



## **Disc Golf School Curriculum**

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### **Preface**

Disc golf is a perfect activity for students of all ages from K-12. Disc golf encourages students to be active by performing an athletic throwing motion paired with walking from shot to shot. When paired with grade-level appropriate terminology and understanding of etiquette, disc golf allows students to meet each of SHAPE America's National Standards & Grade-Level Outcomes for K-12 Physical Education. All students can enjoy disc golf!

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### **Supplies Needed for Lessons:**

25 putters (can be adjusted for class size)

25 midranges

25 drivers

Cones

3 baskets (more or less based on supply)

Hula hoops (Lesson 5 only)



## **Lesson 1: Disc Golf Introduction**

### **SHAPE America's National Standards: Standard 1**

**Preparation:** Set up three baskets in clear view of all students. Gather a few sets of one putter, one midrange, and one driver to pass around for examples. Place a couple of pieces of tape to imitate corners of a tee box facing the basket. Place one putter on a cone for each student.

**Warmup:** Relay race (4 minutes). Split students into 3 lines facing each of the baskets. The first student in line will take a putter, sprint to the basket, drop it in, and run back. Once they've crossed the line, the next student in line will retrieve the putter from the basket and return it to their line. The third student in line takes the putter and puts it into the basket, sprints back, and so on. Winning isn't important - this will just get the students blood flowing a bit.

**Water/Stretch:** (5 minutes) Stretches included in *Lesson 1 video*.

**Intro:** Disc golf is simple to learn and difficult to master. Just like golf, the goal of disc golf is to complete the hole in the fewest throws possible. Disc golf begins by throwing from a tee pad or tee area and is completed when the disc comes to rest in the basket or chains.

**What parts make up the basket?** (2 minutes) The top of the basket is called "the band", the chains are just that - "the chains", and the bottom portion that catches the disc is called "the cage" or "the basket." The baskets we're using have a "base", but permanent baskets won't. Quiz the students briefly on the parts of the basket. *Consult Lesson 1 video*.

**Types of Discs:** (8 minutes) There are 3 main types of discs in disc golf - putters, midranges, and drivers. (Have each student pick up the putter in front of them again.) **Putters** are the discs that will probably feel the most familiar to students, as they're shaped somewhat similarly to the frisbees they've thrown before. Putters have more rounded edges, and they're a little bit deeper than other discs. Putters are used to throw shorter distances and to putt your disc into the basket to complete the hole. They spin a little bit more slowly than midranges and drivers, so they can't travel quite as far, but they are more forgiving - if you miss your line with a putter, it won't travel as far away from the target as a midrange or driver will. **(Educator: pick up a driver and pass it around)** **Drivers:** Ask students, "What are the differences between a driver and putter?" You'll notice that drivers have sharper edges to cut through the air, they have a thinner profile, and they have wider inside rims. Drivers have the potential to go farther than putters and midranges - the World Record for distance is just over 1100 feet! (Almost 4 football fields long!) However, drivers can also go a long way the wrong way, so there is some risk when



choosing a driver to throw. **(Educator: pick up a midrange and pass it around)** **Midranges** kind of fall between a putter and a driver - they have a slightly rounded edge, they are a little deeper than a driver but shallower than a putter, and they have a wider rim than a putter, but not quite as wide of a rim as a driver. They are great for medium distances with good control!  
*Consult Lesson 1 video.*

**Short Putts:** To finish the lesson, have the students line up in three lines facing the three baskets. The front of the lines should be 8-10 feet from the basket. Technique isn't important, On the count of "3, 2, 1, putt", the students in the front of the 3 lines putt toward the basket at the same time. Once all 3 students have putted, have them hustle to retrieve their disc and head to the back of their line. Repeat until all students have putted a few times or as time allows. Give individualized feedback to students as they putt when applicable.

## **Lesson 2: Putting**



**SHAPE America's National Standards:** Standard 1, Standard 2

**Preparation:** Set 3 baskets up 8-10 feet from one another side-by-side with 4 cones forming almost a semi-circle facing each basket, and set a one putter on a cone for each child so that they can see the baskets and educator.

