

# TeamTimbers™

Item #18192

## WHAT ARE THE EDUCATIONAL APPLICATIONS?

TeamTimbers is a portable low ropes course that helps groups learn important life skills such as teamwork, leadership, trust, creative problem solving, and communication. TeamTimbers is used by educators, trainers, facilitators and coaches to engage a wide variety of groups (kids to adults) in fun experiential learning exercises that are normally found at outside team development ropes courses. Now, using the TeamTimbers, you can bring the challenge anywhere - the classroom, boardroom, conference room, and even outside!

## HOW CAN I USE TEAMTIMBERS WITH MY STUDENTS?

The 4 TeamTimbers boards (each measuring 2" x 6" x 6') utilize a unique bracket that allows you to instantly and easily connect the beams at any angle (no tools required). You can build different shapes (square, zig-zag, triangle, giant "V", giant "plus sign", etc.) and each shape allows you to lead a different series of teambuilding activities that will help your group practice and learn team and leadership skills that will transform how they work in the classroom and the boardroom.

**Design Feature:** The metal bracket attached to the wood boards is designed to move in a pivoting action. This pivoting action allows the Quick Pins to easily slide into the bracket. Another advantage of the pivoting action is that the boards connect more easily on surfaces that are less than perfectly flat. If you happen to have difficulty inserting a Quick Pin into a bracket, try pivoting the bracket to line up the bracket pin sleeves.

The activities described within are meant for a group size of up to 16 people. Some activities can be done with as few as 2 people. You can work with groups larger than 16 with this equipment, though you may need to have some people act as observers, spotters or "referees".

This activity guide is divided into sections by shape configuration. The activities follow a description of how to build the shape. Each shape lends itself to different activities.

### Debriefing the Activity

The activities in this guide can be done just for fun without going into a discussion about what was learned. Hopefully, the TeamTimbers activities will help you

explore important issues such as teamwork, leadership, cooperation, creative problem solving, trust, decision-making, conflict resolution, resource management, and more.

In the field of experiential education, there is a cycle of learning which starts with the activity (see **Figure 1**).

The activity creates a common experience for the participants and allows everyone to talk about an issue through the language of the activity.

A critical stage of this cycle is known as the "debrief". During this stage, the group is encouraged to talk about what happened during the activity. The activity acts as a stage for the group to play out patterns of behavior that is either having a positive effect on the group or a negative one. An effective facilitator will help the group see the correlations between the events that occurred in the activity and the events of "real life".

### Guidelines for the Debrief

- Encourage the group to review both the task and the process (most groups tend to focus on the task).
- Clarify and focus the comments of the group and provide helpful information (data).
- Call attention to details that may have been overlooked.
- Assist the group in discovering what they have experienced as opposed to telling them what they experienced.
- Be comfortable with the time between the question you ask and the quiet period before someone responds.
- Help participants see the link between their behavior (their choices) and the outcome.

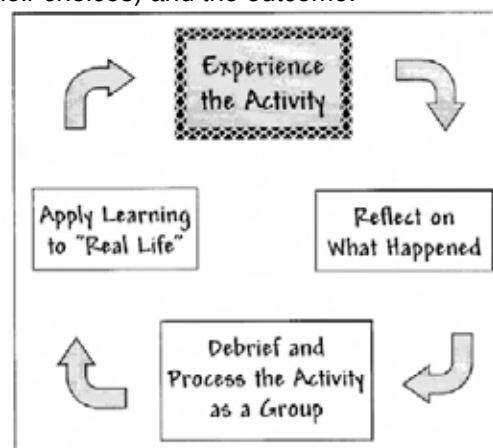


Figure 1, Experiential Education Cycle

## BOXED-SHAPE ACTIVITIES

### How To Build the "Box" Shape

1. Start with a flat surface.
2. Layout all four TeamTimbers into the shape of a square (box), see **Photo B-1** and **Figure B-4**.
3. Using four (4) Quick Pins (one at each corner), secure the TeamTimbers bracket at the 4 corners (see **Photos B-2** and **B-3**).
4. Double-check all connections for safety and security.

