

# Top 20 Team Building Exercises and Activities to Try with Your Team

## Introduction

With the push for teams to [increase collaboration and boost productivity](#), effective teamwork is more important than ever. But it won't just happen overnight. It takes time and effort to get to know team members, build trust, and learn one another's strengths and weaknesses, to determine how to best work together.

This is where team-building exercises and activities can help. But, finding the right activity for your team based on size, the amount of time to complete, and the level of effort to organize, can be tricky.

To help you save time researching, we've identified the top twenty team building activities based on searches from our [Team Building Finder Tool](#). We learned that many of you are looking for activities that: focus on improving teamwork, communication, values, and bonding; take around 15-30 minutes, and are for teams of around 10 members (and, up to 50).

Try one or all of these activities during your next team building event. And, as your teams evolve, keep this resource on hand for team building events down the road.

# 1. Human Bingo

Give each player a Human Bingo card and a pencil. The card is a grid of 25 descriptive statements, such as: “Knows someone who is famous,” “Has lived in five or more states/countries,” and “Can hold a conversation in another language.” Players must fill in the grid with names of people matching each description by asking questions of other players — they may not put down their own names. Answers must be elicited through questions and follow-up questions, rather than volunteered. In each exchange, you can only match one statement successfully, but players may continue asking questions until they find an appropriate matching statement for that person. Once a matching statement is found, players must move on and may not revisit each other for three minutes.

“Getting to know one another is one of the most challenging parts of joining a newly formed team,” says Ed Tilley of Adventure Associates. “Not only are you unfamiliar with your fellow team members, but you don’t share a common language for communicating with one another. Human Bingo provides a fun way for co-workers to get to know one another on a deeper level.”



## OBJECTIVE

Bonding, teamwork, icebreaker, just for fun



## GROUP SIZE

Small or medium groups



## TIME

30 minutes



## MATERIALS NEEDED

Pens, paper



## NOTES

Minimal setup, inexpensive



## CONTRIBUTED BY

Ed Tilley, Adventure Associates

## 2. Wad Ball

Crumple the brown bag into a ball and wrap tape around it so it keeps its shape. The ball is lumpy and irregular, which makes it move and behave in unpredictable ways, and also makes it seem less like a “sport” with a ball. One player hits the ball with an open palm and says the first letter of the alphabet, “A.” The next person hits the ball, keeping it in motion and saying, “B.” Repeat this action - each successive player who hits the ball says the next letter of the alphabet. The only rules are that the same person cannot hit the ball two times in a row, and, if the ball hits the ground, you start over again at “A.” The object of the game is to get all the way to “Z.”

Myles Nye of Wise Guy Events says the best approach is to give as little guidance to participants as possible. “The team will discuss and try various tactics and adjustments. As long as they follow the rules, they can try anything they want to get to Z. This exercise is a great metaphor for how a group of people can sometimes ‘let the ball drop.’ This game is not suitable for rooms with very low ceilings or expensive Ming vases strewn about.”

## 3. Blindfold Rope Square

Find a safe, empty area, blindfold all participants, and have them spin around a few times. Place the rope across the length of the floor, and instruct the team to work together to turn it into a perfect square.

This short exercise helps small groups learn how to communicate without visual cues or being able to monitor progress. It focuses on problem-solving skills and the ability to work together as a team.



### OBJECTIVE

Icebreaker, teamwork



### GROUP SIZE

Any



### TIME

30 minutes



### MATERIALS NEEDED

One brown bag, one roll of packing tape



### NOTES

Minimal setup, fast, wow factor, outdoors



### CONTRIBUTED BY

Myles Nye,  
Wise Guys Events



### OBJECTIVE

Communication, problem-solving



### GROUP SIZE

Small group



### TIME

30 minutes



### MATERIALS NEEDED

Blindfolds, rope




### NOTES


Fast, minimal setup, inexpensive


## 4. Picture Pieces


In preparation for this exercise, a facilitator chooses a well-known, detailed image and cuts it into as many equal-sized squares as there are participants. At the start of the exercise, each participant is given a puzzle piece and asked to reproduce it - only five times larger. Do not tell participants that their piece is part of a larger whole. The facilitator then asks the group to convene and use the magnified reproductions to assemble a composite image five times larger than the original.


This problem-solving exercise teaches participants to work in a team and demonstrates “departmental” working: the concept that each individual contributes to a larger team effort, even though their contribution may not always be apparent. The exercise works best when it involves participants from multiple organizational departments who perform a variety of roles.