**Warmup:** 4-5 minute active team game of your choice.

**Water/Stretch:** 4-5 minutes

**Intro:** The goal of disc golf is to get your disc into the basket in as few throws as possible, so it's very important to learn how to disc the disc close to and into the basket. Just like in golf, getting the disc into the basket is called "putting". The better you are at putting, the lower your scores will be, and the more fun you'll have!

**How to teach:** Ensure that each child can see you, and give these instructions for grip: "I want you to hold your dominant hand up in the air - the hand you write with, the hand you throw with, etc. Now, turn that hand so that your palm is pointing to the sky. Take your putter, and put it in your hand so that the top side (the side with the writing and stamp) is facing your thumb. Let your fingers gently close around the disc so that they aren't really tight on the inside of the rim, but they aren't too spread out." *Consult Lesson 2 video.*

**Putting styles:** Straight-forward, straddle, and turbo

Straight-forward - Students should place their dominant foot in front of them pointed at the basket (same foot as the hand holding the putter). Their feet should be shoulder-width apart with their back foot also pointed toward the basket, knees slightly bent. (Think triple-threat position in basketball or a standing starting line pose for a race.) When putting, it's less of a throw and more of a push toward the basket. Try to have students keep the disc mostly in front of their body instead of to the side like a throw. Students will shift their weight backwards, bending their knees a bit more, then shift their weight forward, extending their arm toward the basket and allowing their wrist to snap the disc toward the basket. The disc doesn't need to have a great amount of spin to reach the basket, but it's perfectly fine if it does. *Consult Lesson 2 video.*



**Application:** Have students line up behind the cones facing each basket. 4 students will putt at each basket at once. Allow students to putt for 3 minutes while you supervise. (less if time is an issue).

**Straddle** - Say to students: “Sometimes, your disc lands behind a tree, and you can’t putt using the straight-forward putt without hitting the tree with your putter or your hand. When that happens, you can choose to use a straddle putt.” Demonstrate a straddle putt by setting your feet wider than shoulder-width apart with both feet facing the basket and your whole body squared up to the basket. The arm motion is similar to a straight-forward putt - in front of your body and more of a push and wrist release than a sideways throw. However, since your feet are next to each other instead of staggered, the weight shift is more down to up through bending your knees. *Consult Lesson 2 video.*

**Application:** Same as for the straight-forward putt.

**Turbo** - The turbo putt is rarely used, but it’s good to know in case you need it. If a player gets caught behind a bush or something like it from which they can’t use a straight-forward putt or a straddle putt, using a turbo putt can help. It’s also a fun putt for students to try! To grip the disc for a turbo putt, put your thumb on the bottom middle portion of the disc on the little ridge in the middle. The disc should balance on your thumb without any other fingers if this is done correctly. Once the thumb is in the correct place, bring the rest of the fingers around the edge of the rim. To throw a turbo putt, rotate your hand around the outside of the disc toward the basket to create spin. *Consult Lesson 2 video.*

**Application:** Same as for the straight-forward putt.

**Putting Practice:** Follow the same process as the applications above, but students may putt with any style they prefer.

If time allows, practice putting in the student’s preferred style until class ends.

### **Lesson 3: Backhand Throws with Putters**



**SHAPE America's National Standards:** Standard 1, Standard 2, Standard 4

**Preparation:** Set baskets up in a triangle with two baskets 40 feet away from a baseline and one basket 60 feet away (can be adjusted for your limitations), and set a one putter on a cone for each child so that they can see the baskets and educator.

**Intro:** Last time, we talked about putting and getting the disc into the basket. This time, let's talk about how we get the disc to the basket - throwing. There are two main throwing forms, and today, we're going to talk about the most widely used form: backhand.

**Warmup:** Relay race from Lesson 1 or a 4-5 minute warmup of educator's choosing.

**Water/Stretch:** 4-5 minutes

**How to teach:** Each child should grab a putter. Go through the same steps for grip as you did during the putting lesson. Once students have their putter grip on the disc, they should bring their fingers a little bit closer to the rim and grip the disc a little bit tighter. Instead of keeping their toes pointed toward the basket, students will turn their bodies perpendicular to their target so that their shoulders are pointed in the direction of the basket.

