**PARACHUTE ACTIVITIES**

**Low Activity:**

**Big Bang**

Have everyone spread the parachute on the ground and then place all the balls in the middle. “One, two, three, lift!” The players lift the parachute as quickly as possible to shoulder level and then snap it down. The effect is to have the balls fly off the parachute.

**Additional Equipment**: Foam balls or other light, soft objects.

**Drag Race**

When you are finished playing with the parachute don’t just tell people you are through and get stuck packing it up alone. Instead, trick the players into helping you roll up the parachute. The object is to be the first drag racer to the middle of the parachute. You get there by rolling up the parachute with your hands.

**Mushroom**

Here is something that involves teamwork, is not too hard, and looks beautiful. Everyone kneels down and holds the parachute taut on the ground. On the same count everyone stands up, lifting the parachute high up over their heads. A giant mushroom is formed. Have the players stand still and watch as the parachute slowly settles back down to the ground.

**Floating Mushroom**

Floating Mushroom starts the same as Mushroom, but this time the players lift the parachute over their heads. When the leader gives a predetermined signal, such as “Now!”, or “Let go!”, or “Fungus Fly Free”, everyone releases the parachute simultaneously or at least tries to.

**Igloo**

Lift the parachute up into a giant mushroom, take a couple of steps in, and bring the parachute down behind you with everyone inside the parachute sitting on the edge.

**Jumbo Mushroom**

Similar to Mushroom, but this time as you lift the parachute ask everyone to walk in a step or two. This makes the mushroom grow even bigger. Repeat the game with everyone taking an additional step. Each round makes the mushroom bigger, and eventually everyone meets in the middle.

**Heads In**

Everyone hoists the parachute and takes two steps in to a Jumbo Mushroom. While the mushroom is descending get down on your stomach on your knees, poke your head under the parachute and pull the parachute down around your shoulders. The view from the inside is a ring of disembodied smiling faces all looking at each other as the parachute slowly settles to the ground.

**Parachute Golf**

If your parachute has a hole in the middle you can play a round of Parachute Golf. It takes quite a bit of teamwork to get the ball to roll through the hole.

**Additional Equipment:** A ball small enough to go through the hole in the parachute.

**Swooping Cloud**

This game begins like the Floating Mushroom, but not everyone lets go at the same time. In fact, one side intentionally lets go after the other side. The parachute will then make a swooping cloud as it rises up on one side and comes right back down to the ground on the other side.

**Moderate Activity:**

**Ball Surfing**

Place a large ball on top of a flat parachute and roll it around the edge. Players should lift the parachute just after the ball passes by. Timing is critical. If someone lifts up a section of the parachute too soon, the ball slows down and stops. If someone lifts a section too late, the ball either runs into the player or rolls off the parachute. The smaller the ball the greater the challenge. The larger the ball the easier the game will be and the greater the effect.

**Additional Equipment:** A large ball

**Basketball**

Four or five players, each with a ball, stand outside the edge of the parachute while the other players raise the parachute into a mushroom. Once the parachute is up, the shooters attempt to score baskets by throwing a ball through the hole. See how many balls get through one mushroom, or how many mushrooms it takes to get one ball through. Naturally, you want to alternate players to give everyone a chance.

**Additional Equipment:** A foam ball for each basket shooter.

**Climb the Mountain**

First make a giant mushroom. Then on a given verbal signal, such as “Down!”, bring the parachute down quickly and hold the edge down with your knees. This traps the air underneath the parachute. Now pretend to be a mountain climber and on your knees, try to scramble up the snowy mountain of cloth using just your arms.

**Heartbeat**

Everyone gets into a steady rhythm by making a mushroom, walking in a step or two and then walking back out as the parachute falls. When the blood has left the parachute, the players all lift up and step in to keep the heartbeat going.

**Missile Launch**

Four or five players, each one carrying a ball, go under the parachute. While mission control (those around the outside of the parachute) makes a mushroom, the missile launchers attempt to throw their balls through the hole in the center of the parachute. How many missiles can they launch in one mushroom? Be sure to give everyone a chance.

**Additional Equipment:** Foam balls that fit through the hole in the center of the parachute.

**Parachute Volleyball**

Divide everyone into two teams. Give each team a parachute. Leave some space between the two parachutes. It takes a lot of teamwork not to send the ball flying out of control. The idea is to launch the ball onto the other parachute.

**Additional Equipment:** Another parachute, a ball.

**Spin Out**

Have three people sit down together in the middle of the parachute with their backs together facing out. They might want to interlock their arms. These three players sit very still, and everyone else slowly walks around in a circle, wrapping the three up in the parachute. The players in the middle may want to use their hands to make sure the parachute doesn’t wrap around their necks. When the three are wrapped up to about chest level, it’s time to give the spin-out signal. At the signal everyone quickly steps straight back at the same time while pulling on the parachute. This spins the people in the middle around quite fast for two or three revolutions.

**Treasure Hunt**

Throw everything under the parachute: balls, jump ropes, Frisbees, and any other small objects you choose to use. Arrange all the players around the parachute and have them make a steady Heartbeat. On the upswing, point to one or more people to go under the parachute, search for a particular treasure, and bring it out. The Heartbeat gives an automatic time limit: If a seeker stays too long and gets touched by the parachute, she or he must rebury the treasure for the next round.

**Additional Equipment:** Balls, jump ropes, Frisbees, any available small objects.

**Waves Overhead**

Send three to five “scuba divers” in to lie down under the parachute while the rest of the players vigorously shake the parachute. This makes strong waves over the divers. It’s a great way to cool off on a hot day.

**High Activity:**

**Flying Parachute**

Have everyone gather at the edge of one half of the parachute and hold the edge with one hand. Everyone takes off running in the same direction. This gives the impression of trying to launch a giant wounded kite.

**Housekeeping**

A team of three or four players stand a bit away from the parachute. This is the “neatness team.” Their job is to make sure that all the balls stay on the parachute. Meanwhile, the “messy team” is trying to shake all the balls off the parachute. At the end of 30 seconds or so everyone stops to tally up how many balls are on the parachute and how many are off. Select a new neatness team and repeat until everyone has had a turn to be neat.

**Jellyfish Jaunt**

Everyone gather around the parachute and take off running in the same direction. It looks like a huge multicolored jellyfish!

**Merry-Go-Round**

Everyone grabs an edge of the parachute with one hand and begins walking in a giant circle. Have everyone run a lap, jump on both feet for a lap, jump on their right foot for a lap, jump on their left foot for a lap, skip for a lap, and gallop for a lap. After a while, switch directions.

**Popcorn**

If you have lots of soft balls you can make a giant popcorn machine. Just throw the light, spongy balls on the parachute. People will get the idea.

**Additional Equipment:** At least three foam balls or other soft, bouncy objects.

**Racing Heartbeat**

Once you establish a heartbeat, you can have people cross under the parachute while it is in the air. To prevent everyone from crossing at once, call out specific categories of who should cross. Categories could include the color of their shirt, hair color, favorite food, and birth month.

**Snake Tag**

Throw a bunch of short ropes on the parachute. Divide the parachute down the middle into two opposing teams. The object is to shake the parachute so vigorously that a rope touches someone on the other team.

**Additional Equipment:** Ropes that measure 4 to 6 feet.

Strong, Todd, and Dale N. LeFevre. *Parachute Games*. Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics, 1996. Print.