 **OBJECTIVE**  
Teamwork, problem-solving

 **GROUP SIZE**  
Small or medium

 **TIME**  
30 minutes


 **MATERIALS NEEDED**  
Image, pens, paper

 **NOTES**  
Inexpensive, Minimal setup, fast


## 5. Coat of Arms

Have teams draw a coat of arms for your company. In one section of a crest, they should draw something that represents a recent achievement. In the second space, put something that symbolizes company values. In the third space, they should sketch something that represents what they see as the future direction of the organization. Post the finished coat of arms posters in your office.


This activity allows for creativity while also strengthening employees’ abilities to work as a team. Most importantly, it reinforces a united front with the employees going forward.

 **OBJECTIVE**  
Values, communication

 **GROUP SIZE**  
Any

 **TIME**  
30 minutes

 **MATERIALS NEEDED**  
Pens, markers, paper, posterboard

 **NOTES**  
Minimal setup, fast, inexpensive

## 6. Tallest Tower

The facilitator divides the group into teams. The game is divided into three rounds, with a debrief between each round.

**Round One: All team members work individually to build the tallest Lego tower. For this first round, the team members are not allowed to communicate. They have three minutes to complete the task. After the three minutes, debrief with the team and ask the following questions:**

- ✓ What was it like building the tower without being able to communicate?
- ✓ What was it like building the tower while working solo?
- ✓ If you could do it over, what would you do differently?

**Round Two: Divide participants into several group teams with the same task – to build the tallest tower using the Legos. The group members can communicate in any form or fashion. The team members have three minutes to complete the task. After the three minutes, debrief with the team and ask the following questions:**

- ✓ What was it like building the tower while being able to communicate freely?
- ✓ What was it like building the tower while working on a team?
- ✓ Did anyone step up to be the leader of the larger team? If so, how did it work out for everyone else or the overall team?
- ✓ If you could do it over, what would you do differently?

**Round Three: All team members come together as one large team with the same task – to build the tallest tower using the Legos. The large team can communicate in any form or fashion. The team members have three minutes to complete the task. After the three minutes, debrief with the team and ask the following questions:**

- ✓ What was it like building the tower while being able to communicate freely?
- ✓ What was it like building the tower while working on a larger team?
- ✓ Did anyone step up to be the leader of the larger team? If so, how did it work out for everyone else or the overall team?
- ✓ If you could do it over, what would you do differently?

This exercise enhances teamwork and communication skills among new and/or existing teams of colleagues. Participants learn to communicate effectively (whether verbally or not), delegate if necessary, and unite to reach a common outcome for successful results. It also allows them to tap into their creativity and play on each other's strengths.



### OBJECTIVE

Teamwork, problem-solving



### GROUP SIZE

Medium group



### TIME

15 minutes



### MATERIALS NEEDED

Sets of Lego blocks, timer



### NOTES

Fast, minimal setup, inexpensive



### CONTRIBUTED BY

Arquella Hargrove,  
ArquellaHargrove.com

## 7. Zombie Escape

Gather the team in a “locked” empty room and choose one team member to play the zombie. Tie the zombie with rope to something fixed in the corner of the room, and leave about a foot of rope as leeway. For every five minutes that pass, loosen the zombie’s rope by another foot so his or her range of movement grows. Simultaneously, give the team a series of puzzles or riddles they need to solve in order to find a hidden key that will unlock the door and allow them to escape.

Communication and problem-solving are at the forefront in this exercise. Team members must work together in order to accomplish a central goal. If a team does not finish, it’s important for them to understand where they went wrong.



### OBJECTIVE

Problem-solving, teamwork, just for fun, communication



### GROUP SIZE

Any size



### TIME

30 minutes



### MATERIALS NEEDED

One rope, one key, and five to ten puzzles or clues



### NOTES

Wow factor, inexpensive

## 8. Zoom

The facilitator divides the group into teams and hands out pictures from the book [Zoom](#). Each team gets one picture. Instruct participants that they can only look at their own pictures and must keep their picture out of other players’ sight. Give everyone some time to study their pictures, as each picture contains important information that will help them put the pictures in order without looking. Participants must describe their picture to the others to figure out what order to place the pictures in.

This activity gets coworkers communicating with the common goal of solving a problem. It also allows for leaders to emerge and take control of the task.



### OBJECTIVE

Problem-solving, communication



### GROUP SIZE

No limit, but minimum of two people



### TIME

30 minutes



### MATERIALS NEEDED

[The book Zoom by Istvan Banyai](#)



### NOTES

Minimal setup, fast

## 9. Team Trivia

Divide participants into smaller teams of four or five people. Announce multiple rounds of trivia questions, and tabulate answer sheets between rounds. Questions should ideally span a number of topics such as pop culture, sports, geography, politics, and even company history and values. Teams have a short time to discuss each answer before writing it down. The team with the most correct answers wins a prize. For added competition, invite two attendees to the front of the room for head-to-head challenges.

