



# **MARATHON KIDS**

**RUNNING GAMES  
FOR KIDS**

# RUNNING GAMES

**INSTRUCTIONS:** Use these running games to switch up the activities your club will be doing throughout the season. These games are a good way to keep things fresh with your runners, and can be incorporated for any length of time during each session.

## RUNNING GAME EXAMPLE:

**Running game name.**

**MARATHON KIDS**

**RED LIGHT, GREEN LIGHT**

**Goal:** 20 minutes of activity = 1 mile      **Materials:** none

**Objective:**  
To move quickly from the starting line to the finish line when the "light is green."  
To work on reaction time when the "light turns red".

**Instructions:**

1. Designate both a starting and finish line.
2. Players line up on the starting line.
3. When Coach says "green light" players may start running towards the finish line
4. When Coach says "red light" all players must freeze where they are and wait for the "light to turn green" again.
5. If a player doesn't stop moving quickly enough, they return to the starting line and start over.
6. The first player to cross the finish line wins
7. Keep playing back and forth until time runs out.

**This section will state the objective of each game. Use this to help your runners understand the main goals and purpose of the activity.**

Marathon Kids has converted time spent doing each game to an amount of mileage. Performing these games for the following lengths of time will allow runners to track the corresponding mileage on their Mileage Log:

5 min = 0.25 mi  
10 min = 0.50 mi  
15 min = 0.75 mi  
20 min = 1.0 mi

Check here to see if any additional materials are needed for each game.

Follow these simple instructions to successfully set up and run each game.

\*Are there other running games you have used that have been successful? We'd love to share them with other Coaches! If you have some great ideas, send them to the Marathon Kids team at [programs@marathonkids.org](mailto:programs@marathonkids.org) and we'll spread the word.

# MARATHON KIDS

## THE CONE GAME

Goal: 20 minutes of activity = 1 mile

Materials: small cones

**Objective:**  
To be the team with the most cones in their designated position (either sitting upright or laying down) after a designated amount of time.

### Instructions:

1. Before starting, spread out cones far enough apart to ensure running.
2. Half of the cones should be sitting upright and half should be laying down to start.
3. Split players into two teams: one team in charge of laying cones down, the other in charge of keeping cones upright.
4. Teams run around and move the cones to upright or lying down positions.
5. When the time is up, count the number of cones upright and laying down, then identify the winning team.
6. Play two rounds so each team gets the chance to do each activity.

# MARATHON KIDS

## MUSICAL FROGS

Goal: 20 minutes of activity = 1 mile

Materials: music, pads/dots

**Objective:**  
To be the last "frog" on a lily pad when the game is over. Similar to musical chairs with a focus on getting kids more physically active.

### Instructions:

1. Set up the "lily pads" (paper, dots, pillows, etc.) in a large circle, using one less pad than the total number of players.
2. Organize players around the lily pads in a circle. When music starts, all players start hopping like frogs around the circle.
3. When music stops, the "frogs" need to get to a lily pad as quickly as possible.
4. There won't be enough pads for everyone. Whoever doesn't get to a lily pad is out.
5. Before each round, remove another lily pad.
6. Continue the game until only one winning frog remains on the final lily pad.

# MARATHON KIDS

## BALLOON STOMP

Goal: 20 minutes of activity = 1 mile

Materials: balloons, string

**Objective:**  
To pop other players' balloons with feet while protecting own balloon from getting popped.

### Instructions:

1. Inflate enough balloons for each player.
2. Each player gets a balloon and a string.
3. Tie one end of the string to the inflated balloon, and the other end around ankle.
4. Players run around, trying to pop other people's balloons by stomping on them while protecting their own balloon.
5. Players may not touch own balloon with their hands, and both feet must stay on the ground except for running or stomping (no hopping on one foot to protect balloon).
6. The last player with an unpopped balloon is the winner.

# MARATHON KIDS

## BLOB TAG

Goal: 20 minutes of activity = 1 mile

Materials: none

**Objective:**  
To be the last player not attached to the Blob.

### Instructions:

1. One player start as "it" and runs around trying to tag the other players.
2. If a player gets tagged, they must join hands with the person who tagged them - they have now started to form the Blob, and they are both "it."
3. The Blob must stay connected and keep trying to tag other players, who then also become part of the Blob.
4. The Blob will keep growing and working together until all of the players have been tagged.
5. The last player to be tagged wins.

# MARATHON KIDS

## ANIMAL FRIENDS

Goal: 20 minutes of activity = 1 mile

Materials: none

**Objective:**  
To get moving and having fun by having players act like their favorite animals. This can also be a great ice breaker/get-to-know-you game.

### Instructions:

1. Designate both a starting and finish line.
2. Players line up on the starting line.
3. Players take turns suggesting their favorite animals to act like.
4. When an animal has been chosen, players act like the animal as they run/move from the starting line to the finish line and back.
5. Repeat until everyone has chosen an animal or until time runs out.

