



Irish Heart
Foundation

Action for Life

Physical literacy through PE and SPHE



Head



Heart



Hands

SECOND
CLASS

THIRD
CLASS

FOURTH
CLASS

LESSON PLANS

Irish Heart Foundation Overview

The Irish Heart Foundation is the national charity dedicated to saving lives by eliminating premature death and avoidable disability from heart disease and stroke. We campaign and advocate to change the public policy environment, improve services for heart health and stroke and are the driving force behind national awareness campaigns such as the Act F.A.S.T. campaign on the signs of stroke.

The Irish Heart Foundation promotes health in communities, workplaces and schools across Ireland and gives vital patient support through a nurse support line, high-quality information materials, and support groups for stroke, heart failure, ICD, Long QT, SADS and cardiomyopathy.

We are a registered charity supported by donations from the public and rely on the goodwill and generosity of our supporters to fund life-saving and life-changing work in prevention, patient support, CPR and campaigning.

Every donation helps more people in Ireland to live longer, healthier lives.

About Irish Heart Foundation's work in schools

The Irish Heart Foundation supports teachers and schools across Ireland in their wellbeing mission to create healthy schools. Our core programmes are evidence-based and co-designed ensuring they meet the needs of schools and align to the curriculum. We advocate for policies that promote healthy school environments and prevent childhood obesity. 80% of premature heart disease and stroke is preventable through healthy lifestyles, which is why the Irish Heart Foundation is committed to promoting lifelong healthy habits from an early age.

The Irish Heart Foundation's dedicated Children and Young People team is available to support schools. For more information, visit www.irishheart.ie or contact schools@irishheart.ie.

Visit
irishheart.ie/schools
for the full
Action For Life
programme

Before and After Physical Activity

Warming Up, Cooling Down and Stretching



WARM UP

- Before we do exercise, like doing PE or sports training, it is necessary to prepare our bodies by warming up.
- When we are active, the heart and lungs work harder and faster to circulate blood around the body.
- Warming up involves doing light activity to gradually increase our heart rate so that the body is prepared for more intense physical activity.

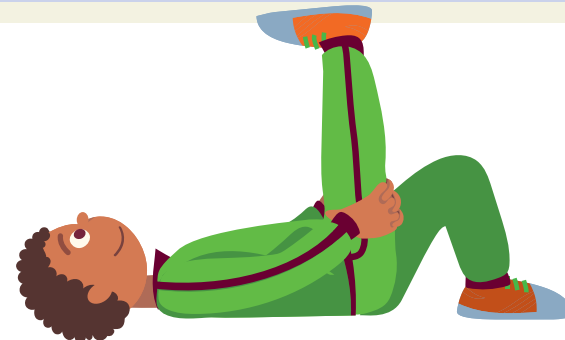
Warm Up Stretch: After warming up our bodies and muscles with light activity, we then do a Warm Up stretch. We do not stretch without first warming up because our muscles are a little bit like plasticine. When we take plasticine out of the packet or tub, it is cold and hard. We need to warm it up by moving it around to make it soft and stretchy. Our muscles are similar; they need to be moved around and warmed up to become flexible enough to stretch.

- ➡ Full body stretches are suggested in each Action For Life lesson plan before the first main activity (Warm Up Stretches) and at the end of each lesson (Cool Down Stretches). Particular attention should be given to stretching the body parts used within the lesson.
- ➡ The stretch should be held when a gentle tension is felt in the muscle.
- ➡ If doing a specific stretch causes pain, stop the stretch. **Stretching should not cause pain.**

COOL DOWN

- When we finish exercising, we are still breathing fast and our hearts are still working hard to deliver blood all around the body.
- If we stop suddenly, the body thinks it is still exercising and continues to react as if it is.
- Cooling down means doing a lighter activity to ease the body out of its work mode and allow the breathing and heart rate to return to normal.
- Stopping suddenly without doing a Cool Down could make us feel dizzy or unwell and can make the muscles sore.

