

Dodging Mechanics

1. The skill of dodging is evident in a wide range of playground activities and is a central component of most team sports.
2. Dodging is a fundamental movement that involves quick changes of direction to evade or catch an opponent. Dodging takes the skill of running and adds a series of coordinated movements to efficiently change direction. Examples:
 - a) Dodge to avoid a moving body
 - b) Dodge to avoid a ball/water balloon/nerf gun projectile, ...
 - c) Dodge to 'get open' past the defense to receive a pass
 - d) Dodge to get past a defensive player – to evade an opponent
 - e) Dodge to get open to catch an opponent
 - f) Dodge a punch or kick in the fighting ring
3. The athlete will incorporate 'additional tools' to deceive or 'fake' the opposition as a way to get free and open. This will allow a pass to be received, an opponent to be left behind, or to avoid being tagged/tackled or trapped. 'Additional tools' to 'sell the deception' or 'fake what the actual intention is', may include:
 - a) Movement of the shoulders
 - b) Movement of the head
 - c) Movement of the eyes
 - d) Directional movement of the arms
 - e) Directional 'jabs' of either foot
 - f) Directional 'jabs' of either foot followed by a reverse pivot
 - g) A quick change of speed – decrease or increase
 - h) A voice command to a teammate (used as a false distraction)
4. Dodging requires good balance and stability which is achieved when the bodies 'core' is strong. The movement should be practiced to the right and to the left.
5. The center of gravity needs to be lowered, which is not done by bending forward at the waist. This will only cause the center of gravity to fall outside the base.
6. The lowered c of g is achieved by bending (flexing) the knees, thus allowing the musculature of the legs to eventually extend off the outside foot and generate maximum force in a sideways (lateral) or diagonal direction to create the dodging action. The change in direction (bend, push, turn) occurs in one step with the eyes focused forward.

7. The dodgers ability is based on their experience doing the movement, their leg strength, their current speed, and their ability to 'time' their movements to best execute the 'fake' to achieve success.
8. Avoid breaking down the skill, but rather, teach it as a whole skill.

Non-locomotor lead-up movements:

1. Twisting
2. Turning / Pivoting
3. Bending
4. Swaying

Locomotor lead-up movements:

1. Practice dodging in isolation – cones/poly spots are set up in a zig zag formation to ensure the students do not simply run around the markers – instruct the students to touch each marker with the outside of their foot.
2. Students experiment with different styles of dodging – wide base of support vs a narrow base of support, body upright vs a body lowered – the student will gradually learn what their optimal knee bend is. This will depend on their experience dodging, their leg strength, and their reaction speed.
3. An obstacle course that involves dodging between the markers.
4. Tag games – one vs one, two vs two / three vs three (these two are played within a 30 to 40 second time period, team vs team), designated multiple students are 'it' in a large group, ...

Common Errors When Learning the Skill:

1. The dodging movements are too slow with too many small steps.
2. The dodger is looking down at the ground.
3. There is not enough bend in the dodger's knee.
4. The whole body turns to face the intended direction of travel.