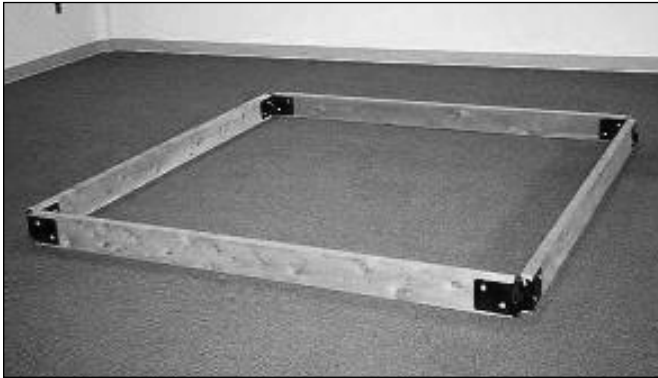


Photo B-1

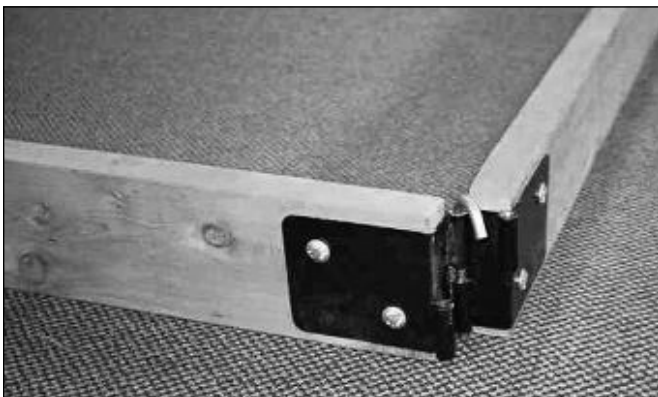


Photo B-2

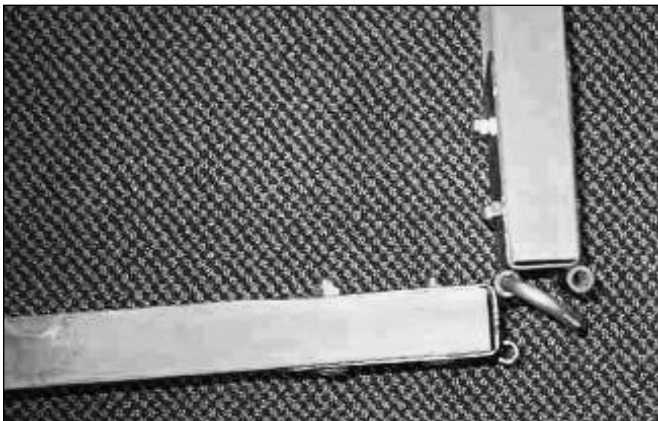


Photo B-3

### Box Activity #1: Circular Switch

*Description* - 6 to 16 participants divide into two groups. The two groups stand at the same corner in a line then step onto the box one by one. Every other person

travels around the box clockwise while the rest of the group travels around the box counter-clockwise. The two groups must pass each other in their effort to travel completely around the box.

*Rules* - 1) People must stay in contact with other teammates at all times; 2) If anyone falls off or steps off, an appropriate penalty is given (that person is blindfolded, that person starts over, everyone starts over, etc.).

*Safety* - Participants must stay in contact with at least one other person at all times. This will help prevent people from jumping from one board to another. Encourage participants to support one another. Remind participants that if they are going to fall off a board they should not pull others off with them.

*Variations* - 1) Allow no verbal communication once you step on the board.

### Box Activity #2: Opposite Sides Switch

*Description* - A group of up to 16 people stand on the box with equal numbers on each side. The objective is for each side to get to the side opposite them. Each side divides itself in half with half of one side traveling to the opposite side in a clockwise direction and half of one side traveling in a counter-clockwise direction. Keep in mind that each of the 4 people on each of the 4 sides must travel to the side opposite them in the same way (half clockwise, half counterclockwise), which results in LOTS of movement. See **Figure B-4**.