Cool Down Stretch: Cool Down stretches should be done after the cool down to keep the muscles strong, flexible and healthy. Cool Down stretches are usually held for longer than Warm Up stretches and done in a seated or lying down position for a deeper stretch. Stretching can help to prevent muscle soreness after physical activity.



Stretches are detailed on the pages overleaf.

Warm Up Stretches

○ = Area where stretch should be felt

- ➔ Hold the position when a gentle tension is felt; you should not feel pain or discomfort.
- ➔ Keep breathing normally through the stretches.
- ➔ Hold each stretch for 8-10 seconds.

1 Quad Stretch

- Stand with feet hip distance apart.
- Bend left knee and catch foot.
- Gently pull heel to bum.
- Hold onto wall for support if necessary.
- Keep hips level and both knees close together.



2 Hamstring Stretch

- Step right foot backwards.
- Bend right knee, leaning upper body forward from hips with back straight.
- Place hands on thigh for support (not on knee).
- Gently push hips backwards as if sitting into a chair.
- Stretch should be felt on back of upper part of the straight leg.



3 Calf Stretch

- Step left leg back, keeping right knee bent from Hamstring Stretch.
- With straight back leg and feet flat on the ground, push weight through back heel into ground.
- Stretch should be felt in bottom of back of straight leg.
- Push against a wall or move feet further apart for deeper stretch.



Complete stretches 1, 2 and 3 on left leg, then change to right leg.

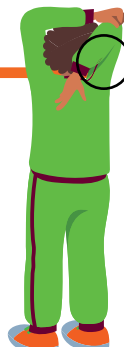
4 Chest and Shoulder Stretch

- Stand with feet hip distance apart.
- Lace fingers together behind the back with palms facing the body.
- Gently squeeze shoulder blades together and lift arms only as far as comfortable.



5 Tricep Stretch

- Stand with feet hip distance apart.
- Raise both arms overhead.
- Bend one elbow and allow hand to drop between shoulder blades.
- Reach fingertips down spine and support elbow with other hand.
- Repeat with opposite arm.



6 Upper Back Stretch

- Interlock fingers with palms facing body.
- Bring arms to shoulder height and drop chin to chest.
- Gently reach arms forwards, feeling the stretch between the back of your shoulders.



7 High Reach Stretch

- Stand with feet hip distance apart.
- Hold hands above head and stretch upwards.
- Feel the stretch along the whole upper body.



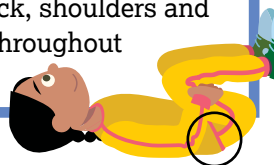
Cool Down Stretches

○ = Area where stretch should be felt

- ➔ Hold the position when a gentle tension is felt; you should not feel pain or discomfort.
- ➔ Take slow deep breaths during the stretches.
- ➔ Hold each stretch for 10-15 seconds, unless otherwise specified.

1 Lower Back Stretch

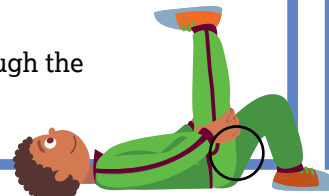
- Lie on back with knees bent and feet flat on floor.
- Place hands at back of thighs and pull knees gently towards chest.
- Keep upper back, shoulders and head on floor throughout the stretch.



2 Lying Hamstring Stretch

- Lie on back with knees bent and feet flat on floor.
- Lift one leg and hold hands around back of thigh.
- Gently pull leg, only as far as comfortable, keeping the leg straight.
- Stretch should be felt through the back of the lower leg.

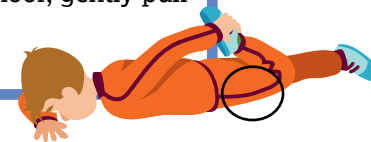
Repeat with opposite leg



3 Lying Quad Stretch

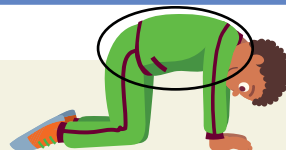
- Turn onto front of body to lie on stomach.
- Rest head on forearm.
- Bend one leg and hold foot with hand on same side.
- Keeping both hips on the floor, gently pull the heel towards the bum.

