



MOVING IN SYNC

Responsive Rhythms

RESOURCE FOR
PHYSICAL ACTIVITY PARTICIPANTS



When Movement Becomes Something We Experience Together

HAVE YOU EVER NOTICED HOW EASY IT IS TO START TAPPING YOUR FOOT WHEN SOMEONE ELSE IS TAPPING THEIRS?

Or how people often begin walking at the same pace when they walk side by side?

Have you ever joined a group where everyone was clapping, singing, paddling, dancing, exercising, or moving together and suddenly felt yourself becoming part of the rhythm?

This is called synchrony.

Synchrony happens when people naturally begin responding to one another's movements, energy, timing, or rhythm.

It can happen during:

- walking together
- dancing
- exercising
- playing sports
- singing
- paddling
- drumming
- stretching
- breathing together
- simply sharing space with others

What makes synchrony so interesting is that it does not require perfect coordination. In fact, moving in sync is not about everyone doing exactly the same thing. It is about feeling connected through a shared experience. Sometimes we lead. Sometimes we follow. Sometimes we simply move alongside one another. Over time, we begin responding to one another's pace, energy, and presence.



When Movement Becomes Something We Experience Together

HAVE YOU EVER NOTICED HOW EASY IT IS TO START TAPPING YOUR FOOT WHEN SOMEONE ELSE IS TAPPING THEIRS?

Many people find that movement feels different when shared. Effort can feel lighter. Energy can feel stronger. Motivation can increase. A simple activity can become more enjoyable because others are participating too.

As one participant in our InterActive for Life research shared:

There's something about being in a group that's different than doing it on your own. It's more interesting. It's more joyful. Everybody wants to participate and put energy into it, be present, be active.

When we move together, everything feels easier. It's the energy of the group. Moving in synchrony was less about coordination and more about shared energy.

InterActive for Life Reflection

Moving in sync does not mean:

- ✗ moving perfectly
- ✗ moving identically
- ✗ moving at the same ability level

Moving in sync means:

- ✓ noticing others
- ✓ responding to shared rhythms
- ✓ contributing your energy
- ✓ allowing others to influence your experience
- ✓ experiencing movement as something shared

Challenge

The next time you move with others, ask yourself:

"When do I feel most connected to the rhythm or energy of the people around me?"



Participant Activities

TO INSPIRE MOVING IN SYNC

1

Notice Shared Rhythm

During your next activity, notice moments when you begin moving in rhythm with others.

Examples:

- walking together
- clapping
- moving to music
- exercising
- breathing together
- sharing a common pace

Reflection

How did moving in rhythm affect your experience?

Participant Activities

TO INSPIRE MOVING IN SYNC

2 The Energy Exchange

During a group activity, pay attention to energy.

Ask yourself:

- When does the group's energy lift me?
- When do I help lift the energy of others?
- What makes the activity feel more engaging?

Challenge

Notice one moment when someone else's energy positively influences you.



Participant Activities

TO INSPIRE MOVING IN SYNC

3 Follow and Lead

During a movement activity:

Try following someone else's rhythm for a short period.

Then notice moments when others may begin responding to your rhythm.

Reflection

How does it feel to:

- follow?
- lead?
- move alongside others?

Participant Activities

TO INSPIRE MOVING IN SYNC

4

Moving Together Challenge

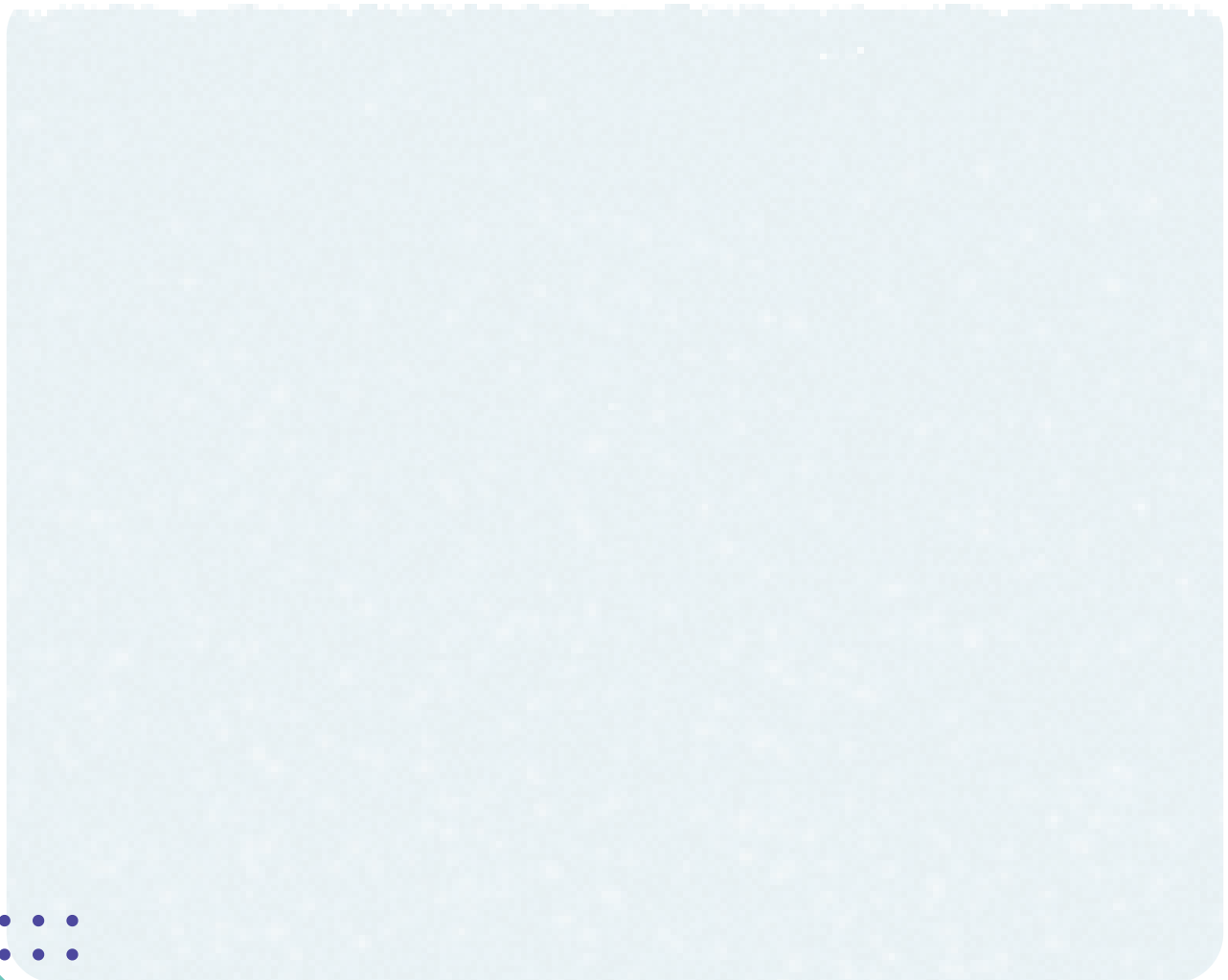
Participate in an activity with another person or group.

