



Beachblast Soft Skills Drills

The Beachblast Soft Skills Drills are a practical training toolkit designed to develop the behavioural and cognitive abilities that underpin performance in Coastal Rowing and Beach Sprint. Each exercise transforms a life skill—such as teamwork, communication, decision-making, quick adaptation, or stress management—into an active physical experience.

These drills are easy to apply on sand, in the gym, or near the boat area, using minimal equipment. They aim to reinforce trust, focus, and group cohesion while stimulating athletes to think, react, and cooperate dynamically under realistic conditions.

COMMUNICATION

1) Touch Your Hands, Go and Believe in Me

Overview:

This engaging partner activity focuses on enhancing nonverbal communication, trust, and physical coordination. Participants rely solely on tactile cues to navigate a path, emphasizing the power of silent collaboration.

2 players:

- Player A walks backward, facing away from the target.
- Player B, facing forward, guides using hand taps:
 - Both hands = move straight.
 - Right hand = turn right.
 - Left hand = turn left.

Goal: complete a 20m slalom, turn 180°, and return.

Focus: trust, nonverbal communication, body listening.

Setup:

- **Participants:** Work in pairs.
- **Positioning:**
 - **Participant A:** Faces away from the path, preparing to walk backward.
 - **Participant B:** Faces Participant A, observing the path ahead.
- **Hand Placement:** Participant A places their hands beneath those of Participant B, establishing a tactile connection.

Communication Protocol:

- **Both hands tapped simultaneously:** Participant A moves straight backward.
- **Right hand tapped:** Participant A turns or steps to the right.
- **Left hand tapped:** Participant A turns or steps to the left.

Objective:

- Navigate a 20-meter slalom course using only the established hand signals.
- Upon reaching the end, perform a 180° turn and retrace the path to return to the starting point.

Key Skills Developed:

- Nonverbal group communication
- Trust and collaboration without sight
- Physical awareness and coordination
- Leadership through touch and sensory listening



2) Touch Your Shoulders, Trust the Team

Overview:

A cooperative team activity focused on developing nonverbal communication, trust, coordination, and leadership through physical cues.

5 players in line: the first 4 are blindfolded.

The 5th, unblindfolded, taps on the shoulders to guide:

- Both shoulders = go straight.
 - One shoulder = turn that way.
- Goal: navigate a slalom, turn 180°, return to start.
Focus: trust, nonverbal leadership, coordination.

Setup:

- Form a group of **five participants**.
- The **first four** line up one behind the other, **facing the target**, and are **blindfolded**.
- The **fifth participant**, also facing forward and **not blindfolded**, stands at the back of the line and acts as the **team captain**.
- All participants place their hands lightly on the shoulders of the person in front.

Communication Protocol:

The captain communicates with the group **exclusively through tactile signals**:

- **Taps both shoulders simultaneously**: move **straight ahead**.
- **Taps only the right shoulder**: **turn right**.
- **Taps only the left shoulder**: **turn left**.

The signals are passed down naturally as each team member follows the tactile cue felt on their shoulders and replicates the motion.

Objectives:

- Navigate a **20-meter slalom course** while blindfolded, using only the captain's physical signals to guide the movement.
- Reach the end of the path, perform a **180° turn**, and return to the starting point while maintaining group alignment and coordination.

Key Skills Developed:

- Nonverbal group communication
- Trust and collaboration without sight
- Physical awareness and coordination
- Leadership through touch and sensory listening



TEAMWORK

3) Sync or Fall – Three-Person Race

Overview:

A high-energy team-building activity that tests coordination, mutual listening, and physical trust. Three people must move as a single unit: if they lose rhythm... they fall!

3 participants tied together at the ankles.

- Coordinated race: shared rhythm + communication.
- Goal: 20m slalom + 180° turn + return without falling.
- Focus: synchronization, trust, pressure management.

Setup:

- Form teams of **three participants**.
- Tie:
 - The **right ankle** of the first participant to the **left ankle** of the second participant.
 - The **right ankle** of the second participant to the **left ankle** of the third participant.
- All three stand **side by side, facing the goal**.

Communication Protocol:

- Before starting, the group defines a **common rhythm**.
- During the race, they use short verbal commands ("go!", "stop!", "jump!") or body language to stay synchronized.

Objectives:

- Cover a **20-meter slalom course**, perform a **180° turn**, and return to the starting point **without falling**.
- The team must maintain **balance, pace, and mutual trust** throughout the entire course.