Repeat with opposite leg



4 Cat Stretch

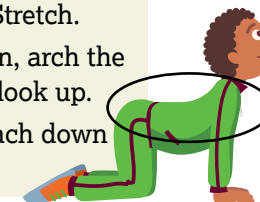
- Kneel with both hands on floor (knees below hips and hands below shoulders).
- Let out a deep breath, tuck chin towards chest and round the back – imagine that you are trying to move your belly button up to the sky.
- Do not hold this position as you will move slowly into Cow Stretch on next breath in.



Move slowly from Cat Stretch to Cow Stretch and back for a few breaths – slowly moving into Cat Stretch on breath out and Cow Stretch on breath in. Repeat sequence 3-4 times.

5 Cow Stretch

- Kneel with both hands on the floor as in Cat Stretch.
- Taking a deep breath in, arch the back, tilt the chin and look up.
- Gently press the stomach down and the hips up.



6 Seated Calf Stretch

- Sit on floor with legs wide.
- Bend one knee, bringing the sole of the foot to rest on the inner thigh of the opposite leg.
- Point toes of straight leg towards the face and reach gently towards toes, keeping back straight.
- Stretch should be felt in the back of the bottom of the straight leg. *Repeat with opposite leg*



7 Inner Thigh Stretch

- Sitting on floor with straight back, bend both knees, placing soles of feet together.
- Hold legs at ankles, sit up tall and allow knees to fall towards the floor (don't push the legs).
- For a deeper stretch, hold feet and lean slightly forward.



8 Seated Chest Stretch

- In a seated position on the floor, place both hands behind the back.
- Rest the palms of the hands on either side of the spine at the lower back with fingertips facing downwards.
- With straight back and head facing forward, gently press elbows together to stretch across the chest.





Irish Heart Foundation

Learning Outcomes

Through this lesson, pupils should be enabled to...

HEAD



Demonstrate an understanding of how to vary a crawling skill to adapt the level of challenge.

HEART



Perform a basic movement in front of a group, with confidence.

HANDS



Perform a Commando Crawl and Spider Crawl ('part skill' or 'whole skill').

WARM UP - Meet in the Middle

Set-up: Create two parallel lines of cones at opposite ends of the playing area. Put pupils into pairs and instruct each pair to stand at opposite lines facing each other. Ask pupils to adjust cones to ensure they are directly opposite their partner.

On teacher's signal, pupils run (or hop, skip or jump) to meet partner in the middle, perform a given task, then return to their cone.

Tasks:

- ➡ High five to the right then to the left.
- ➡ Jump and clap hands overhead twice.
- ➡ Jump and turn 360° (full turn).
- ➡ Jump and give partner a high ten.
- ➡ Lift right elbow turn right and left for a 90° (quarter turn) turn.
- ➡ Create a move.



MODIFICATION: Adjust the distance between partners to reduce length required to travel to meet partner.

STRETCH

before moving to Activity 1
(see Warm Up stretches)

MORE ACTION: Increase challenge by removing verbal prompts. Can pupils sequence tasks, with no teacher prompt, without forgetting any?



TOP TIP

Emphasise the link between Gymnastics and Maths. **Prompt** pupils to recount how many degrees are in a right angle, a straight angle, a full revolution etc. Provide pupils with the knowledge and understanding that we **use our bodies** to create shapes and angles all of the time. Watch a video of Olympic champion, Sanne Wevers, AKA 'Spindarella', perform a beam routine. **Pause** to count the revolutions in her spins and name the angles and shapes she makes with her body.

ACTIVITY 1 - Movement Challenge 1

Set-up: Keep the cones set up at the edge of the playing area for Activity 2. Ask pupils to assist with taking mats from storage and spreading them out around the playing area. Depending on number of mats available, ask pupils to stand on mats individually or in pairs.