Notice:

- shared timing
- shared pacing
- shared effort
- shared focus

Reflection

Did moving together make the activity feel different than moving alone?



Participant Activities

TO INSPIRE MOVING IN SYNC

5 The Presence Challenge

Choose one activity and focus on being fully present with others.

Notice:

- eye contact
- smiles
- laughter
- encouragement
- movement cues
- group energy

Challenge

What happens when you pay attention to others while staying true to your own movement experience?



Participant Activities

TO INSPIRE MOVING IN SYNC

6

Sync with the Music

Music often helps people move together.

Choose an activity involving music.

Notice:

- when your body responds to the beat
- when movement feels more natural
- when people begin moving in similar rhythms

Reflection

How does music help create connection?



Participant Activities

TO INSPIRE MOVING IN SYNC

7

Use the Movement Mood Barometer Together

Before an activity ask:

How do I feel right now?

Then ask:

How would I like to feel while moving with others?

Examples:

- energized
- connected
- inspired
- encouraged
- joyful

After the activity, reflect:

- Did moving with others influence my mood?
- Did shared rhythm change my energy?
- Did I feel more engaged?

Resource:

Movement Mood Barometer

<https://function2flow.ca/wp-content/uploads/2025/11/Movement-Mood-Barometer.pdf>

CLASS COLOUR CODE	ICON	E-MOTIONS
Red Aggressive		Quick/Aggressive/Competitive Activities that offer an outlet to release stress, feelings of aggression or frustration. Examples: cardio boxing, pickleball, HIT training, cardio drumming
Yellow Uplifting		Uplifting, Joyous, Ecstatic, Energizing, Invigorating Activities that offer opportunities to move joyfully to music with or without partner that promotes fun and laughter with options for freestyle flow or moving in unison. Class promotes feelings of success (graduated progressions). Examples: freestyle dance, synchronized movement (i.e., clapping, tapping, cardio drumming/ body percussion, belly dancing)
Light Green Grounded		Predictable/Grounded Activities that follow consistent format designed to promote a mindful, rooted flow with repeated sequences. Attention is directed to breath, feeling body movement and feeling very present. Examples: Mindful walking, Tai Chi, Yoga, range-of-motion exercises, meditation classes, mindfulness training
Orange Cognitive Challenge		Cognitive Challenge-Dual Tasking Classes that complexify the experience that combine physical activity with cognitive challenges, i.e., counting, naming, problem-solving while engaged in movement. Examples: "Simon(e) Says" games, Cross-Crawl
Blue Restful		Slow/Peaceful/Relaxing Activities/ Classes that offer progressive relaxation, stretching/range of motion movements, mindful breathing. Examples: Tai Chi, Yoga, Range-of-motion exercises, meditation classes, Mindfulness training
Purple Spontaneous		Spontaneous/Creative Activities or games that offer variations in intensity, speed (quick bursts and holds), equipment/props (i.e., scarfs, beach balls, rubber chickens). Examples: cooperative/modified games, i.e., chair volleyball, pool noodle games; partner dance; ping pong, scarf juggling



Participant Tips

FOR MOVING IN SYNC

Tip #1: Synchrony Is About Connection, Not Perfection

You do not have to move exactly like everyone else to experience synchrony.

Tip #2: Notice Shared Energy

The energy of others can influence your experience.
Your energy can influence theirs.

Tip #3: Stay Open to Being Lifted

Some days you may provide energy.
Other days you may receive it.
Both are valuable.

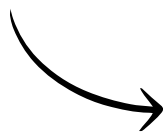
Tip #4: Enjoy the Experience

Shared movement often feels more enjoyable when we focus less on performance and more on participation.



Curious for more?

- [Quick tips for physical activity facilitators](#)
- [Complete the InterActive for Life Inventory](#)



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