

Tracking Progressions:

1. Implement is Rolling on the Ground:

- Sit across from partner (4 to 6 ft.) and roll a medium sized soft ball to partner – initially the ball will hit the leg and then it will be retrieved - keep the roll speed slow
- Encourage the receiver to reach (track) the ball before it hits the leg
- Slowly increase the distance between the partners and the speed of the moving ball
- Sit with legs folded and roll the ball to the right and the left such that they reach forward to the right or left to track the ball before it gets past them
- Track using either hand (reach for the ball before it has a chance to get past the receiver)
- Continue to increase the distance away from the body such that they have to reach to the point of falling on side to retrieve the ball – use lines on the floor for the boundaries to introduce competition (mats may be needed \carpeted floor in the house\grass)
- Move to standing but continue rolling the ball – begin with rolling the ball close to the body and teach the importance of moving the feet such that the receiver is directly in front of the ball (a good opportunity to introduce footwork – step to the ball using regular walking steps - do not cross over)
- Watch the participants closely such that the speed of the ball allows the receiver time to square up to the ball. It is very important that this is reinforced early in the tracking progression. Increase the speed of the incoming ball only when this concept is learned.
- Use the same progression of increasing difficulty:
 - (1) speed
 - (2) distance between partners
 - (3) distance outside the body
- Encourage the participant to quickly move their feet to ‘square up’ to the ball (the ball is in direct line with the center line of the body) to stop it.
- The tracker is learning to judge, ‘read’, the speed of the moving object
- The tracker is also learning to figure out what their speed needs to be to intercept the moving object. This will affect whether or not they want to get to the point of interception early or just in time. The applications to sport skills later are numerous (eg. Getting a one- step advantage on a defensive player to catch a football).
- One on one or two on two games against a wall are great to keep the ‘keeneners’ engaged.
- Using the feet to stop or send the ball will definitely increase the speed of the activity\drill\game.
- Introduce the feet to project the ball, only if the objective is to increase the skill of the participants (ball flight will invariably become part of the fundamental movement development, which is the next progression).

2. Implement is in Flight:

A. Slow Moving Implement (balloon, scarf)

- Start with a balloon. A balloon is a slow moving object and is easier to 'track' and to make contact with it.
- Each participant must have their own balloon. Keep the balloon air born using the hands to keep tapping it into the air for as long as possible. Contact the balloon above head height.
- The participant keeps the balloon air born using different parts of their body, eg., toes, heel, back, shoulder, bum, knee, elbow, head, ear,
- The participant keeps the balloon alive with their hands according to defined parameters. Each parameter will provide a different perspective to reaction time:
 1. Make contact with the balloon above the head
 2. Allow the balloon to fall to chest height, then make contact
 3. Allow the ball to fall to waist height, then make contact
 4. Allow the balloon to fall to knee height, then make contact
 5. Allow the balloon to fall to almost hit the floor, then kick it up into the air**** The participant must wait for the balloon to get to the desired height ('read' it's flight path), then make contact.
- With one balloon between two people, tap the balloon high into the air back and forth with each other. Alternate who makes contact after each hit. Initially keep the taps light and the partners close to one another. Harder taps/hits that send the balloon farther will make the tracking more difficult. Try to make all contacts above head height.
- Add a second balloon that they tap back and forth to each other. The objective is to keep the balloon off the floor. They may not contact the same balloon twice in a row. Add a third, possibly fourth balloon. Contact height of the balloon will now be "whenever".
- Each balloon will need to be 'read' as to when it needs to be contacted. With two, three, four in play, the speed of the 'read' will be quickened, and the reaction time of the participant will also be increased.

B. Fast Moving Implement (elephant ball, volleyball, utility ball)

- Follow the same progressions that the slow moving implement used.
- The muscles of the open hand and forearm will need to be tightly contracted. A fistted hand will also be an effective tapping/hitting implement. Just be careful, the knuckle protrusions may send the ball in unwanted directions.
- Be prepared that once they are in pairs working with two balls, adding a third or even a fourth will be very difficult.