“Team trivia is an incredibly effective form of group bonding,” says David Jacobson, founder of TrivWorks. “A thoughtfully-crafted team trivia contest ... allows for people to instantly bond over laughs, shared knowledge, and healthy competition to create a positive experience for the entire room. A proven means of engaging groups of all backgrounds and cultures, team trivia can be utilized day or night, year-round, rain or shine.”

## 10. Back-to-Back Drawing

Divide the group into pairs, and have the pairs sit on the floor with their backs to each other. One partner will draw while the other partner provides verbal instructions. Give the non-drawing partner a common shape. They are not allowed to say the shape’s name; instead, they have to describe it to their partner. Once time is up (30 seconds to one minute), they discuss how close the drawing is to the shape requested. You can start off with simple shapes like circles and squares and go on to more complex ones.

This game showcases communication as a vital tool in the workplace. It promotes listening, communication, and patience. It will also have the whole room laughing.



### OBJECTIVE

Fun, bonding, teamwork



### GROUP SIZE

Any



### TIME

One hour



### MATERIALS NEEDED

Answer sheets or paper, pens, microphone or PA system



### NOTES

Fast, minimal setup, inexpensive



### CONTRIBUTED BY

David Jacobson, founder of TrivWorks



### OBJECTIVE

Communication



### GROUP SIZE

No limit, but minimum of four participants



### TIME

30 minutes



### MATERIALS NEEDED

Pencil or pen and flipchart or paper



### NOTES

Inexpensive, minimal set-up

## 11. Mine Field

Locate and secure an open space, preferably outside, for this activity. Set out the mines, or cups of water, paint, and slime, at random. Pair participants into teams of two, and blindfold one member of each team. The blindfolded person must make their way from one side of the space to the other without stepping on any “mines” solely by listening to the instructions of their partner. If they step on a mine, they need to start over.

This exercise fosters listening and utilizing effective communication strategies. The nature of the activity is designed to improve communication and trust between team members. Mine Field also demonstrates how we can depend too much on the sense of sight and helps participants focus on listening and effective communication strategies.



### OBJECTIVE

Communication, problem-solving



### GROUP SIZE

Small group



### TIME

30 minutes



### MATERIALS NEEDED

Bottles, cans, cups, or anything for a hazard



### NOTES

Fast, minimal setup, inexpensive, outdoors

## 12. Whose Office Is It, Anyway?

Team members send a photo of their home office to the team leader or facilitator. The facilitator shows the group a picture, and the group has to guess whose home office it is. Participants are encouraged to state why they thought a certain office belonged to a specific team member. For other variations of the game, you can also repeat for other items, such as coffee mugs, desktop backgrounds, etc. This activity works well with remote teams gathering on a video chat.

This activity allows colleagues the chance to get to know each better and bond. It fosters cooperation and encourages better communication. It's also ideal for destressing and having fun.



### OBJECTIVE

Icebreaker, bonding, fun



### GROUP SIZE

No limit, but a minimum of three people



### TIME

30 minutes



### MATERIALS NEEDED

Computer, smartphone



### NOTES

Inexpensive, minimal setup, fast, remote teams

## 13. Concentration

Divide the group into teams. The teams form two even lines, facing one another. Give all participants a minute to study their partner, then have one line turn around. The other line now has 40 seconds to change ten things about themselves – like changing hairstyles, tying scarves differently, swapping watches to the other hand. After 40 seconds, the other line turns back around and has to identify all the changes. This continues until the game ends.

Concentration tests communication abilities and also serves as a fun icebreaker. It requires participants to pay close attention to detail and focus on things that they might not normally.

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## 14. Life Highlights

Life Highlights is a two-part exercise. To begin, a facilitator asks participants to close their eyes for one minute and think about the best moments of their lives. These could be professional accomplishments, personal memories, or life adventures. When the minute ends, the facilitator tells the participants that their list of highlights must now be cut down to 30 seconds. Each participant must decide which 30 seconds they would most want to re-experience. In the second part of the activity, each participant is invited to tell the group about their 30 seconds.

The exercise prompts participants to reflect on their lives and encourages understanding of other people's passions, motivations, and personal experiences. As such, it makes for a powerful lesson in team-building and communication. Since this exercise focuses on sharing memories and personal experiences, it may be most suitable for participants who are already well acquainted with one another.