# MARATHON KIDS

## SHARKS AND MINNOWS

Goal: 20 minutes of activity = 1 mile

Materials: none

**Objective:**  
To be the last minnow swimming, as well as to keep moving throughout the entire game.

### Instructions:

1. Choose 1-2 players to be the "sharks" trying to tag the other players, or "minnows."
2. Designate both a starting and a finish line.
3. Minnows start on the starting line and slowly "swim" (jog/run) forward.
4. When Coach yells "SHARK ATTACK!" the minnows must "swim" quickly to the finish line, past the shark(s) without being tagged.
5. Once tagged, minnows become sharks too.
6. Continue the game (running back and forth) until there are only 1-2 minnows left.
7. These minnows become the sharks in the next round.



# MARATHON KIDS

## FOUR CORNERS

Goal: 20 minutes of activity = 1 mile

Materials: small cones

**Objective:**  
To get moving by running from corner to corner and to learn a variety of new exercises.

### Instructions:

1. Using cones, designate 4 corners.
2. Players start at any corner they want to.
3. Coach stands in the middle of the space.
4. Coach closes eyes and says "GO!", and players run to a different corner of their choosing (spread out to all 4 corners).
5. Coach, eyes still closed, points to a corner (now open eyes).
6. Players in that corner must do an exercise chosen by Coach while everyone else counts to 5,10, etc.
7. Keep going, switching up exercises, until time is up.

# MARATHON KIDS

## EVERYONE'S IT

Goal: 20 minutes of activity = 1 mile

Materials: none

**Objective:**  
To get the whole group moving at once with the goal of tagging as many other players as possible. To practice goal setting and achieving through friendly competition. Additionally, stress the importance of honesty and how it relates to goal achieving.

### Instructions:

1. Set boundaries for the playing area.
2. Players must stay in bounds. If a player goes out of bounds they will have to do an activity (ex: 10 jumping jacks).
3. Everyone's goal is to tag as many other players as possible.
4. Players should keep count of how many others they have tagged.
5. When tagged, nothing happens to the player. They just keep playing!
6. When game ends, ask players to say how many others they tagged.
7. For the next round, players set a goal for themselves and try to meet/exceed it.

# MARATHON KIDS

## RED LIGHT, GREEN LIGHT

Goal: 20 minutes of activity = 1 mile

Materials: none

**Objective:**  
To move quickly from the starting line to the finish line when the "light is green." To work on reaction time when the "light turns red".

### Instructions:

1. Designate both a starting and finish line.
2. Players line up on the starting line.
3. When Coach says "green light" players may start running towards the finish line
4. When Coach says "red light" all players must freeze where they are and wait for the "light to turn green" again.
5. If a player doesn't stop moving quickly enough, they return to the starting line and start over.
6. The first player to cross the finish line wins
7. Keep playing back and forth until time runs out.

# MARATHON KIDS

## FREEZE DANCE

Goal: 20 minutes of activity = 1 mile

Materials: music

**Objective:**  
To get moving and acting silly when the music is playing. To practice balance and work on reaction time when the music stops.

### Instructions:

1. Players spread out in an open area.
2. When the music starts, players dance/jump/move with the music.
3. When the music stops, players must freeze and hold that position until the music starts again.
4. For older players, if they don't hold their frozen pose until the music starts, they will have to do an activity (ex: 10 jumping jacks) chosen by Coach.
5. Keep playing for an entire song or until time runs out.

# MARATHON KIDS

## JUMP JUMP

Goal: 20 minutes of activity = 1 mile

Materials: none

**Objective:**  
To be the first to reach the finish line while still following the directions!

### Instructions:

1. Designate both a starting and finish line.
2. Players line up on the starting line.
3. Coach calls out directions like: One jump! Two jumps! Four one-footed jumps!
4. Players move forward towards the finish line while doing each activity.
5. Continue to give jumping directions until players reach the finish line.
6. If players don't follow directions, they return to the starting line and start over.
7. The first player to cross the finish line wins
8. Keep playing back and forth until time runs out.

# MARATHON KIDS

## NEWSPAPER RACE

Goal: 20 minutes of activity = 1 mile

Materials: newspaper

**Objective:**  
To keep the newspaper from falling to the ground. The more players run, the longer their newspaper will stay up!

### Instructions:

1. Players spread out with a sheet of newspaper.
2. Coach demonstrates how to run with the newspaper. First hold it on chest, start running, then let go. The wind resistance keeps the newspaper in place.
3. Play a test round to learn the process.
4. Start the first round, encouraging players to keep running fast to keep their newspapers from falling.
5. Players are out once their newspaper falls.
6. Last person to be running with their newspaper still against their chest wins!
7. Keep playing until time runs out.