**Flat shots:** From this position, the goal is to learn how to throw a flat shot. Students should pull back straight, bring the disc flat across their chest around sternum-height, and follow through flat. A good visual for keeping the disc flat is to have the students envision holding a tray of glasses of water. The students' goal is "not to spill those drinks" from reaching back to pulling across the chest to follow-through. Disc golf discs when thrown right hand backhand naturally tend to finish to the left, so don't be surprised when they do. Encourage students to allow their body to naturally follow through instead of stopping their arm abruptly when they let go of the disc. *Consult Lesson 3 video.*

The throwing form can be taught in three simple steps to remember:

1. Set yourself
2. Draw back
3. Follow through



Once the educator has taught backhand form in a bit more depth (5-10 minutes), educators can remind students how to throw and what to think about by reminding them to “set yourself, draw back, and follow through.”

*Application: Split students into 2 groups, and have students throw one-by-one while other students watch. Provide feedback on their throws (more follow through, flatter release, etc.) Once group 1 has thrown, group 2 will move forward and throw with feedback.*

**Hyzers:** When a disc is thrown, it generally curves in the opposite direction from its spin. Consult Lesson 3 video. So when right-handed players throw a backhand throw, the disc will naturally want to finish to the left. That sort of shot is called a “hyzer”. When the left edge of the disc is angled toward the ground and the player leans their torso forward while throwing, the disc will travel up and to the right before moving down and to the left. This is a natural throw to understand and execute for most players.

*Application: Have students line up in 3 lines facing the basket. On the count of “3, 2, 1, throw”, the students in the front of the 3 lines throw **hyzers** toward the baskets at the same time - about 40 feet away. Once all 3 students have thrown, have them hustle to retrieve their disc and head to the back of their line. Repeat until all students have thrown twice.*

**Anhyzers:** An “anhyzer” (derived from “anti-hyzer”) throw occurs when the thrower leans their torso back, angles the right edge of the disc toward the ground, and throws a disc that moves to the right and finishes to the right. This is a bit more difficult to execute, as discs naturally want to move to the left. (If you envision a tabletop that you’re throwing over, flat shots will be flat on reach back, throw point, and follow through. To throw a hyzer, envision that the tabletop is leaning away from you - you’ll have to lean forward, reach back lower, and follow through higher. To throw anhyzers, envision that the tabletop is leaning toward you, so you’ll have to reach back a little bit higher and follow through toward the ground.) It doesn’t feel natural at first, but it will come with practice. Consult Lesson 3 video.

*Application: Have students line up in 3 lines facing the basket. On the count of “3, 2, 1, throw”, the students in the front of the 3 lines throw **anhyzers** toward the baskets at the same time - about 40 feet away. Once all 3 students have thrown, have them hustle to retrieve their disc and head to the back of their line. Repeat until all students have thrown twice.*





**Etiquette/Rules:** First thing to do - instruct students to pick up their putter and tap it lightly against the side of their heads. Say, "These seem just like regular frisbees, but they can really hurt if they hit you. One of the most important rules in disc golf is that you don't throw if someone else is in front of you. The easiest way to do this is that when you're playing disc golf, the person whose disc is farthest from the basket throws first, and all other players stand behind that player."

**Other rules to know:** When teeing off or throwing, the player's foot must stay behind the cone (or their lie - the front line of a tee box or tee area.) Once the disc is released, the player can follow through past the front of the tee box if necessary. (Demonstrate as seen in the video.) When a player arrives at their disc in the fairway, their foot must be behind their disc (or mini marker) in line with the basket (*Consult Lesson 3 video*) when their disc is released. Again, they can follow through past the disc after they've thrown if necessary. The only place they can't follow through the disc after throwing is when putting inside 10 meters (32'10") from the basket. That 10 meter distance around the basket forms what is called "the circle", so you can't follow through past your lie inside the circle.

There are many more rules, but these are the most important and easiest to learn/demonstrate.