Key Skills Developed:

- Advanced physical coordination
- Immediate and effective communication
- Trust and dynamic adaptation
- Group pressure management

4) Sync or Fall – Extreme Time Challenge (Ankles + Arms Tied + Obstacles & Commands)

2 team with 3 participants tied at ankles and wrists.

Navigate 20–25m obstacle course with jump, squat, forward, backward commands.

Timed race: mistakes = return to last checkpoint (+ optional 5 sec penalty).

Focus: synchronization, trust, reaction speed, time pressure.

Overview:

A high-energy and highly demanding team-building activity where three participants, tied together at ankles and wrists, must navigate an obstacle-filled linear course, perform sudden movement commands, and race against the clock.

Success requires full-body synchronization, trust, rapid communication, and fast reactions under pressure.



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Setup:

- Create teams of **three participants**.
- Tie:
 - The **right ankle** of the first participant to the **left ankle** of the second.
 - The **right ankle** of the second participant to the **left ankle** of the third.
 - The **right wrist** of the first participant to the **left wrist** of the second.
 - The **right wrist** of the second participant to the **left wrist** of the third.
- Set up a **linear course** of approx. **20–25 meters** including obstacles such as:
 - Small cones or hurdles to step over.
 - Lines to jump across.
 - Zones for squats or quick jumps.

Communication Protocol:

- Participants may use **short verbal cues** ("Jump!", "Squat!", "Back!", "Forward!") and rely heavily on **body synchronization**.
- Movements must be **small, controlled, and perfectly timed** to maintain balance and formation.

During the course:

- At specific points, the instructor will call out **commands** that must be executed instantly:
 - **Jump:** all three must jump together.
 - **Squat:** all three must squat together.
 - **Forward:** continue moving forward.
 - **Backward:** carefully step backward together.

Time Pressure:

- Each team is **timed** from start to finish.
- If a fall or mistake occurs, the team must **return to the last valid checkpoint** before continuing.
- **Optional:** Add **5 seconds** penalty for each mistake.

Objectives:

- Complete the obstacle-filled linear course **as fast as possible** while staying connected, executing commands correctly, and maintaining perfect synchronization.

Key Skills Developed:

- Full-body coordination and agility
- Fast, efficient communication under pressure
- Trust, adaptability, and teamwork
- Strategic movement and stress management



DECISION MAKING

5) Plank Duel – 1 vs 1 Static Volleyball Challenge

Overview:

A high-intensity 1 vs 1 challenge combining core strength, balance, and quick reactions. Two players, maintaining a **static plank**, must return the ball over a makeshift "net" (a stick supported by two cones). The field is clearly **delimited by small cones** ("cinesini"), and players are allowed **small adjustments** without losing their plank.

Static plank, **small torso/arm adjustments allowed**.

Net: stick supported by cones.

Field marked with cones (3x3m).

Point if opponent drops ball, falls, moves hands/feet, hits net, or plays out.

Game: 5 points or 2-minute rounds.

Setup:

- Two players face each other, **about 2–3 meters apart**.
- Both start in a **plank position** (either forearms or hands) with **feet and hands fixed**, allowed only **small body shifts** (shoulder, torso, slight arm adjustments) **without lifting or moving hands/feet**.
- A **stick** (e.g., broomstick) supported by **two cones** acts as the **net**.
- The **field boundaries** are marked with **small cones** (approx. **3x3 meters**).
- Use a **light ball** (foam ball or volleyball).

Communication Protocol:

- No talking needed during play: **only reactions and controlled movements**.

Rules of Play:

- Players can perform **small controlled shifts** of the upper body to reach the ball.
- Hands and feet **must stay in place**: no stepping, hopping, or crawling allowed.
- Players hit the ball over the net using controlled touches.
- **Point for opponent if:**
 - The ball falls,
 - The player touches/moves the net (stick),
 - The player falls, rises up, or moves hands/feet out of their spot,
 - The ball is played **out of the field boundaries** (cinesini).
- Play up to **5 points** or **2-minute rounds** (fast duels).

Objectives:

- Strengthen **core stability** and **balance** under pressure.
- Improve **reaction time** with limited mobility.
- Develop **precision, resilience, and strategic focus**.

6) Row and Flow – 2 vs 2 Decision Making Challenge

Overview:

A high-intensity training activity designed to enhance **fast and effective decision-making** under pressure. Two teams of 2 participants alternate between **fixed rowing machines** and **slide-mounted ergometers**, dealing with real-time transitions, rhythm changes, and tactical choices. Every mistake, hesitation, or poor communication directly impacts performance. This challenge pushes individuals and teams to make quick, coordinated decisions in a physically demanding context.



