



1413 S. Meridian Road • Jasper, IN 47546
800.264.4519 • 812.634-2036 (fax)
www.sportsadvantage.com

Z-Ball GAMES

Introduction:

Z-Balls are useful in developing a variety of skills necessary for sports performance at various ages and ability levels. Their unique design allows them to pop, bounce, and leap unpredictably in different directions. Fun, simple, and incredibly versatile, they are ideal for a variety of training programs. Used properly, and in conjunction with an overall fitness program, these balls will improve performance in all sports where quick reactions are essential. The nine specific skills these balls develop are:

1. **Balance** – The ability to attain, recover, and keep equilibrium.
2. **Bilateral Movement** – The ability to use both sides of the body (arms and legs) with equal efficiency.
3. **Depth Perception** – The ability to judge the distances of objects and move accurately in relation to them.
4. **Eye-Hand / Eye-Foot Coordination** – The ability to coordinate body movement based on what is seen.
5. **First Step Quickness** – The ability to move to an object quickly and accurately.
6. **Focus** – The ability to maintain concentration and attention.
7. **Focus Change** – The ability to look from near to far and vice versa without momentary blur.
8. **Peripheral Awareness** – The ability to see and interpret what is happening in your side vision while still aware of what is happening in front.
9. **Tracking** – The ability to follow a moving object smoothly and accurately with both eyes.

Drill #1: Hot Potato

This drill offers three levels of challenge. For all three, keep feet at shoulder width with knees slightly bent. This “ready position” provides good balance and prepares the athlete to “spring” into a step, if necessary, to catch the ball. Try to catch the ball in one or two bounces as opposed to chasing after it.

1. Drop the ball from **knee height** and catch.
2. Now drop the ball from **waist height** and catch.
3. Finally, drop the ball from **chest height** and catch.

Drill #2: Switch-it

This drill is similar to Drill #1 except the athlete alternates tosses and catches from hand to hand (i.e., drop with left hand, catch with right, etc.).

Drill #3: Sliders

Stand approximately five feet away from a wall, and face it. Toss the ball against the wall and catch it using one or two hands. Move to ball using side to side steps if necessary.

Drill #4: Pursuit

Hold a ball at arms length. Toss it out two to four feet away from where you are standing and up approximately two feet over your head. Try to catch the ball on one bounce, using short, quick steps. Again, do not chase the ball if you miss, retrieve it and repeat the drill.

Drill #5: Ground Hog

Though similar to Drill #3, this drill is slightly more difficult. Again, stand between five and six feet from a wall. Rather than tossing the ball, roll it to the wall so that it rebounds back. Stay in a fairly low position to make this an excellent drill for

practicing catching ground balls in baseball or getting low for volleys in tennis.

Drill #6: Duel of Two Players

Duel is a good exercise for basketball players. To start, two players stand approximately four to six feet apart, facing each other. Player A drops the ball between himself and player B, and both players try to catch the ball. Use quick, short steps to get to the ball. The first player to catch the ball receives a point. The player catching the ball then comes back to the starting position and drops the ball. Continue the game until one player reaches 11 points.

Drill #7: Around the Horn

With three, four, or more players, have the first player start inside a chalk-marked circle about the size of a Hula-Hoop. One player then tosses ball outside of the circle. The other players try to catch ball and then quickly stop. Then they must try to get back inside the circle in three or less steps. If player is successful he/she is receives one point and then stands inside the circle and becomes the tosser. The ball must be allowed to bounce at least once, and, if needed, the tosser can be asked to close his/her eyes to not show favoritism. No body contact should be permitted such as blocking for position.

Drill #8: Add 'em Up

This game requires one server and at least two receivers. The server puts the ball into play by tossing it toward the receivers. One point is added for each bounce the ball takes. The total is awarded to the receiver who catches the ball. Should a player attempt to catch the ball and fumble or miss, the points are subtracted from the player's total. Each player serves twice on a rotating basis. The first player to 25 or 50 points wins.

Drill #9: Hand Ball

Hand Ball requires two people and a wall at least four feet high. Measure 20 feet from the base of the wall to establish the service line. Mark the line with chalk or tape. All serves must be made from behind this line. The server puts the ball into play by bouncing it between the service line and wall, off the wall, and back down between the wall and the line. Any balls bouncing behind the service line are considered long and server loses turn. One point is awarded to the server each time receiving player fails to catch the ball. The receiver starts wherever they desire and once the ball has been put into play,

the receiver may cross the service line. Each player serves twice on a rotating basis. The first player to 15 points wins.

Drill #10: Challenge Wall Ball

This game can be played in pairs but obviously with an unlimited number of players paired up. Players line up, one behind the other, with one player facing the wall at a distance of approximately six to eight feet. A second player stands behind this player and tosses the ball against the wall for the front player to catch. One point is awarded if the player closest to the wall makes the catch. Alternate after each toss even if the player facing the wall catches the ball. The winner is the first player to reach a designated number of points. A variation of this game can be played by rolling the ball on the ground and against the wall rather than tossing it in the air. In this case, the catcher must catch the ball on the first attempt after it bounces off the wall.

Drill #11: The Chase

The Chase is a retrieval exercise which develops both foot speed and agility as well as quick hands. Two lines are established, approximately 50 feet apart. Players are paired up and one rolls the ball from one line towards the other. The partner begins on one line and his/her goal is to run as fast as possible to catch the ball before it crosses the other line. To make it even more challenging, use two balls and have the chasers reach and catch both balls before either ball crosses the second line.