

Co-Oper Band™ Product Guide

with Activities & Games by Kimberly Dye, MS, DTR

Introduction

Welcome to the Co-Oper Band, the stretchy, deep pressure and elastic FUN Band.

Co-Oper Band's strength and stretchability create an exciting new movement experience that can either contain and hold a rowdy group or encourage risk taking from even the most timid. Its dynamic rebound challenges individual gravity and balance. Group movement can support individual experimentation with trust, caution, risk-taking and release.

While Co-Oper Band is made of heavy-duty surgical elastic, it shouldn't be misused or abused. Do not use it to play tug-of-war, as a swing or as a grown-up baby bouncer. Like anything with tensile properties, it can have a recoil effect, so be careful that participants do not slingshot out of control. You can involve up to twenty-five people (X-large), twelve people (large), four people (small) or even two (x-small) but be discrete as to how individual weight might affect that number. Make sure fabric is equally distributed around internal elastic before each use. Store away from radiators, direct sunlight or other heat sources.

Note: Co-Oper Band contains Latex.



Here are some great ideas to get started using your Co-Oper Band.

Activities

Warm-Up Exercises - Stretches

For arms, back, chest, shoulders:

- Sitting or standing, participants hold Co-Oper Band above heads moving straight arms forward and backwards, side to side, and circling over the head with as much range of motion as possible.
- Hold Co-Oper Band with two hands, arms outstretched to the front. Stretch arms to either side without moving torso.

For sides:

- Holding Co-Oper Band in right hand everyone step back to expand the circle, producing as much tension as possible. Don't let go! With feet parallel to the circle, lean sideways away from the center while stretching left arm over head towards the center. Change sides.
- While sitting on the floor, hold Co-Oper Band with right hand. Move back to produce the right amount of tension. Slowly lean forward, twisting torso towards arm holding band. Change sides.
- Participants stand or sit facing center, with Co-Oper Band held in both hands. Each participant pulls away from the center with bent knees, producing an undercurve of back and pelvis. Instruct use of oppositional pull to change body position and find different places in the back to stretch.

For legs:

- Participants sit holding Co-Oper Band in front of them, with legs either straight or slightly bent. Lean forward from hips and perform a rowing action with the arms. The body returns to the vertical as arms circle up towards the ceiling.
- All lie on back with head towards center. Hold band with two hands, raise one leg, placing band under arch of foot. Use Co-Oper Band to stretch your hamstrings by gently pulling your leg towards your head.
- While on back bring both legs open to a V shape on band, overlapping ankles with your neighbor if necessary. Allow weight of legs to hang into the support of the band while maintaining lower back on floor. Enjoy the stretch!
- Standing, and far enough apart to create adequate tension, participants hang forward while holding on to Co-Oper Band. Encourage use of breathing and sensing body weight in order to increase stretch and relaxation.

Warm-Up Exercises - Strength

For thighs:

Sitting, hook Co-Oper Band around instep of foot while holding on with right and left hands. Press with foot and pull with hands to lift leg away from floor. Lower slowly and repeat until leg tires. Use texture of Co-Oper Band to massage feet, achilles tendons, and calves.

Abdomen:

Participants sit facing Co-Oper Band and holding it in two hands, execute a backwards buttock walk until band provides a moderate resistance. Lie down on three counts, lift Co-Oper Band to the ceiling and resume sitting position, again in three counts. As a variation, instruct one half of the circle to pull back to the floor while the other half does its sit-up. Add a twist on the way down while holding with one hand, lie on back, heads toward center, place arches of feet on band, press legs toward floor while holding band.

Arms:

Still on back, knees bent, feet on floor, hold Co-Oper Band with hands shoulder-width apart. Arc band up towards thighs and back to floor over head. Repeat with one arm. Repeat moving right arm diagonally towards left thigh.

Movement Exercises

The Basic Amoeba

Form a circle with 3-8 people inside the Co-Oper Band, which is stretched comfortably against the lower back. Arms rest lightly on the Co-Oper Band while hands grasp it on either side. Take a few steps to the rear, then lean slightly backwards until a counter-tension results between weight and support.

PinBall Blast

This exercise promotes a physical experience of rebound, while encouraging interpersonal spontaneity. Four or eight participants stand inside Co-Oper Band. Stretch Co-Oper Band outward to light tension. Children count off and run sequentially across the circle without delay creating a pinball effect.