➡ Teacher leads pupils in performing a series of movements. Movement Challenge 1 resource card illustrates each movement and includes teaching notes.

➡ If in pairs, pupils take turns to perform each movement on the mat.

- 1) Commando Crawl
- 2) Spider Crawl
- 3) Inchworm
- 4) Push Turn



MODIFICATION: Demonstrate variations for each move. For example, a Commando Crawl can be made easier by using feet as well as elbows, a Spider Crawl can use deep knee bend and an Inchworm may not require a fully extended body. A pupil who uses a wheelchair may wish to transfer to the floor for this activity. Allow flexibility in how a movement is performed, encouraging the pupil to use their body, or their body and the chair to perform their movements.

MORE ACTION: Incorporate the movements into games. For example, play musical statues; perform a movement while the music plays and freeze in position when the music stops.



TOP TIP

Provide a **variety of demonstrations** of different crawls. Pupils of all capabilities can act as models if initial focus is on one or two important components of a movement in isolation.

SPHE

Strand:
Myself and Others
Strand Unit:
My Friends and
Other People



PE

Strand:
Gymnastics
Strand Unit:
Movement

Equipment for Lesson:

Cones, Mats, Movement
Challenge 1 card and
Feelings Finder
(from resource pack)

Action for Life

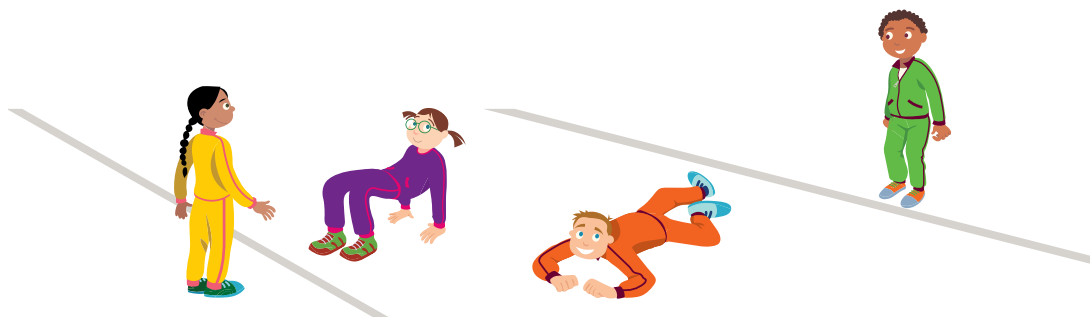
LESSON 5

ACTIVITY 2 - Team Travel

Set-up: Move one line of cones from the Warm Up closer to the other to reduce the distance between the two lines. Divide pupils into teams of 4-6.

- ➡ In their teams, pupils line up on one side of the area.
- ➡ Teacher instructs pupils to travel to the other side performing a particular movement (Commando Crawl, Spider Crawl, Inchworm, Crab Walk).
- ➡ When one team member reaches the far side, the next team member takes their turn.
- ➡ Continue until all team members have completed the movements.
- ➡ Stagger each team's starting times, to remove competitive component.

MORE ACTION: Play again allowing pupils to choose which movement they want to use to travel to the other side, or assign each group a specific move.



TOP TIP

It is often useful to group pupils together with a **mix of abilities**. This provides appropriate 'in group' models. However, we know that pupils typically feel more confident working with peers they have chosen themselves. A useful way to deliberately group your pupils while still providing them with choice, is to allow them to find their own partner, then **combine** self-assigned pairs, thus forming groups with a mix of abilities.

COOL DOWN - Bean Bonanza

Set-up: Instruct pupils to find space in the playing area.