*Rules* - 1) People must stay in contact with other teammates at all times; 2) If anyone falls off or steps off, an appropriate penalty is given (that person is blindfolded, that person starts over, everyone starts over, etc.).

*Safety* - Participants must stay in contact with at least one other person at all times. This will help prevent people from jumping from one board to another. Encourage participants to support one another. Remind participants that if they are going to fall off a board they should not pull others off with them.

*Variations* - Allow no verbal communication once you step on the board.

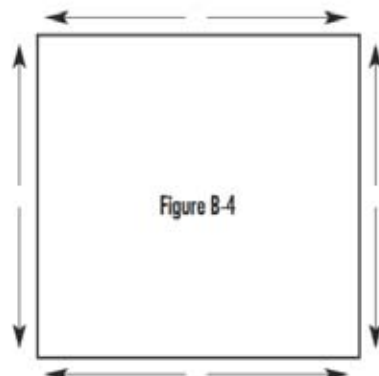


Figure B-4

### Box Activity #3: Lost Gold

*Description* - The participants step onto the box and make room for the entire team. The group facilitator tosses several pennies onto the ground inside the box. The group must locate and retrieve as many coins as possible. This activity works best when the box is set up outside in the grass where the coins become partially hidden.

*Rules* - 1) Team members must stay in physical contact with at least one other person; 2) If anyone falls off or steps off, an appropriate penalty is given (that person is blindfolded, everyone starts over, etc.); 3) Team members may not touch the ground.

*Safety* - Participants must stay in contact with at least one other person at all times. Encourage participants to support one another. Remind participants that if they are going to fall off a board they should not pull others off with them.

### Box Activity #4: Pairs Traverse

*Description* - Two people step onto the box simultaneously at opposite corners. The pair has a 9-foot rope between them, which acts as their only source of support. Each person travels around the box in a clockwise direction. The pair uses the rope as a support tool to aid their balance.

*Rules* - If anyone falls off or steps off, the pair starts again.

*Safety* - Participants must be spotted.

*Variations* - If someone falls off, you can provide a penalty (blindfold, no verbal communication, etc.).

### Box Activity #5: Team Perimeter Walk

*Description* - The group surrounds the box while standing on the ground with equal numbers on each of the four sides. All at once, the group steps up onto the box. The group picks a direction (clockwise or counter-clockwise) to travel in. The goal is for the entire team to travel around the box in the same direction to make it all the way back to where they originally started.

*Rules* - 1) People must stay in contact with other teammates at all times; 2) If anyone falls off or steps off, an appropriate penalty is given (that person is blindfolded, that person starts over, everyone starts over, etc.).

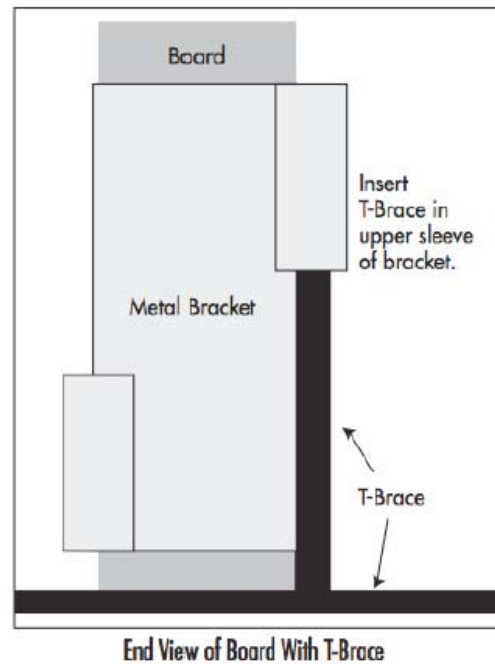
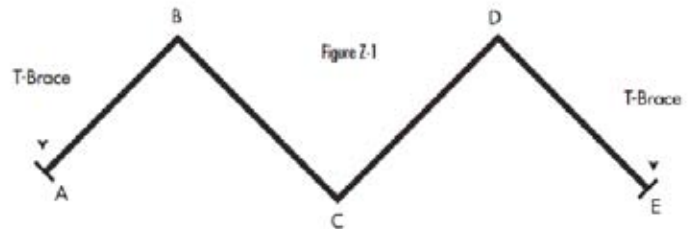
*Safety* - Participants must stay in contact with at least one other person at all times. This will help prevent one or more people from jumping from one board to another. Encourage participants to support one another. Remind participants that if they are going to fall off a board they should not pull others off with them.

