Ready
- 4 cones (for boundaries)
- 2 balloons and/or 1 beachball per student
- 1 lollipop paddle per student

Set
- Create large (40X40 paces) activity area.
- Send students to select 1 paddle and 1 balloon each, then scatter them to establish home base.
- Have students set their balloon on the floor nearby, hold their paddle still, and listen.

GO!
1. Introduction
   - We have practiced striking with our hands. Today, we’ll learn to strike with paddles.
   - Introduce yourself to your paddle by “shaking hands” with its handle. *(Demonstrate a handshake. Show how your thumb and index finger form a V at the top.)*
   - While you’re introducing yourself, I’ll move to see if everyone is gripping their paddle correctly.

2. Balance Challenges...
   - Pick up your balloon. Can you balance it on top of your paddle with your palm facing up? This is the forehand.
   - How long can you balance the balloon on your paddle? Count out loud.
   - Keep your same grip, but turn the paddle over so your palm faces down. This is the backhand. Try balancing the balloon on this side. How long can you balance it?
   - Can you walk slowly, balancing the balloon on your paddle using your forehand (palm up)? Can you walk at a low level? High level?
   - Can you gently tap the balloon with your paddle so it goes just above your head? How many times can you tap it?

3. Striking
   - Shadowing
     - Let’s practice swinging our paddles safely without balloons.
     - Hold the paddle in your favorite hand; stand with your other foot (opposite) forward. Reach back and down low with your paddle.
     - Swing your paddle upward slowly as if you were striking a balloon in the air. Follow through (don’t stop the paddle after contact) and hold your finishing pose.

(continued)
**GO!** (continued)

- **With Balloon**
  - Hold the balloon in 1 hand around shoulder high. Hold your paddle in the other. Reach back and down low with your paddle.
  - Let go of the balloon, and watch it drop slowly. Swing your paddle upward, and strike the balloon straight up in the air. Follow through high.
  - Run under the balloon, and try to catch it on your paddle. Balance it there for the count of 3.
  - Drop, strike, catch. Repeat. Keep practicing.
  - Now try striking it 2X, then catching.

4. **Wrap It Up**

- How do you know which way the balloon will go when you strike it?
- What kind of sports use racquets or paddles? *(Raquetball, badminton, paddleball, pickleball, tennis, ping pong, etc.)*

**SPARK IT UP!**

**Backhand Striking**

This time, use your backhand to strike the balloon straight up. A backhand is using the other side of the paddle, the back side. Can you make your paddle as flat as a table top when you contact the balloon?

**Change the Angle**

We’ll try striking our balloons in different directions, but first we need to spread out even more to stay safe. *(Triple the distance between students.)* Can you strike your balloon so it flies straight ahead? Run and catch it in the air. *(Allow 1-2 minutes for practice before posing the next challenge.)* Can you strike it to your left with a forehand *(for the right-handers)*? Catch it after every strike. Can you strike it to your right with a backhand? Down? How far can you strike your balloon?

**Keep It Up**

After you strike your balloon straight up, instead of moving to catch it, move and strike it again. If you can strike it twice in a row, try for 3X. Keep going and see how many times in a row you can strike your balloon (straight up) without a miss or letting it drop to the floor.

**Striking With a Partner**

*(Pair students; distribute 1 balloon per pair.)* The partner with the balloon drops it, then strikes it up with the paddle, and steps back out of the way. The other partner has plenty of room to strike it before it falls to the ground. Play *Keep It Up.* How many times in a row can you and your partner strike your balloon before it touches the floor? *(After trials.)* Instead of striking your balloon straight up, strike it back and forth with your partner.
STRIKING WITH PADDLES

STANDARDS ADDRESSED

NASPE Standards

#1, 2 Spatial awareness, strike a balloon continuously with a paddle

#3, 4 Participates in enjoyable, challenging activities

#5, 6 Participates, appreciates, enjoys movement, cooperates in a group setting

Your State (Write in here)

TONY’S TIPS

• Triple the distance between students before starting striking activities.

• Keep teaching of forehand and backhand exploratory and simple.

• Send students back to their home bases whenever you want to pose a new challenge or instruct a new skill.

Vocabulary

Grip, forehand, backhand

NOTES

Language Arts

(With each strike or volley of the balloon, partners say a letter to spell words on a spelling list.)