Teacher calls out different types of beans to prompt the following actions:

- ➡ **Runner Beans:** Jog on the spot.
- ➡ **Jumping Beans:** Jump on the spot.
- ➡ **Broad Beans:** Make a wide shape.
- ➡ **Chilli Beans:** Pupils pretend they are cold and shake all over.
- ➡ **String Beans:** Make a tall thin shape.
- ➡ **Kidney Beans:** Make a kidney shape, stretching up with arms and bending gently to the side.
- ➡ **Beans on toast:** Stretch out on the floor with arms and legs wide.

STRETCH

at the end of the lesson
(see Cool Down stretches)

Assessment of / for learning



Questioning

Discuss what movements we can do to turn 360/180/90 degrees. Consider games (such as Ring a Rosie) and sports and physical activities where angles can be observed (gymnastics, snowboarding, ice skating, dancing etc.).



Self-assessment

Ask pupils to identify people in their lives that make them feel confident and more able to carry out a task without fear. Work together to list the things these people do to make us feel safe and confident. Use *Feelings Finder* to help pupils to indicate how confident they felt during Activity 2.



Self-assessment

Use the school camera (if school policies allow) to video pupils performing the movements from Activity 1. Play these videos for the specific pupils individually and ask them to highlight the parts of the crawl that they did well (flat body, tight arms etc.). Ask them to highlight one part of the skill they could improve.



Irish Heart Foundation

Learning Outcomes

Through this lesson, pupils should be enabled to...

HEAD



Identify where their abdominal and tricep muscles are.

HEART



Practise playing/interacting with different peers in PE and on the playground.

HANDS



Perform the 'parts' of a pencil roll (straight body, pointed feet, chin tucked).

WARM UP - Pleased to 'Meat' You

Set-up: Teacher asks pupils to spread out around the playing area.

- ➡ Pupils run around the playing area.
- ➡ Teacher calls out a food that is a fruit, vegetable or meat (e.g. "juicy apple" "mashed potato" "pork chop" etc.).
- ➡ Pupils find the nearest classmate to them and pair up to perform the movement for the food type named.

Fruit: Pairs make a high bridge with hands ("fruits often grow high on trees").

Vegetable: Pairs make a low bridge by sitting on the ground and placing the soles of their feet together ("vegetables often grow low to the ground").

Meat: Shake hands and say "Pleased, to meat you".

- ➡ When teacher gives the signal, pupils return to running around the area.
- ➡ Pupils find a new person to pair up with each time.



STRETCH

before moving to Activity 1
(see Warm Up stretches)

ACTIVITY 1 - Movement Challenge 2

Set-up: Ask pupils to assist with taking mats from storage and spreading them out around the playing area. Ask pupils to each stand on a mat, or pair pupils up to share mats.

- ➡ Teacher leads pupils in performing a series of movements, emphasising the movement names and components:
- ➡ If in pairs, pupils take turns to perform each movement on the mat.

- 1) Pencil Roll
- 2) Coffee Grinder
- 3) Tucked Rock

MODIFICATION: Adapt movements by focusing on individual elements of the movement (e.g. for a seated Pencil Roll, focus on the upper body; straighten the arms upwards and slowly rotate the arms, moving through the full range of motion of the shoulders. A pupil who uses a wheelchair could perform the Coffee Grinder by turning in a circle).



MORE ACTION: Begin by calling out several fruits providing pupils with an opportunity to practise finding a partner and making a high bridge. Then call out several vegetables, several fruits and several meats, before alternating between the three. To increase the challenge, call out a combination of foods, e.g. "Beef stew and carrots" for a combination of shaking hands and a low bridge. Task pupils with the responsibility of calling out foods for the group.

MORE ACTION: Movements can be incorporated into 'Here, There, Everywhere' (from Lesson 2), using a selection of the actions from Movement Challenge 1 and Movement Challenge 2 for the 'Everywhere' direction.



TOP TIP

Emphasise to pupils that "PE is a great place to partner up with classmates you don't always have a chance to play with". Stipulate that pupils cannot have the same partner twice in a row, or need to find a new partner each time (depending on size of class). **Positively reinforce** (privately) pupils who sought out different partners.



