



CANADIAN OLYMPIC ACTIVITY CHALLENGE



FENCING

The origins of fencing go back thousands of years, to a time when it was common to fight with swords. Starting in the 1100s, fencing schools sprung up across Europe to train soldiers for battle. In the 1700s, these schools started using a flat-tipped sword called the foil. Rules were soon made so that the fencer could be protected and fencing could be a sport. Fencing was one of the nine sports included in the first modern Olympic Games in Athens, Greece.

In a fencing bout, two opponents face each other. They hold swords and wear a protective uniform that covers their body and head. The fencer tries to touch his opponent in the target area with the blade. The athletes move very quickly, making offensive and defensive moves with their swords. Each time a fencer scores a touch, he receives a point. At the Olympic the object of a fencing bout is to be the first to score 15 points.

There are three different events in fencing, and each has its own set of rules and its own weapon. The three weapons are called the foil, the épée, and the sabre. The target area in foil fencing is the front and back torso. In epee, it is the entire body. In sabre, it is the front and back of the body from the bend of the hips to the top of the head. All three events are scored electronically. The fencer's uniform and the blade of the weapon have wires that connect to a scoring machine, which keeps track of the touches.

Fencing is a challenging sport for both the body and the mind. Fencers need to be very physically fit. They also need to learn the offensive and defensive moves and the overall strategy of the sport.

To learn more about Fencing or to find a local club please visit, www.fencing.ca.



SCHOOL PROGRAM



FEATURED COUNTRY

SPAIN



By the mid-1400s, it had become common in Spain that two men would settle a disagreement with a swordfight. The City of Toledo passed a law in 1480 banning the practice of the duel. Around this same time, Spaniard Diego de Valera wrote the first book on fencing. This helped make fencing an art, with rules, strategy, and technique.

The Spanish armies carried fencing abroad, particularly to the south of Italy and France. These two countries soon developed their own traditions of fencing, and started teaching them in schools.

FEATURED ATHLETE



SHERRAINE SCHALM

FIVE-TIME PAN AMERICAN GAMES MEDALLIST
OLYMPIAN, LONDON 2012, BEIJING 2008, ATHENS 2004, SYDNEY 2000

The London 2012 Olympic Games were Sherraine Schalm's fourth Olympic Games in a row. She competes in the épée and team épée events. She placed top 20 at the Athens 2004 Games and the Sydney 2000 Games. Sherraine is Canada's most decorated fencing athlete, having been a two-time World Championship medallist, 32-time World Cup medallist, and five-time medallist at the Pan Am Games.

To learn more about Sherraine please visit olympic.ca

FENCING


ACTIVITIES


Described below are Daily Physical Activity fencing activities that can be used in the classroom and gym. Have fun!

ON GUARD

The On Guard position must be maintained when fencing. The more comfortable a fencer is in this position, the more control they have when fencing. This position requires balance, building your quadriceps and gluteal muscles.

 **Participants :** Individual

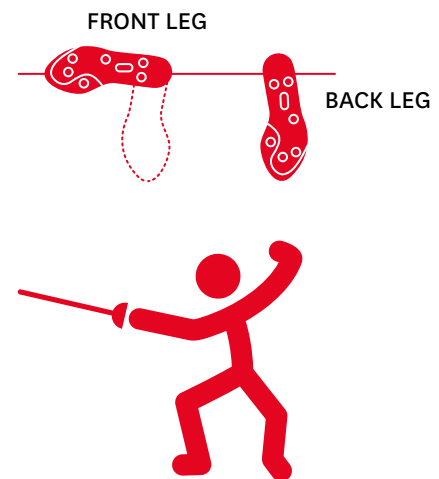
 **Space :** Anywhere

 **Equipment :** None required

STARTING SKILLS:

ON GUARD TEACHING CUES

- Find a line on the floor. If there isn't one, imagine one or use tape to make one.
- Stand with your feet shoulder width apart. Position your heels on the line.
- Identify your dominant hand/foot. Rotate that foot to completely be on the line.
- Turn your head to look out over the foot you pivoted.
- Slightly bend your knees to be in an athletic stance.
- Position your arm up behind your head as though you are holding a beach ball.
- Comfortably hold your arm out in front of you, with your elbow slightly bent as though you are holding a sword.



ACTIVITY DESCRIPTION:

- Assume the On Guard position described in the setup.
- Lift your front leg slightly off the ground and maintain balance for 10-20 seconds before placing your foot back on the ground.
- Lift your back leg slightly off the ground and maintain balance for 10-20 seconds before placing your foot back on the ground.
- While maintaining your On Guard foot position, bend your knees, squat down, hold your squat for 10-20 seconds and then return to On Guard.
- Repeat this sequence 5-10 times.