**Ring of Fire:** Have the students make a circle around the basket. Each student should be 25-30 feet away from the basket for safety. The teacher will count out "3, 2, 1, fire!" and students putt at the basket on fire - everyone at the same time. Only the students that make it will retrieve their putters; all other students will remain still. The students that made their first putt will putt again on a count of "3, 2, 1, fire!" until only one student has made it. If all students miss, everyone is back in! Ring of Fire is a fun game that gets all students involved and finishes quickly, so teachers can lead students in the game as many or as few times as needed. (Only for students 3rd grade and older)

#### **Lesson 4: Backhand Throws with Putters, Midranges, and Drivers**



**SHAPE America's National Standards:** Standard 1, Standard 2

**Preparation:** Set baskets up in a triangle with two baskets 60 feet away from a baseline and one basket 100 feet away (can be adjusted for your limitations), and set a one putter, one midrange, and one driver on a cone for each child so that they can see the baskets and educator. This is best taught outdoors.

**Warmup:** 4-5 minute game of your choice

**Water/Stretch:** 4-5 minutes

**How to Teach:** Educator to remind students of the 3 steps from the previous session: Set Yourself, Draw Back, and Follow Through. Educator to demonstrate perpendicular lineup, reach back with a flat disc and straight across the chest, and simulate a full follow through or actually throw the disc - educator's choice.

**Application:** Educators will lead the students in a throwing game from 3 lines. Students at the front of each line will throw a putter toward the baskets on the count of "3, 2, 1, Throw!" Once the three students have thrown, instruct them to hustle, retrieve their disc, and return to the back of the line. (If it works for your class, you can set the baskets up in a line at the same distance from all students or set them up at different distances.) Once each student has thrown from the front of the line 3 times, gather students behind the lines to discuss throwing with midranges and drivers. *Consult Lesson 4 video.*

**Midrange Throws:** If your class has midranges, guide the students through the same throwing drill, but with midranges instead of putters this time. Instruct the students to tighten their grip on the disc just slightly, but not to grip them too hard. Repeat the 3-line throwing drill until all students have thrown 3 times.

**Driver Throws:** If your class has drivers, guide the students through the same throwing drill, but with drivers instead of midranges this time. Instruct the students to tighten their grip on the disc just slightly, but not to grip them too hard. Repeat the 3-line throwing drill until all students have thrown 3 times. (Important: Remind students not to run in front of one another until all students have thrown; drivers' sharper edges hurt even more than putters if they hit you!)

### **Lesson 5: Forehand Throws**



**SHAPE America's National Standards:** Standard 1, Standard 2

**Preparation:** Educator sets cones out evenly in three groups and sets discs out on the cones ahead of time. Educator sets hula hoops out 40-60 feet from students and sets baskets off to the side.

**Warmup:** Line Tag (6-8 minutes)

Students must run on the gym lines, staying on the lines for 90-second intervals. Give two students (taggers) each a 29cm size ball and instruct that they cannot throw the ball. If the tagger tags a student, they walk to the middle of the gym, do 15 jumping jacks, and get back in.

**Water/Stretch:** 4-5 minutes

**Forehand Practice:** Ask the students to stand behind their respective cones, grab their disc, and form a circle around the educator. Once all the students are around the educator, they will demonstrate how to find the forehand grip and show the correct grip to the group. *Consult Lesson 5 video.* Mention using the wrist for power and demonstrate. Once each student has found the grip a few times successfully, send them back to their cones to get ready to practice from 3 lines. Standstill is the easiest way for the students to practice, and some may need to be reminded to work only on forehands or to only use a standstill stance. You do not need baskets for the first 20 minutes of this lesson - you can use hula hoops laid out on the ground to throw to. Throwing to these helps the students with confidence and control when learning this new skill.

Educator should try to walk the line individually and give specific feedback to the students about grip - wrist action is the major key that the students struggle to involve in their shot. Once the students have thrown several times, put the baskets out just behind the hoops. Making it in the basket is worth 3 points, and coming to rest in the hoop is worth 1 point.

**Cool Down:** (5 minutes)

Allow the students to putt on the baskets that are already out there. Quickly move the cones so there are 3 facing each target at 14 feet. Allow the students practice on repeat for the remaining time.