Loop-The-Loop

Start inside Co-Oper Band and move out to the Amoeba position. Participants take 3 rotating steps to right, then two to left. Complete one revolution around the Co-Oper Band in this way. Try turning on your favorite music, adding eight counts of free form between each of your double rotating turns, and imagine dancing with your favorite partner!

Break Dancing

Group stands either outside or inside Co-Oper Band holding with two hands. One or two “break dancers” hold two-handed while on floor. Group creates momentum for “break dancers” to spin, propel, or whip around on back, belly, or sides. A nice, smooth wood floor is necessary.

Shape Making

Encourage groups of 4-8 children to work together to make familiar shapes to begin with. Introduce three-dimensional shape making by adding extensions into different planes. Have them make up their own shapes. Divide group into shape makers and observers. As shape makers complete their shape, observers can either draw shapes they see or choose one they would like to “move” as a group. Different options for moving their shapes are expansion/contraction, twisting, rotating, changing positions while maintaining original shape, etc.

Family Games

Who's in Control?

Alternately stand inside or outside of Co-Oper Band, holding two-handed, facing toward center. Decide who are the leaders and who are the riders. Object is to either lead or follow while staying in balance.

Tree Rooting

All stand with feet spread wide inside Co-Oper Band, leaning slightly back. Without moving feet, participants attempt to uproot their counterparts by using hands and arms on the Co-Oper Band and performing quick shifts that throw the other off balance.

Mountain Climb

Participants hold Co-Oper Band over their heads. One Participant at a time hangs from the Co-Oper Band. Encourage both hangers and supporters to verbalize imagery or feelings, e.g., surrender, dependency, hanging by one's fingernails, etc.

Traffic

Participants take the Amoeba position. Count off in 3's. The leader calls out “one, two, three, all ones change.” All number one participants must change their Co-Oper Band positions with another number one. Last one to find a new place is out. Leader repeats commands changing the number each time until there are three participants left. The last one left goes in the center and gets one minute to direct others.

NoiseBreaker

Facing towards center, expand circle as large as it will go. On leader's signal all children run towards center while making a sound. Gradually increase or decrease sound level. Agree on specific kind of sound. It could range from a hearty scream to a robust musical phrase.

Potpourri

Give the oldies-but-goodies a new twist. Co-Oper Band can greatly increase the fun of such tried and true activities as mirror games, Simon Says, The Hokey Pokey, Follow the Leader, Red Rover, etc.

Other Games

Dragon Tag

Start with 1-3 bands with two children in each band. Set a large circle or square boundary. The children in the bands try to touch the children outside the bands. When a child is tagged he/she must join the circle inside the band. Play until all children are tagged and inside the band. Variation: Child tagged is replaced by tagger. Suggestion: Group says name of child to be tagged so group works together. Identify group leader to make sure the group works together.

DodgeBall

Stand inside band in Amoeba starting position. Pick two players to be in the center. Players on the circle must continuously move around circle and maintain pressured contact with band while trying to hit person in the middle with a soft foam or SloMo Ball. If person opposite circle or player in the middle catches the ball, the thrower must replace middle player. Larger size bands work best. Variation: Players in the middle are the throwers.

Balloon Toss

Use several small bands with 5-6 children inside. Each team must keep a balloon in the air longer than the other teams. Variation: Switch places while keeping balloons in the air. Two teams volley the balloons back and forth while maintaining pressured waist contact with the band.

Cat and Mouse

Mice run in and out while being chased by the cat. Cat(s) must always be in contact with the band. Children try to prevent cat from getting mice by lifting side up and down, ricocheting cat off path, or pulling circle away from mice.

Numbered Ducks

Count off in 4's. All hold outside band with left hand, pull out to firm tension, and continue to circle around to left maintaining tension. As child's number is called they turn and run two times clockwise around to their original position. Call can instruct runners to skip, hop, leap, slither, etc. as variations.

Twister

Lead the group in floor patterns that begin to overlap each other by climbing under, over, or around each other until they reach a twisted spatial design. Now get untwisted without letting go of the band.

X-Small Co-Oper Band Activities

Two-Way Balance

Incorporates balance, grounding, trust, adaptation and strength. Two people hold the band pulling apart enough to where there is an equal counter tensional pull. Slowly twist the torso away from the other while pulling back on the band, feet spread wide apart. Variation: Once an equilibrium is established you can begin to challenge each other by making quick, strong, weight changes without moving the feet in order to knock the other off balance.