*Variations* - Allow no verbal communication.

## ZIG-ZAG-SHAPED ACTIVITIES

### How To Build A "Zig-Zag" Shape

1. Start with a flat surface.
2. Layout the boards in a zig-zag pattern using all 4 boards (see **Figure Z-1**).
3. Insert T-Braces (see **Diagram Z** below) on the two end boards at points A and E (see **Figure Z-1**).
4. Join the boards together at points B, C, and D by placing Quick Pins in the brackets.
5. Double-check all connections for safety.



### Zig-Zag Activity #1: Zig-Zag Lineup

*Description* - Have the group stand on the Zig-Zag spreading themselves out equally from end to end. Then, have the group reorganize themselves along the zig-zag by height, or eye color (lightest to darkest), or date of birth, or shoe size, etc.

*Rules* - 1) People must stay in contact with other teammates at all times; 2) If anyone falls off or steps off, an appropriate penalty is given (that person starts over, everyone starts over, that person can no longer communicate verbally, the team may not communicate verbally for 2 minutes, etc.).

**Safety** - Participants must stay in contact with at least one other person at all times. Encourage participants to support one another. Remind participants that if they are going to fall off a board they should not pull others off with them.

**Variations** - 1) Require the group to complete the reorganization without verbal communication; 2) Try blindfolding one or two people at different times during the activity. Make sure the blindfolded participants are well spotted.

### Zig-Zag Activity #2: Zig-Zag Traverse

**Description** - Start at one end and get to the other. See photo below.

**Rules** - 1) People must stay in contact with other teammates at all times; 2) If anyone falls off or steps off, an appropriate penalty is given (that person starts over, everyone starts over, that person can no longer communicate verbally, the team may not communicate verbally for 2 minutes, etc.).

**Safety** - Participants must stay in contact with at least one other person at all times. Encourage participants to support one another. Remind participants that if they are going to fall off a board they should not pull others off with them.

**Variations** - 1) Divide the group in half, then have half the group start at one end of the Zig-Zag and have the other half start at the other end of the Zig-Zag. The two teams must pass each other while they try to get to the other side; 2) Require the group to complete the activity without verbal communication; 3) Try blindfolding one or two people at different times during the activity. Make sure the blindfolded participants are well spotted; 4) Have the group transport 4 large beach balls as they travel — the rules with the beach balls are that they may not be thrown, the balls must stay inflated, the balls may not touch the ground and the balls must stay in contact with someone at all times.



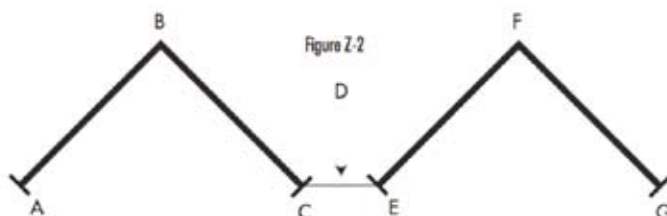
### Zig-Zag Activity #3: Zig-Zag Traverse With A Gap

1. Layout the 4 boards on a flat surface.
2. Place T-Braces at points A, C, E, and G (see **Figure Z-2**).
3. Connect boards together with Quick Pins at points B and F (see **Figure Z-2**).
4. Tie a line (point D in **Figure Z-2**) between points C and E using the supplied nylon cord, so the board ends (C and E) are approximately 12 inches apart. This line will prevent the boards from slipping further apart during the activity. The line can be tied to the bracket sleeves that are not being used by the T-Brace at points C and E. Make sure the knots are secure and the boards will not move further apart. SAFETY NOTE: Failure to securely tie the rope to the brackets may result in injury.
5. Double-check all connections for safety and security.