Row and Flow – 2 vs 2

4 ergometers (2 slide-mounted + 2 fixed)
2-player teams, 5 minutes × 3 sets

At each signal: switch machine + change stroke rate
Transition: pass under teammate's legs, decide who moves first
Focus: fast decision-making, adaptation, team coordination

Setup:

- **2 teams of 2 participants** each.
- 4 rowing machines total:
 - **2 slide-mounted ergometers**
 - **2 fixed ergometers**
- Each athlete starts on a different ergometer.
- The coach assigns a specific **stroke rate (SPM)** for each phase.

Communication & Decision Protocol:

- Each pair must **decide together** how to maintain the assigned pace.
- During machine switches, teammates must:
 - Choose **who moves first**,
 - **Pass under the legs** of their counterpart in a safe and smooth way,
 - Quickly resume rowing at the new assigned rhythm.
- At every signal, the **stroke rate changes**: athletes must adapt immediately, choosing how to adjust power, technique, and coordination.

Rules of Play:

- **Duration**: 5 minutes, repeated for **3 rounds**.
- Every 60–90 seconds, the coach gives a signal for:
 - **Machine switch**: players trade between slide and fixed ergometers.
 - **Rhythm change**: a new stroke rate must be followed.
- The transition involves **passing under the legs** of the opposite athlete.
- Penalties:
 - Lost rhythm or delay → **-5 meters**
 - Uncoordinated or slow switch → **-10 seconds**

Objectives:

- Develop the ability to make **quick, tactical decisions** under fatigue and pressure.
- Improve **technical adaptation** and real-time communication.
- Strengthen **trust and coordinated execution** during dynamic transitions.



QUICK ADAPTION

7) Chaos Drill – Instant Adaptation in Motion

Overview:

A high-energy group activity designed to train the soft skill of **Quick Adaptation**. Participants move freely within a space while responding instantly to new instructions, changing rules, or shifting objectives. The body stays active, but it's the mind that is constantly tested to respond with flexibility and control.

6–12 participants in a free space

Instruction changes every 30–45 sec

Actions vary: run, block, avoid, cooperate

Focus: instantly adapt to new rules without stopping

Setup:

- Open indoor or outdoor space (gym, court, or field).
- **6 to 12 participants.**
- The coach prepares a list of **dynamic instructions**, such as:
 - Walk – Run – Jump – Throw – Block – Chase – Evade
 - Individual, in pairs, or in small groups
 - With objects: light balls, cones, sticks, etc.

Communication Protocol:

- Participants follow **one instruction at a time**, valid until the next change.
- Every **30–45 seconds**, the coach shouts a **new rule** or switches the objective completely.
- Players must **adapt immediately**, without hesitation or confusion.

Rules of Play:

- Example flow:
 1. Run freely
 2. At the signal: block the person nearest to you
 3. At the next signal: now you become the target
 4. New instruction: work in pairs to pass objects.
- Each phase lasts **no longer than 1 minute**.
- The key is to **stay responsive**, follow changing instructions, and keep moving without freezing or falling behind.

Objectives:

- Train the ability to **adapt instantly to new rules or situations**.
- Stimulate **mental and physical flexibility**.
- Boost **mental agility and bodily control** in unpredictable contexts.

8) Follow the Sound, Trust the Signal – Advanced

Overview:

This team-building activity enhances **nonverbal auditory communication, active listening, trust, and group coordination**—with a strong focus on the soft skill of **Quick Adaptation**.

Participants must respond only to valid sound cues from a leader, while **ignoring misleading “trap sounds.”** The need to process and respond quickly to changing auditory instructions reinforces adaptability, focus, and reactivity under pressure.



5 participants (4 blindfolded in line + 1 sound leader)
Sound commands to guide movement and direction
Includes trap sounds that must be ignored
Immediate adaptation to changing cues required
Focus: active listening, trust, quick adaptation, sound-based leadership

Setup:

- Form a group of **five participants**.
- The **first four** stand in line, one behind the other, **facing the target**, and are **blindfolded**.
- The **fifth participant**, standing at the back and **not blindfolded**, acts as the **sound leader**.
- All blindfolded participants place their **hands lightly on the shoulders** of the person in front to stay aligned.

