

Inuit Games (Traditional games played by Inuit children in Canada's Arctic)

Animal Sounds

Write the names of different animals on pieces of paper in the middle of the circle. Each animal name should be written down twice. People jig around the circle. When the music stops everyone grabs a paper and starts to make the noise of their animal. The two people who have the same animal noise must find each other. The last pair standing is eliminated.

Arm Pull

The Arm Pull is one of the traditional tug-of-war games. Maximum strength and endurance are the main factors that decide the outcome. The objective of the Arm Pull is similar to that of the Finger Pull and the Wrist Pull: The athletes interlock arms at the elbows; each attempts to pull the opponent over or to break the elbow lock. Usually a best of three format is used. Place the leg on the pulling side over your partner's opposite leg, and bend the knee. Straighten the other leg and place it on the floor. Interlock pulling arms, and place the free hand on your partner's ankle. The elbow is held at shoulder height, the pulling fist is strongly flexed. Do not lean back more than about 15 degrees, the back is straight.

Dog Sled Race

The girls are lined up in teams at one end of the playing area. The first girl on each team runs down the length of the playing area and back, then picks up the second girl on her team (holding each other's waist). Together they run down the playing area and back, then pick up the third girl in their team, etc., until the whole team is running together.

Kneel Jump

The Kneel Jump can be compared to the standing long jump, but it is a more difficult jump. You must jump off from a kneeling position, and you can only push off with the top of the feet. This requires great power in all the muscles that straighten the lower body: the ankle, knee and hip extensor muscles. Kneel on the floor. Your feet are tucked in under your buttocks. Swing your arms back and forth, but do not break contact between the buttocks and heels. Straighten the lower body (hips, knees, ankles) and push off. While in the air, move the feet forward while moving the arms down. Land with feet close together, demonstrating balance and control.

Leg Wrestle

The Leg Wrestling competition belongs to the popular group of pushing contests. It differs from the other pushing games which mostly test the athlete's strength endurance and maximal strength: Depending on how quickly and forcefully the athlete is able to push down after the opponents hook legs; it can also be a test of her power (speed and strength). You and your partner lie on the floor, hip to shoulder and facing in opposite directions. Hook elbows of the inside arm of your partner. Now you and your partner swing the inside leg up and overhead three times, and at the same time. On the third swing, you hook legs with your partner and try to flip her over backward with one quick, powerful push of the leg. To win, you have to "flip" her out of position. A best of three format is used.

Muskox Fight

In the Muskox Fight, the competitors imitate an animal that is important in the traditional way of life. This game is one example of many showing how games were connected to the traditional way of life on the land. This is a fun game, but it can be a great competition. The two opponents kneel on the floor, supporting themselves on their knees and hands, using the flexed feet for added support. Knees and hips are bent to 90 degrees, the arms fully stretched out. In this position, they make contact at the shoulders, and tuck the head under. On a signal, they attempt to push each other past a target line or out of a circle. No jerking or sideways movements are allowed.

Owl Hop

The Owl Hop is connected to traditional way of life, imitating another of the animals of the traditional home lands. It is a distance competition testing the strength and power of the leg muscles. Complete as many one-foot hops as possible without moving the other foot. To win a round, you must hop the greatest distance. When played as a distance competition, the competitor can jump by himself. Space permitting, the game can also be played as a race. In this case, several competitors line up beside each other. On a signal, they begin hopping, attempting to outrace each other. The competitor who reaches the finish line first, wins the round. At the starting line, balance your body on the foot of the hopping leg only. Hook the other foot firmly behind the knee of the hopping leg, and bend the knee of the hopping leg to about 45 degrees. Raise and extend the arms sideways so that they are parallel to the floor. The hands are clenched into fists, the thumbs point up. Now begin hopping forward on one leg. Hop as far and as often as possible, but do not skip between hops (only one foot contact with the floor between hops is allowed). The player hopping the greatest distance wins the round. - You must not switch hopping legs during the attempt.

Shoe Game

Have participants partner with a member of the the opposite gender, if possible (this game is described for a mixed-gender group - you will have to modify for an all-female group). Have participants form large circle in a male-female-male-female order. Have all male participants remove right shoe and place in the middle of the circle. Once the music starts participants weave in and out like in a square dance until the music stops. Once the music stops, female participants rush to the centre and grab one shoe each. Once they have a shoe they must then find the owner of the shoe and place back onto their foot and sit on the floor. The last group to sit down is out.

To continue, the males put their right shoes randomly back in the middle and start again. The last pair in the game are declared the winners once all other groups have been eliminated. People should get a different shoe every time to ensure that no one is cheating by getting the same shoe each round.

Variations: This game can be adapted in many different ways. Participants could switch roles. Different articles of clothing can be used like mitts, jackets, toques, etc.

Striker

Materials: 4 pylons to mark goals, pinheys to identify teams, 1 large, not-so-bouncy and not-so-hard ball

Set up two goals as in soccer or hockey using the pylons as posts. Ensure there is ample space behind each set of goal posts as well. Divide the players into 2 teams. The game is played similar to soccer, in that the objective is to score as many goals as possible against the opposite team. However, there are a few major differences:

The ball must stay on the ground, and can only be moved by hitting it with your hand. If the ball is accidentally kicked, it is an automatic point to the opposing team. Goals can be scored from either side of the goal posts; as long as the ball passes between them, a point is scored. This game can be played in a grassy field, or, even better, on a snowy field while wearing snowshoes!