**Description** - This activity can be run with either of the rules from Zig-Zag Activity #1 or #2 above. The gap provides an extra challenge for the group to negotiate.

**Rules** - 1) People must stay in contact with other teammates at all times; 2) If anyone falls off or steps off, an appropriate penalty is given (that person starts over, everyone starts over, that person can no longer communicate verbally, the team may not communicate verbally for 2 minutes, etc.).

**Safety** - Spotting of participants at the gap is a must. Participants must stay in contact with at least one other person at all times. Encourage participants to support one another. Remind participants that if they are going to fall off a board they should not pull others off with them.



## STAR-SHAPED ACTIVITIES

### How To Build A "Star" Shape

1. Start with a flat surface.
2. Layout the 4 boards in the pattern shown below in **Figure S-1**.
3. Using 4 pins, secure the center of the boards (see **Photo S-2**).
4. Stabilize the boards by placing a T-Brace at end of each board.
5. Double-check all connections for safety and security.

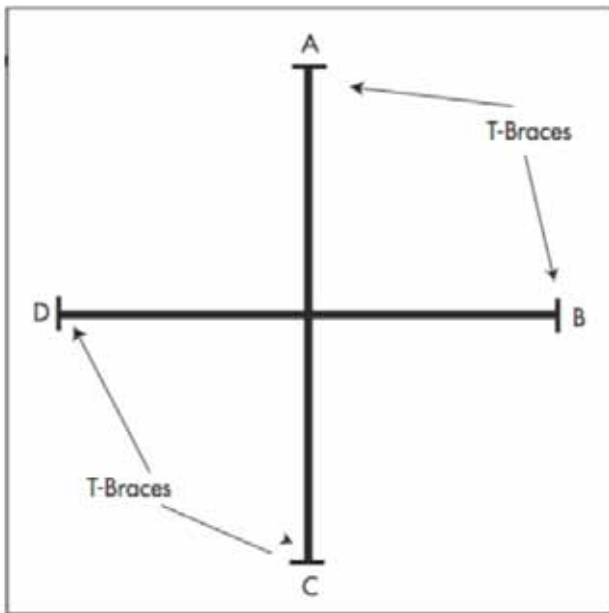


Figure S-1

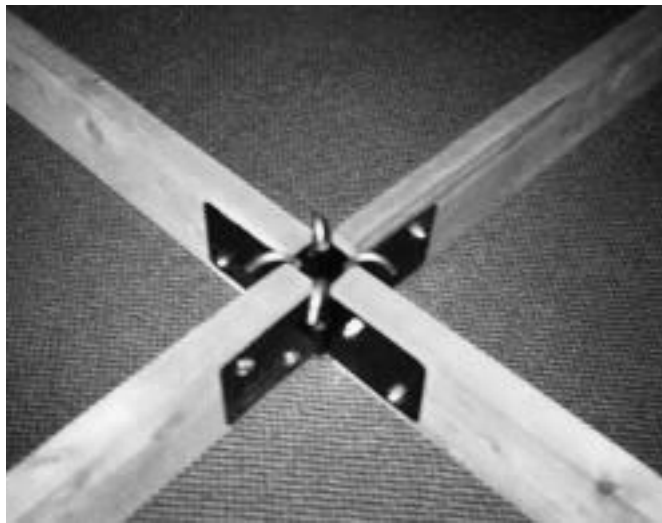


Photo S-2

### Star Activity #1: Star Switch

*Description* - Divide the team into 4 groups with each group standing on one leg of the star. The objective is for the people standing on opposite legs of the star to switch places (the people on leg A switch with the people on leg C, the people on leg B switch with the people on leg D).

