

Activity: Winding Down**Overview**

This activity was inspired by a carnival game at the fair, but the materials are a bit different. You won't win any cheesy stuffed animals and it takes the whole group to make this one work, but hey, close enough. Your group is trying to move a ring down a winding piece of copper tubing without it touching. Success depends on the group's ability to work together and have a good time doing it.

Set Up**Props**

- 1 10' piece of 1/4" soft copper tubing packaged in a roll. (For cost savings, buy the 20' roll and halve it. The cost difference between the 10' and 20' roll is usually small, and you will end up with two game pieces.)
- 1 40' to 60' rope, webbing, chalk, or whatever will work to create a medium-sized circle boundary.
- 1 Large ring (and/or an assortment of different-sized rings for the variations). You could use a Styrofoam wreath (found at any crafts store), or use a large loop of rope. Pool rings also work well and are easy to find.
- 8 Generous lengths of yarn or string.

Set Up

Make a large circle and place the raised copper tubing in the center. (If you are using the rolled tubing, this is easy: Simply step on the outside end and pull up from the center. The tubing should twist down, spiralling to the ground.) Place the eight lengths of yarn/string and the ring(s) near the outside edge of the circle.

Instructions

The team must design and implement a method of lowering the ring to the bottom of the winding copper tubing with the fewest touches.

No one may enter the circle at any time.

Remind teams to be honest and hold themselves accountable for touches. The team must complete the task in 25 minutes or less.

Try goal setting. Ask the group to set a goal for the fewest touches and try to beat it. Provide an opportunity for them to start again.

Be sure to begin with a larger ring, and then graduate your group to smaller rings (if you have the time).

Sample Story Line

"Working in the high-tech industry has always been your thing, and your team has built a great reputation for superior performance through the years. At the request of the board, your team has been transferred to work on a very delicate project. You must work together to place the final o-ring in the world supercomputer mainframe, keeping the flaw or 'oops! rate' as low as possible. You will be working in a controlled environment, known as a 'clean' room. No one may enter the room, so the tools you see before you must be used to wind the o-ring in place. You will be rewarded for the successful completion of your work with a minimum number of flaws!"

Variations

Variation 1: This variation is great for including everyone. Ask participants to stand around the circle, spaced equally from one another. Once in position, their feet become stuck in place and they cannot move for the duration of play. Introduce the activity as before. This variation increases the level of attention and cooperation as participants must pass the yarn from person to person to complete the task. This variation also keeps the more extroverted crowd from dominating the activity.

Variation 2: This activity can also be fantastic when the winding is done by hand. Use multiple rings and ask the group to wind them down as fast as possible, again

Activity: **Winding Down**

with the fewest touches. Or, try it in pairs where each ring must be wound to the bottom by two participants, who must hold on to the ring at all times. Whichever you choose, vary the size of the rings to pose a challenge to your specific group.

Safety

When played with common sense, this activity is very safe. The only potential concern involves the variation. When balls are being thrown back and fourth, remind group members to pay attention and take care of one another.

Reflection

Here are some questions to get you started on the right track. We recommend you form your own questions related to your observation of the group's experience.

Discover: "On a scale of 1 to 10, rate the difficulty of the task. Why did you rate it that number?"

Connect: "Have you ever worked on a problem that was more difficult than it appeared when you started? Have you ever experienced the opposite, discovering a task to be easier than expected? How did you react in either instance?"

Create: "What have you learned about working together on a challenge? What should we consider the next time we take on a challenging task as a group? What have you learned from this exercise? How will you change as a result of this learning?"