TOP TIP

Some skills in gymnastics can appear easy on paper but present as complex in action. When pupils find a movement quite challenging, focus in on the **skill in parts** and then later, progress to **whole skill** (e.g. for a pencil roll – making a straight shape with the body standing up, pointing the toes while sitting down). These **preliminary movements** allow the pupil to practise and gain confidence in parts of the skill, as they build up the skill and motivation to attempt a full roll.

SPHE

Strand:
Myself and Others

Strand Unit:
My Friends and
Other People



PE

Strand:
Gymnastics

Strand Unit:
Movement

Equipment for Lesson:

Hula hoops, Beanbags,
Cones, Mats, *Movement
Challenge 2* and *Muscles
of the Body* cards (from
resource pack)

Action for Life

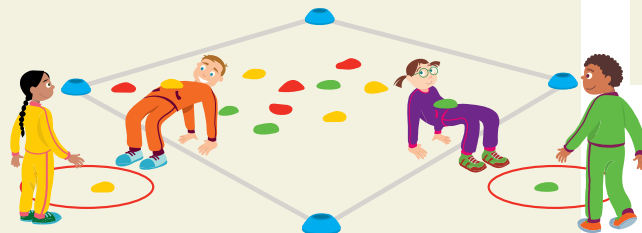
LESSON

6

ACTIVITY 2 - Hungry Crabs

Set-up: Ask pupils to help stack the mats from Activity 1. Divide pupils into groups of 3-4. Create squares using cones, with a hula hoop outside each edge. Scatter beanbags within each square and ask groups to stand beside a hoop. Tell pupils that beanbags are 'crab food'.

- ➔ Pupils travel by crab walking (or crawling, if preferred) inside the boundaries, to collect a beanbag, placing it on their stomach, returning it to the team's hula hoop.
- ➔ Once the beanbag enters the team's hoop, the next team member goes off in search of 'crab food'.
- ➔ Each team is trying to collect the most beanbags before they are all gone.



MODIFICATION: Place beanbags on a raised surface to allow a pupil who cannot reach the ground to retrieve the beanbag. Demonstrate variations of the crab (easier – low back arch, bum close to the floor; harder – straight back, bum high off the floor). The activity requires upper body strength which should be built up over a number of weeks rather than in one lesson. In the early stages, consider adapting the crab walk to a 'kangaroo jump' or a 'horse gallop', which are more focused on the lower body.

MORE ACTION: Challenge pupils to use a different method of travelling around playing area and carry beanbags on their head, arm, leg, etc.



TOP TIP

Use the *Muscles of the Body* card in the resource pack to make reference to the muscles being used in this activity. "*Straighten your back to feel your abdominal muscles working*", "*The more we use our triceps the stronger they get*". PE provides an excellent opportunity to build vocabulary and increase knowledge and understanding of how the body works.

COOL DOWN - Move and Balance

Set-up: Ask pupils to clear the equipment from previous activity and find space to stand in the playing area.

Teacher instructs pupils to travel (walk, jog, run, hop, side step, jump) at different speeds, levels and directions around the designated play area.

When teacher calls 'Freeze', pupils balance on nominated body parts (e.g. "*Balance on your feet and hands*", "*Balance on your knees and elbows*", "*Balance on one foot and with one arm above your head*").

STRETCH

at the end of the lesson
(see Cool Down stretches)

Assessment of / for learning



Questioning

Following Activity 2, discuss why the Crab Walk is harder than crawling. See the *Muscles of the Body* card in the resource pack to explore the muscles we use when walking like crabs.



Teacher-designed Task

Task pupils with playing/talking with someone in the playground from their own or a different class that they don't usually get to play/talk with. You could organise these groupings and an activity for them to play together in the classroom prior to break time, where necessary.