*Rules* - 1) People must stay in contact with other teammates at all times; 2) If anyone falls off or steps off, an appropriate penalty is given (that person starts over, everyone starts over, that person can no longer communicate verbally, the team may not communicate verbally for 2 minutes, etc.).

*Safety* - Participants must stay in contact with at least one other person at all times. Encourage participants to support one another. Remind participants that if they

are going to fall off a board they should not pull others off with them.

*Variations* - 1) Provide the group with a 9-foot section of rope to use as a stabilizer (handrail); 2) Require the group to accomplish the objective with no verbal communication; 3) Require each leg to stay in constant physical contact with each other during the entire activity.

### Star Activity #2: Star Gold

*Description* - The participants step onto the star with equal numbers on each leg of the star. The group facilitator tosses between 100 and 200 pennies onto the ground around the star structure. The group must locate and retrieve as many coins as possible before time runs out (give them 15-25 minutes). This activity works best outside in the grass where the coins become partially hidden. This activity is similar to the "Box Gold" activity, although this activity is more difficult.

*Rules* - 1) Team members must stay in physical contact with at least one other person; 2) If anyone falls off or steps off, an appropriate penalty is given (that person starts over, everyone starts over, that person can no longer communicate verbally, the team may not communicate verbally for 2 minutes, the team must return 2 coins, etc.); 3) Team members may not touch the ground.

*Safety* - Participants must stay in contact with at least one other person at all times. Encourage participants to support one another. Remind participants that if they are going to fall off a board they should not pull others off with them.

*Variations* - Toss out 100 or so balls (old tennis balls work great) on the ground around the Star and have the group pick up as many balls as they can without touching the ground.

### Star Activity #3: Star Clock

*Description* - The participants step onto the star with equal numbers on each leg of the star. Participants on leg A (see **Figure S-1**) must move to leg B; leg B moves to leg C; leg C moves to leg D; leg D moves to leg A.

*Rules* - 1) Team members must stay in physical contact with at least one other person; 2) If anyone falls off or steps off, an appropriate penalty is given (that person starts over, everyone starts over, that person can no longer communicate verbally, the team may not communicate verbally for 2 minutes, etc.); 3) Team members may not touch the ground.

*Safety* - Participants must stay in contact with at least one other person at all times. Encourage participants

to support one another. Remind participants that if they are going to fall off a board they should not pull others off with them.

*Variations* - 1) Provide the group with a 9-foot section of rope to use as a stabilizer (handrail); 2) Require the group to accomplish the objective with no verbal communication; 3) Require each leg to stay in constant physical contact with each other during the entire activity.

### V-SHAPED ACTIVITIES

#### How To Build A "V" Shape

1. Make sure to set up the V-shape on a flat, stable surface.
2. Join 2 boards together end-to-end using a T-Brace and Quick Pin at the joint (Part B in **Figure V-1**). The T-Brace is used to provide stability.
3. Repeat step 2 for the remaining 2 boards.
4. Join the 2 long boards together at point A (see **Figure V-1**) using a Pin.
5. Insert T-Braces in the ends of both boards (points C and D, **Figure V-1**). Make sure the T-Brace is inserted into the higher of the two bracket sleeves.
6. Securely attach the 9-foot nylon cord through the holes in the T-Braces to prevent the "V" shape from opening too far. Tie the rope shorter to make the activity easier and lengthen the rope to make the activity harder. **SAFETY NOTICE:** Do not use a rope longer than 9 feet!
7. Double-check all connections for safety.

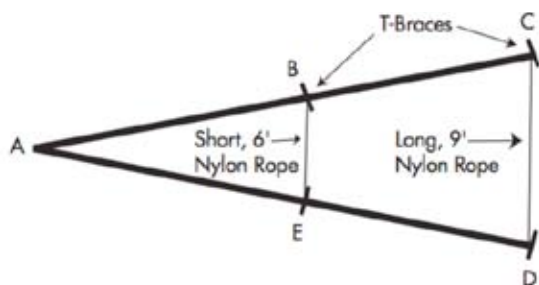


Figure V-1

#### "V" Activity #1: Trust-V

*Description* - The challenge is for a team of two to travel from the Trust V's starting point to the finish line (nylon rope).