Communication Protocol:

The leader uses **only sound signals** to guide the team:

- **1 whistle** or **“Go!”** → Move **straight ahead**
- **2 claps** → Turn **right**
- **1 clap** → Turn **left**
- **“Stop!”** (or other keyword) → **Freeze immediately**

Trap Sounds:

- The leader may insert **fake or misleading cues**, such as:
 - Multiple whistles
 - Rhythmic claps
 - Made-up words
- If anyone reacts to a trap sound, the **entire team must return** to the last checkpoint.

Objectives:

- Navigate a **20-meter slalom course**, perform a **180° turn**, and return to the starting point
- Follow **only the correct signals**
- Adapt quickly to unexpected or changing instructions



STRESS MANAGEMENT

9) Breathe & Perform – Stress Control Under Effort

Overview:

A dual-phase exercise designed to develop **stress management** through the transition from **maximum physical effort** to **low-intensity movement with high mental demand**. Participants learn to **regain focus, control their breath**, and maintain mental clarity after exertion. The goal is to manage both **physiological and cognitive stress** under pressure.

4–8 participants

1' intense rowing + low-intensity physical task + mental challenge

3–5 rounds with different activities

Focus: stress control, recovery focus, composure under pressure

Setup:

- Participants: **2 to 4**, individual or in pairs
- Equipment:
 - Rowing machines (1 per participant or rotate in turns)
 - Cones, hoops, and small training props
 - Basket and balls
 - Pre-set mental tasks: color/number sequences, reverse patterns, targeting tasks
- Organize the workout space into:
 - 0. **Rowing zone** (for intense 1-minute rows at 30–34 strokes/min)
 - 1. **Cognitive-motor stations** (for task execution post-effort)

Communication Protocol:

- Brief participants on the transition process: from rowing to mental-motor tasks.
- Tasks are explained before starting each round.
- Participants must maintain **calm focus** and execute each task without rushing.
- Minimal talking is allowed during execution to simulate real stress exposure.

Exercise Flow:

1. 1 minute of **high-intensity rowing** (max effort: 30–34 SPM).
2. Immediate transition to a **low-intensity physical task** combined with a **mental challenge**, such as:
 - Tapping cones in a memorized sequence (e.g., red–green–blue)
 - Performing a movement sequence **in reverse**
 - Throwing 5 balls into a basket **with control**
3. Repeat for **3–5 rounds**, with a **new task each round**.

Objectives:

- Practice **stress recovery** after physical effort
- Improve **cognitive performance** under fatigue
- Develop **self-regulation and emotional control**
- Reinforce focus, calm action, and breathing control in dynamic situations

10) Stress Flag – Advanced Team Challenge for Stress Management

Overview:

A high-energy, team-based version of the classic *Capture the Flag* game, redesigned to build **stress tolerance, emotional regulation, and team coordination**. Players must respond quickly



and calmly to **changing rules—even mid-action**—and maintain focus and cooperation under pressure.

Setup:

- **2 teams of 5–6 players**
- A marked-off field (ideal on sand)
- A “flag” placed at the center (ball, towel, cone...)
- Each player is assigned a **unique number**

Communication Protocol (Variable Rules):

The facilitator calls **1, 2, or 3 numbers** at random. Depending on the number of players called, different movement rules apply. **Rules may change even during the run** (mid-sprint), forcing teams to adapt instantly.

- **If 1 number is called:**
 - Classic rule: each player (1 per team) runs to grab the flag
- **If 2 numbers are called:**
 - The two teammates must run piggyback (one on the back of the other)
 - The configuration must be formed before starting
- **If 3 numbers are called:**
 - Two players form a seated “pope’s chair” with their arms (interlocking forearms to make a human seat)
 - The third teammate sits on the “chair”
 - They must carry the seated player to the flag without dropping them
 - If they fall: no points

Mid-run rule change:

- The facilitator can **call an additional number** mid-sprint (e.g., goes from 1 to 3)
- The team must **immediately stop**, form the new configuration (e.g., pope’s chair), then continue
- Adaptation and calm coordination are crucial

Rules of Play:

- Run only when your number is called
- Use the correct configuration for each call
- Mistakes = penalty or no points:
 - Early start
 - Wrong or incomplete configuration
 - Fall from “pope’s chair”
 - Failure to stop and adapt when a rule changes

Objectives:

- Build **emotional control and decision-making** under pressure
- Encourage **adaptability to real-time changes**
- Foster **team coordination and trust**
- Strengthen **stress recovery during unexpected interruptions**