### **Lesson 6: Forehand Repetition and Practice**



**SHAPE America's National Standards:** Standard 1, Standard 2

**Preparation:** Educator sets cones out evenly in three groups and sets discs out on the cones ahead of time. Set baskets up at different distances - 50/70/100 feet or as space permits.

**Warmup:** Line Tag from Lesson 5 or another group game for 4-5 minutes.

**Water/Stretch:** 4-5 minutes

**Forehand Practice:**

Educator to remind the students of the proper grip (*Refer back to Lesson 5 video if necessary*). Mention using the wrist for power and demonstration. Focus on good wrist action and following through with good rotation with their hips to their target. *Consult Lesson 6 video.*

Set students in 3 lines to practice throwing as they have in previous lessons. Ensure you are working individually with as many students as possible as you walk through and give feedback. The important focus is that their hips follow through to the target with a smooth release. The goal of this portion is simply repetition and increasing students' confidence on a different shot.

**Student's Choice of Shot:**

Students are allowed to choose which shot - backhand or forehand - to throw and allowed to choose which basket at which they want to throw.

Educators shouldn't need to give much feedback during this time. This is a good time for trial and error for the students, and they usually eat it up. Be sure to encourage the students when they throw good shots, and give them their moment when they throw it in!

**Lesson 7: Practice Day**

**SHAPE America's National Standards:** Standard 1, Standard 2, Standard 3, Standard 4



**Preparation:** Educator lays drivers out in two groups and sets baskets out 60 feet away from the students.

**Warmup:** (10 Minutes) Free Putting: Free putting is an activity that is common before casual and competitive rounds. Students will putt their putters on the target, look around to make sure no one else is currently putting, grab the putters they just putted, and find a new spot to putt from (without getting hit or hitting anyone). When students are doing it for the first time, it will have to be overseen.

Each student gets a putter. Using all the targets you have, the students will free putt for 8-10 minutes for warmup, working specifically on focusing, consistent release, and follow through to shaking hands position (hand open at the center of the basket as if shaking hands with it). *Consult Lesson 7 video.*

**Water/Stretch:** 4-5 minutes

### **Field Work**

Being outside is best for this portion of the unit. Educator should work with half the group at a time. Separate the students into two groups: Group 1 in the front, group 2 in the back observing. Group 1 will throw using the shot of their choice (forehand or backhand), then group 2 will step forward and do the same. Once everyone has thrown, educator asks students to pick the discs up quickly. Educator can replicate this for 10-15 minutes while walking through and giving individual feedback. Try to give feedback to at least 80% of the students during this time.

For the remaining time for lesson 7, have the students practice playing simulated holes like they would in a disc golf round. (Educator should review courtesy rules, specifically staying behind the person who is farthest away.) Designate the tee pads with cones at this time. Hole distances can vary based on the skill level of the class - 50-80 feet is probably a good starting point. Walking between disc golf holes and from shot to shot is a great physical activity - most disc golfers take 5,000-10,000 steps while completing a round of disc golf!

### **Cool Down:** 2 Minutes

Educator should reiterate important courtesy rules and how to be safe when playing a mini round for score - marking your lie, the steps to successful shots, order of play, etc.

### **Lesson 8: Application - Play Disc Golf!**



**SHAPE America's National Standards:** Standard 1, Standard 2, Standard 3, Standard 4, and Standard 5

**Preparation:** Educator should set up 3 different disc golf holes using cones, spray paint, or another indicator for tee pads/boxes. Holes can range from 80-150 feet if space permits.

**Warmup:** (6 Minutes) Free putting.

**Water/Stretch:** 4-5 minutes

### **Playing a Round of Disc Golf**

After separating the students into 3 groups, educators will set them up at their tee pads. *Consult Lesson 8 video.* The students will throw from their respective tees one by one and play out the hole. They will do this for all 3 holes, rotating as they go. Educator should drive home the importance of courtesy rules and how important it is to build up your cardmates by encouraging their shots. Disc golf gives players from all backgrounds the opportunity to interact during the round, and everyone is typically walking over 2 miles to complete the round!

### **Cool Down:** 4 Minutes

Educator asks the students to help bring in the baskets, cones, and search for discs that may have been misplaced throughout the day. The playing of the holes takes the entire class period.