*Rules* - 1) Refer to **Figure V-2**. Each team of two must use both boards; 2) The team of two must stay in constant direct physical contact with one another while crossing; 3) No interlocking of fingers; 4) If one or both participants falls off or steps off before they reach the end, they must both start over.

*Safety* - There will be 2 spotters for each "V-walker". The spotters will join hands, under the "V-walkers"

joined hands, in order to support them in the event of a fall. The spotters are to travel with the pair from the mid point to the finish when the partners step off the boards. There may only be room for one pair of spotters inside the V, until the "V-walkers" progress about 1/2 way down the V, then the other pair of spotters will be able to fit inside the V as well. Refer to **Photos V-2, V-3, and V-4** below. Prior to leading this activity, review the information on proper spotting described earlier in this guide. By adjusting the "finish line", either shorter or longer, you can make the activity easier or harder. Shorter people will have a more difficult time when the finish line is longer (adjust the length of the cord for them). Encourage participants to speak out if this activity is beyond their physical comfort level. Make sure all others in the group are focused in on this event. Do not allow people to practice while others are on the boards.

*Variations* - Require that the participants make a plan before stepping onto the boards and after that moment they are not allowed to communicate verbally.

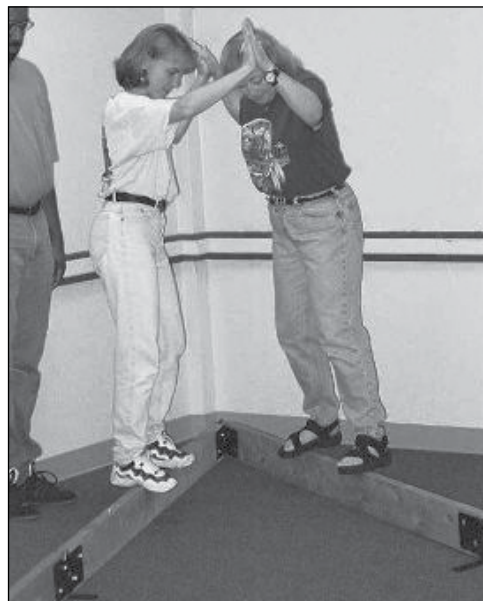


Photo V-2



Photo V-3

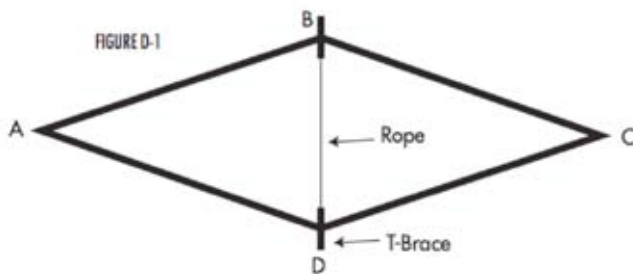


Photo V-4

## DIAMOND-SHAPED ACTIVITIES

### How To Build A “Diamond” Shape

1. Start with a flat surface.
2. Layout the four boards in a diamond shape (see **Figure D-1**).
3. Insert T-Braces at points B and D (see **Figure D-1**).
4. Insert a Quick Pin at both points A and C (see **Figure D-1**).
5. Attach the rope to the T-Braces by tying the rope through the hole on each of the T-Brace bases. Adjust the rope to be longer to provide a greater challenge and shorter to make the activity easier. **SAFETY NOTE:** Make absolutely sure that the rope is securely attached to the T-Braces. Failure to do so may result in injury.
6. Double-check all connections for safety and security.



### Diamond Activity #1: Trust Diamond

*Description* - This activity is similar to the previous “Trust V” activity in that two people work together to get from one end of the Diamond to the other.