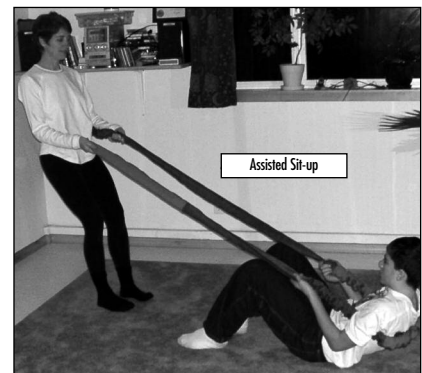
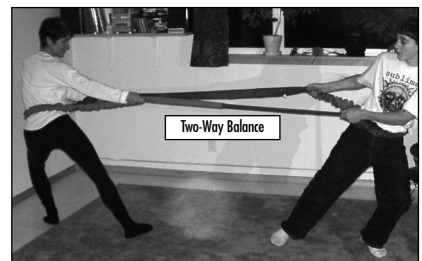
Assisted Sit-up

Incorporates body center strength, proper mechanics and trust building.

An adult stands inside band with it around the waist. The child can either sit opposite holding the band or with the band around upper back, under arms and holding it with hands. The adult provides resistance so child can slowly sit back to floor and back up again.

Arm Curl

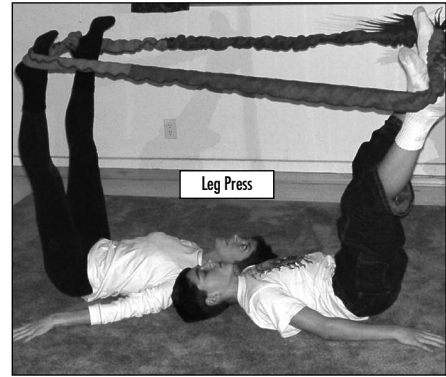
Incorporates upper body tonicity and arm strength. One person stands on doubled band and holds opposite ends. Bend elbows and pull up band to create arm resistance.



Leg Press

Incorporates lower body strength, coordination, tonicity and flexibility.

Two people lay down head to head, with their legs in air. Hook the band over the arches of their feet and press it away from each other to create an equalized tension. For alternate pressure, one person presses down while the other holds still, or both press down at the same time. Another option is to just hang out opening the legs more into a straddle stretch.



Pull and Drag

Incorporates trust, adaptation and coordination. You will need a smooth wood or tile floor. An adult stands holding band while a child holds the band with two hands and lies on their stomach. With lively music playing, the adult pulls the child around in straight lines and curves while instructing child to try moving in different ways... a tight ball, a flopping fish, an acrobat in the circus or a flying squirrel. Make it fun!

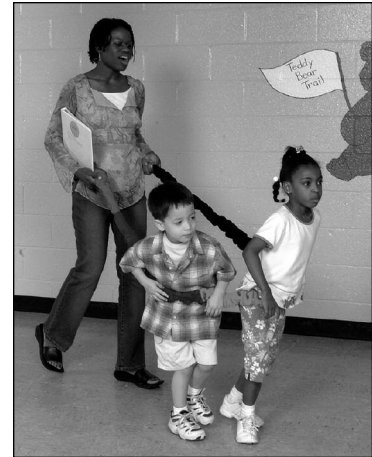
Special Needs Modifications

Co-Oper Band's natural resistance properties are ideal for working with children with neurological and/or sensory integration issues.

Used in a group, Co-Oper Band provides gentle proprioceptive input into the big muscle groups and giving deep pressure sensory input. Use Warm Up and Movement Exercises listed below or make up your own Co-Oper Band Activities.

Co-Oper Band is wonderful for improving range of motion, motor planning and social skills. It also makes a great tool for transitions! Just have the teacher or caregiver be the anchor for one end of the Co-Oper Band while the students walk at the other end.

Co-Oper Band is a blast for scooter board activities. Have the child lay prone (on tummy) or sitting up and hold an X-Small Co-Oper Band. You can use the Co-Oper Band to pull the child on the scooter board. Pull turn and spin for extra movement input.



Care & Safety

Co-Oper Band is machine washable, cold water, gentle cycle. Hang to dry. Use with adult supervision and note precautions in introductory section.

Good luck, and s - t - r - e - t - c - h your activities to the limit!

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