Self-assessment

Following the movements practiced in Activity 1, ask pupils to consider: *Where did I get stuck? What did I do? What helped me best? Who did I ask? What new thing did I learn?*

1	2	3	4	5
				

**TEACHING
NOTES**

Commando Crawl

- 1 Lie on your stomach with hips, knees and feet flat on the mat.
- 2 Crawl across the mat using your forearms and legs while keeping hips, knees and feet close to with the mat.



**TEACHING
NOTES**

Spider Crawl

- 1 Put hands and feet, but not knees, on the floor, keeping your hips high.
- 2 Walk forwards on your hands and feet, keeping your head up to look forward.
- 3 When you get really good at this, try it backwards.



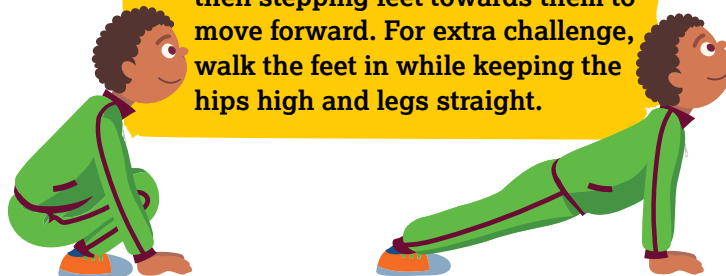
**TEACHING
NOTES**

Inchworm

- 1 Fully bend knees and put hands on the mat.
- 2 Keeping your feet on the floor, walk the hands forward until your legs and back are straight.
- 3 Then, without moving your arms, take short steps with the feet until you are in the start position again.
- 4 Continue to walk the arms forward, then stepping feet towards them to move forward. For extra challenge, walk the feet in while keeping the hips high and legs straight.

MODIFICATION:

Move on lower legs (like crawling on hands and knees) instead of feet.



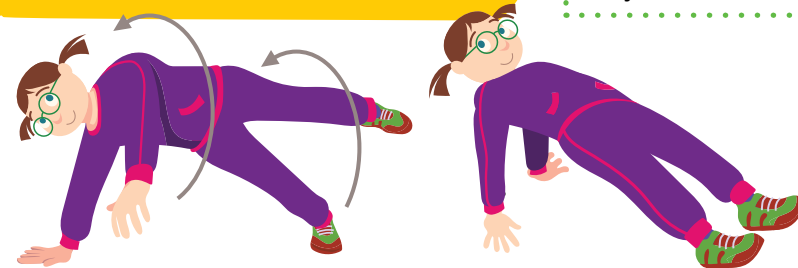
**TEACHING
NOTES**

Push Turn

- 1 Start in a plank position on the floor, with arms straight and hands flat on the mat.
- 2 Keeping one hand on the floor, swing the other arm up and over while turning the body, landing in a crab walk position.
- 3 Swing the other arm around to return to a plank position.

MODIFICATION:

Start on all fours instead of plank position and keep lower legs on mat while using upper body to turn.





COFFEE GRINDER

TEACHING NOTES

Coffee Grinder

- 1 Start in a side position, leaning on the side of your feet with one arm straight underneath you and hand flat on the mat.
- 2 Stretch the other hand up to the sky.
- 3 Walk slowly around to make a full circle. Then repeat with other hand.

MODIFICATION:

Bend elbow and lean on forearm instead of hand. Keep the other hand on the floor to help stabilise the body.



