preparing for a pretend take off.</p>	<p>We need to get the wing muscles ready for flight.</p> <p>Gently flap your arms up and down. Not too quickly as this uses up energy and if you get tired you will need food and rest.</p> <p>Gently bend your knees and lower your bottom into a squatting position ready to push off and launch into flight.</p> <p>When you are ready push upwards with the feet, straightening your body and flap as quickly as you can.</p>

<b>Purpose</b>	<b>Exercise</b>
<p>Practise different flying styles.</p>	<p>Walk around flapping your arms until you start to get tired. You probably don't want to keep flapping hard for too long.</p> <p>Take a rest, but remember to keep looking out for predators.</p> <p>Take off again, squat, push and flap hard, but this time for say 5 seconds. Enough to get you into the air.</p> <p>As you walk, count four steps and flap gently, continue to repeat this exercise for, say, a minute.</p> <p>Take off again, remember to squat, push off and flap hard for, say, 5 seconds. This time we will practise gliding. Walk around slowly with your arms stretched out and palms of the hands pointing down. No need to flap let the wind do the work for you. If there is a wind when you carry out this exercise you should walk in the direction the wind blows you. Sorry, but if you walk into the wind you must flap.</p> <p>We will now practise a swoop. Throw your arms backwards and slowly run forward for a few seconds and then relax.</p>

<b>Purpose</b>	<b>Exercise</b>
Landing	<p>We haven't practised landing yet, so you may have developed your own landing styles or had a few crash landings – sorry.</p> <p>To land safely, you need to be able to brake (not break) quickly, not over-shoot your target and then balance if you are landing in a tree or bush. Not so bad if you are landing on the ground or water.</p> <p>We suggest you use some hoops or mark out a target landing position, or lay out a rope to act as a branch.</p> <p>Start from within one hoop and take off. Fly gently towards another hoop and just as you approach it take a small jump aiming to land in the middle of the hoop. You should aim to land on both feet and not topple forwards. Stand still and look out for predators.</p>

## 1.2. Barn owl hunting games

We will now look at some activities related to specific birds.

Barn owl hunting	<p>Set up two hoops. One will be the nest and the other a perch.</p> <p>Lay out some bean bags or tennis balls to represent prey.</p> <p>Fly to your perch. When you are told to go, take off and glide towards the prey bending down to pick it up in one hand and take it to the nest. Drop the prey in the nest.</p> <p>The other owl should fly to the perch and wait for the signal to go hunting.</p> <p>Repeat the exercise.</p>
Hunting in the dark	<p>Barn owls hunt in the dark and use sound rather than sight to locate their prey.</p> <p>The first bird flies to a perch where s/he is blindfolded – no peeking.</p> <p>The bird remaining in the nest gives instructions to the other bird to locate the prey, pick it up and bring it back to the nest.</p> <p>We suggest the nesting bird uses, for example, left, right, forward, back, swoop, grab as suitable commands.</p>

### 1.3. Flocking

So far we have carried out exercises that involve individual movements. We can now look at moving in flocks and how much more difficult it is to ensure a flock achieves its aims. In particular we must try to avoid collisions.

For the purpose of these exercises set out some cones which the flock will have to navigate through – a sort of obstacle course. Ensure that the flock will have to change direction and have a starting area and finishing area to land.

Flying with a friend	In pairs walk or jog round the set course. The pairs should not touch each other. They can talk if they wish.
Flying in V formation	<p>Form a group of 5 in a V formation. Appoint a leader to take the group round the course.</p> <p>The objective is to retain the V formation shape and try to maintain the distance from your neighbour.</p> <p>Try the exercise first in silence, then with everybody talking and finally with just the leader talking. See if there are any differences in the way the flock performs.</p> <p>Increase the size of the flock to, say, 11 and try again.</p>
Large flocks	<p>Now try with the whole class at walking pace for safety.</p> <p>Try to maintain a flocking shape, say the V with a leader.</p> <p>Now try with no shape and no leader. Members of the flock can talk to each other.</p>