*Rules* - 1) Each team of two must use both boards; 2) The team of two must stay in constant direct physical contact with one another while crossing; 3) No interlocking of fingers; 4) If one or both participants falls off or steps off before they reach the end, they must both start over.

*Safety* - Spotters are required for this activity. Remind participants that if they are going to fall off a board they should not pull others off with them.

*Variations* - Require the partners to make a plan prior to stepping on the Diamond. Once they step on the boards, they are not allowed to communicate verbally.

### Diamond Activity #2: Two Pair Pass

*Description* - This activity is similar to Diamond Activity #1. A total of 4 people will be working on the Diamond during this activity. Two start at one end and 2 start at the other. The objective is for both pairs to successfully travel from one end to the other. The difficulty comes when the pairs meet in the middle and pass each other.

*Rules* - 1) Each team of two must use both boards; 2) The teams of two must stay in constant direct physical contact with one another while crossing; 3) No interlocking of fingers; 4) If anyone falls off or steps off before they reach the end, everyone must start over; 5) Teams must pass each other at or near the middle.

*Safety* - Spotters are required for this activity. Remind participants that if they are going to fall off a board they should not pull others off with them.

*Variations* - Require the partners to make a plan prior to stepping on the Diamond. Once they step on the boards, they are not allowed to communicate verbally.

### Diamond Activity #3: Two Pair Trade Partners

*Description* - This activity is similar to Diamond Activity #1 and #2. A total of 4 people will be working on the Diamond during this activity. Two start at one end and 2 start at the other. The objective is for both pairs to meet in the middle and then to trade partners and then travel back to the beginning (Note: One person in each pair will travel the full length of the Diamond while their partner will travel to the middle and then return to where they started).

*Rules* - 1) Each team of two must use both boards; 2) The teams of two must stay in constant direct physical contact with one other person while crossing; 3) No interlocking of fingers; 4) If anyone falls off or steps off before they reach the end, everyone must start over; 5) Teams must make the partner trade at, or near, the middle.

*Safety* - Spotters are required for this activity. Remind participants that if they are going to fall off a board they should not pull others off with them.

*Variations* - Require the partners to make a plan prior to stepping on the Diamond. Once they step on the boards, they are not allowed to communicate verbally.

## SAFETY ISSUES & CONCERNS

The safety of the participants is the instructor's primary concern. Before leading any activity with the TeamTimbers, make certain that you have done everything in your power to create a learning atmosphere that is physically, emotionally and spiritually safe for all concerned.

As a leader, you must have a clear understanding of the physical and emotional abilities and limitations of each member of the group prior to starting. This information should be used to determine the appropriateness of each activity.

- Always set up the TeamTimbers on a flat surface. Do not elevate the TeamTimbers.
- Don't use TeamTimbers in a manner other than described in this activity guide.
- Inspect TeamTimbers prior to use. Check all metal pieces for cracks or abnormal wear. Check the boards for cracks that may lead to a broken board or splintering. If TeamTimbers does not pass this safety inspection, do not use them.
- Store TeamTimbers on a flat surface in a dry area.

## Pointers for Teaching Spotting

- Explain the concept and meaning of spotting (to serve as a referee or observer).
- Practice spotting with participants before they actually need to use the skill in an activity.
- Promote the attitude that teasing and joking about not catching someone has no place in your program.
- The activities in this guidebook require a minimum number of 2 spotters, and depending on the skill and ability level of your particular group, more spotters will be necessary.
- Supervise spotters closely.
- A good spotter shares the responsibility of spotting equally. It is easier and safer to work as a team when spotting.
- Spotters should stand in a balanced position, holding hands up in a "ready position" or as some say "bumpers up".
- Spotters must focus on participant(s).
- Spotters should cushion a fall, not catch and hold, and should move with the direction of force.
- When lifting one of the participants is required for a group to successfully solve a challenge, the leader must teach participants how to safely lift, so that injury can be avoided. Remember: Lift with your legs, not with your back.

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