TEACHING NOTES

Pencil Roll

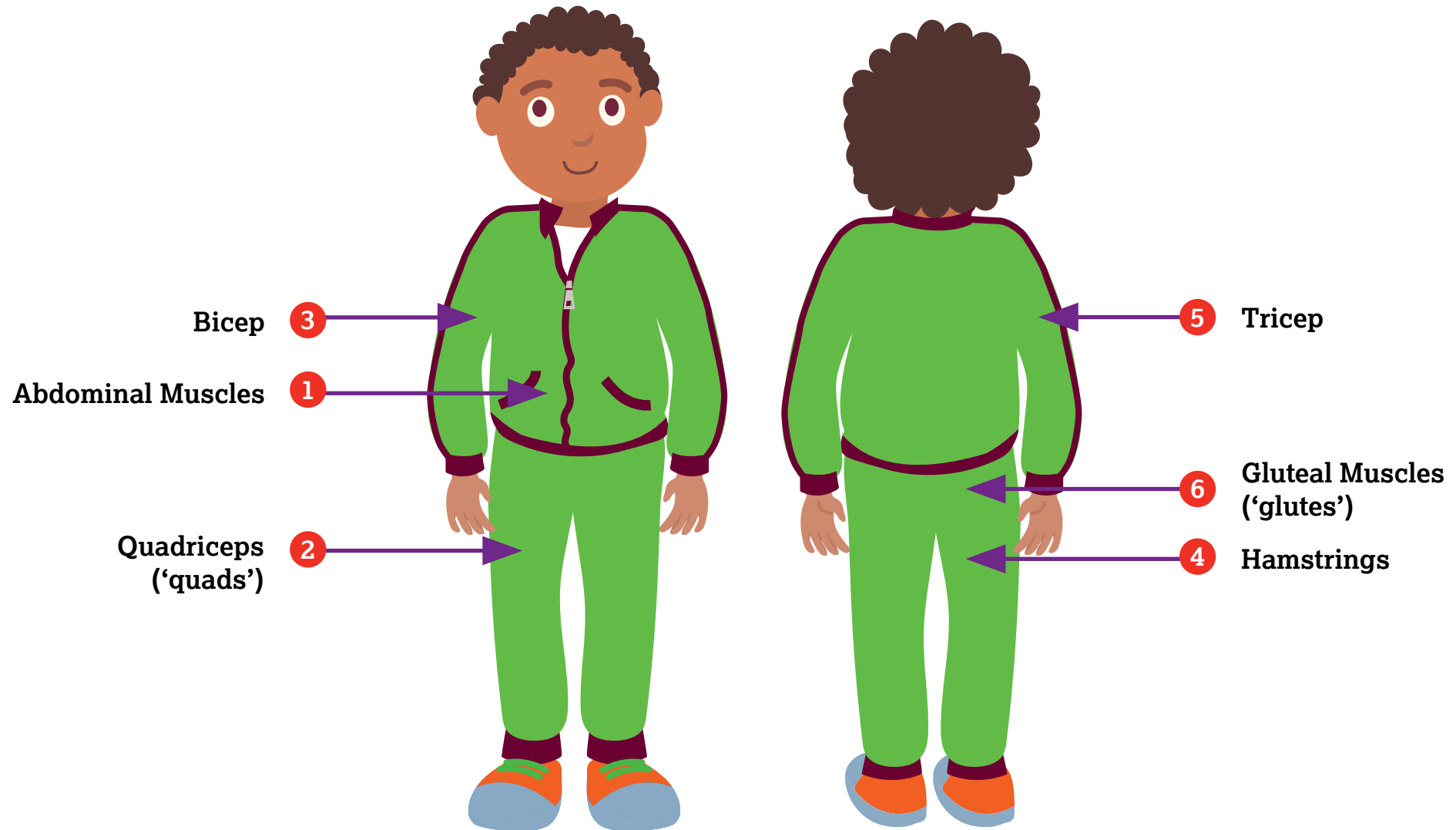
- 1 Lie flat on your stomach with arms reaching up and legs stretched out straight like a pencil.
- 2 Keeping your feet together and body long, tuck your chin down and roll to one side.
- 3 Keep rolling until you have turned the whole way around and are back on your stomach.



TEACHING NOTES

Tucked Rock

- 1 On your back, curl up into a ball holding your knees close to your chest.
- 2 Roll gently to one side, until the outside of the top of your arm touches the mat.
- 3 As soon as your upper arm touches the mat, rock back towards the centre and to the other side.
- 4 Repeat, rocking slowly and gently to each side.





For more information on the suite of supports
for schools and training programmes for CPD,
contact schools@irishheart.ie