ACTIVITY EXTENSIONS:

- Adjust the amount of time you're balancing in each position and/or how many repetitions you complete.
- Focus on squats. Hold your squat at your lowest point for 15 seconds. Take a break for 10 seconds and then repeat 3-5 times. Switch your foot positioning to balance your workout.

SIMON SAYS FENCING

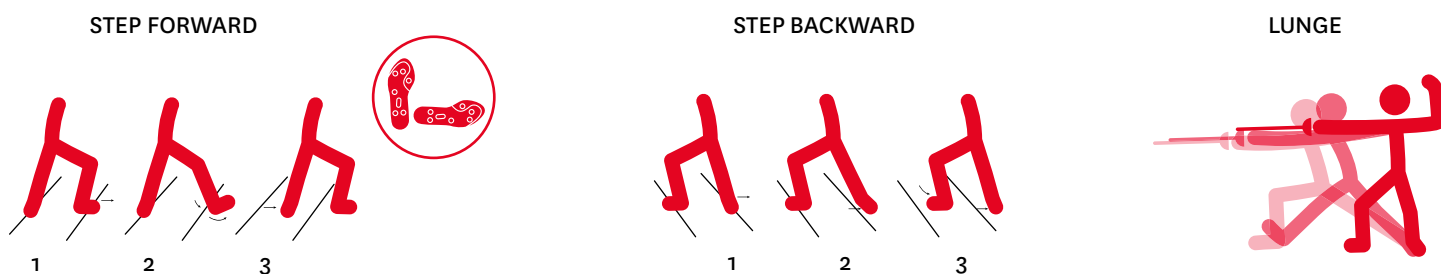
In fencing, you need excellent footwork to be successful. Moving forward and backward without your feet crossing requires balance and coordination. The lunge attack works abdominal, quadriceps and gluteal muscles. Practicing this footwork is a great conditioning activity.

 **Participants :** All

 **Space :** Classroom or hallway

 **Equipment :** None required

STARTING SKILLS:



ACTIVITY DESCRIPTION:

- Position Simon, your “leader” in front of your group, facing your participants, your “followers”. Leader: Call out commands by saying “Simon Says” followed by one of the commands listed below. The followers have to do the action that Simon calls.

COMMANDS:

- On Guard – Place feet shoulder width apart, point your lead foot forward, bend your knees and bend your lead arm.
- Step forward – Lead with front foot stepping forward, follow with your back foot.
- Step back – Lead with your back foot stepping back, follow with your front foot.
- Thrust – Stick your sword arm out straight.
- Lunge – Thrust, stick your sword arm out straight, and take a big step with only your front foot.
- Recover – Position yourself back into the On Guard position.
- If any of the followers moves without the Simon Says command, they go back to the original point in the classroom in which the line of students started.


ACTIVITY EXTENSIONS:

- Vary the speeds at which the commands are being provided.
- Challenge the group by providing multiple commands at one time (e.g. Simon Says 1 step forward, 2 steps back, lunge, recover).

FOLLOW THE LEADER

With foil and sabre fencing, athletes alternate being an attacker and a defender. To be successful, you have to anticipate and respond to your opponent's moves. This activity helps develop good body awareness and control!

 **Participants :** Groups of 2

 **Space :** Classroom or hallway

 **Equipment :** None required

ACTIVITY DESCRIPTION:

- Stand facing your partner with 2-3 metres between you. Allow yourselves enough room to move forward and backward in a straight line.
- Identify one partner as the leader to start and the other as the follower. Working with your partner, move in unison. Assume the following roles:

LEADER'S ROLE:

- Move forward and backward using fencing steps.
- Change direction and speed frequently.

FOLLOWER'S ROLE:

- Follow the leader using the opposite fencing steps they use (i.e. Leader steps 1 step forward, Follower steps 1 step back).
- Keep the same distance between leader and follower throughout activity.
- Alternate who gets to lead and who follows.

ACTIVITY EXTENSIONS:

- Try hand fencing! Since the purpose of fencing is to score points by hitting the opponent, allow the leader to attack using a thrust (stick arm out straight) or lunge (stick arm out straight then move front foot forward in a big step) to tag your partner's hand. Note that only the leaders can attack. The followers are only allowed to try to move out of the way. Once an attack has been made, go back to your starting positions and switch roles, with the follower now the leader, having the opportunity to attack and potentially earn points.
- Identify the winner as the first to earn 4 points. Switch partners at the end of each game.

BRINGING IT TO THE CLASSROOM

Use the library or the Internet to research the different types of swords used in fencing: the foil, the epee, and the sabre. In your writing journal describe each of these in your own words. Try to be so descriptive that someone who can't see the images could still picture the swords and how they are different. Next, find a partner and share your descriptions with each other.

Imagine what it would be like to go to a special school that focuses on fencing. Write a diary entry for one day as a student in a fencing school. What would you do, eat, and learn?