### OBJECTIVE

Communication



### GROUP SIZE

Any



### TIME

15 minutes



### MATERIALS NEEDED

None



### NOTES

Fast, minimal setup, inexpensive



### OBJECTIVE

Bonding



### GROUP SIZE

Any



### TIME

30 minutes



### MATERIALS NEEDED

None



### NOTES

Minimal setup, fast, remote team

## 15. Frostbite

The facilitator breaks the group into teams of four or five, and informs them that they are no longer sitting in the office. Instead, they are Arctic explorers! Have each team elect a leader. When a storm hits, the team must build an emergency shelter. However, team leaders' hands are frostbitten, so they can't physically help construct the shelter, and the rest of the team has snow blindness and is unable to see. Each team has a set of construction materials and must build the best shelter possible. When time is up, turn on the electric fan's "Arctic winds" and see which shelter stands up the best. Adjust the difficulty by providing sturdier construction materials (Popsicle sticks instead of toothpicks, etc.), changing the fan's settings, or leaving the fan running while the team constructs their shelters.

This game is perfect for small groups or divisions to work together. Leadership strengths and teamwork are also important aspects of this activity. Teams work toward a common goal by using the strengths of each person to their advantage.



### OBJECTIVE

Problem-solving, communication, leadership



### GROUP SIZE

Any size



### TIME

30 minutes



### MATERIALS NEEDED

Cardstock, toothpicks, rubber bands, sticky notes, electric fan



### NOTES

Minimal setup, fast, wow factor

## 16. One Question

Present a scenario where you need to hire someone for a position such as a babysitter, a driver, a chef, or a housekeeper. Each participant then gets to ask only one question to determine whether that person is right for the job. The group can discuss the pro and cons of each question.

One Question is a quick game that promotes a cooperative and friendly work environment. It fosters communication while learning about the values of others. The team members learn more about one another, which allows them to utilize each other's strengths and weaknesses.



### OBJECTIVE

Communication, problem-solving



### GROUP SIZE

Small group



### TIME

15 minutes



### MATERIALS NEEDED

None



### NOTES

Fast, minimal setup, inexpensive

## 17. The Onion

The group sits around a flipchart, on which a facilitator draws a large pie chart with as many equal-sized slices as there are participants. Above the chart, the facilitator writes a keyword such as “success” or “growth.” Taking turns, each participant writes their interpretation of the keyword in one of the slices. These may be precise or loosely defined. Once all the slices have been filled in, the group discusses and examines the varying interpretations of the keyword. The facilitator may also raise the question of why keyword interpretations differ across people performing different roles in the organization.

Recommended by Michael O’Brien of Peloton Coaching and Consulting, this game builds communication skills while providing an open space to discuss the aims of an organization. It may also offer valuable insights into how people define important but abstract concepts, such as “success.” It is a good idea to allow employees from different departments and at varying levels of seniority to present their interpretations, and thus encourage conversations between chains of command.

## 18. Push-Up Ritual

Make a daily or multiple-times-a-day ritual. For example, at some companies, everyone drops down and does 20 push-ups together (even remote team members can participate). You can even add a motivating theme song.

The ritual creates a positive energy in the workplace. It offers a mental break for employees while providing brain-stimulating exercise and a sense of camaraderie.



### OBJECTIVE

Bonding, communication, values



### GROUP SIZE

Four to twelve



### TIME

30 minutes



### MATERIALS NEEDED

Flipchart, pens



### NOTES

Fast, minimal setup, remote teams



### CONTRIBUTED BY

Michael O’Brien of Peloton Coaching and Consulting



### OBJECTIVE

Values, just for fun, bonding



### GROUP SIZE

Any size



### TIME

5 minutes



### MATERIALS NEEDED

None



### NOTES

Fast, minimal setup, fun, wow factor, remote

## 19. Best and Worst

In this exercise, a facilitator has each participant write down one “best” question and one “worst” question. It’s a good idea for questions to elicit funny answers: For example, participants may ask, “What’s the worst trip you’ve ever been on?” or “What’s the best chick flick you’ve ever seen?” Collect the questions and put them into a “best” hat and a “worst” hat respectively, and have team members take turns drawing and answering questions from each hat.

This simple icebreaker helps people loosen up and is especially suited to new teams and those who work remotely. For new teams, it can foster working relationships and spark conversations. For remote teams, it is an excellent opportunity to learn about people they rarely meet in person.



### OBJECTIVE

Icebreaker, communication, bonding



### GROUP SIZE

Medium group



### TIME

One hour



### MATERIALS NEEDED

None



### NOTES

Minimal setup, inexpensive, remote team

## 20. Question Master

Select one person to be the question master. The Question Master starts by asking a thought-provoking question. Ask things like “What was the most challenging time in your life and why?” or “If you could go back to school for an advanced degree, what would you study and why?” Participants take turns answering. You can also have the team submit questions in advance or call to add another layer of participation by the group members.

The activity promotes bonding and helps build camaraderie. It encourages remote team members to get to know each other better and allows participants to reveal pieces of themselves in a comfortable and safe environment. This a fun, simple way to build trust and bond with one another.



### OBJECTIVE

Bonding, values



### GROUP SIZE

Any



### TIME

30 minutes



### MATERIALS NEEDED

Questions



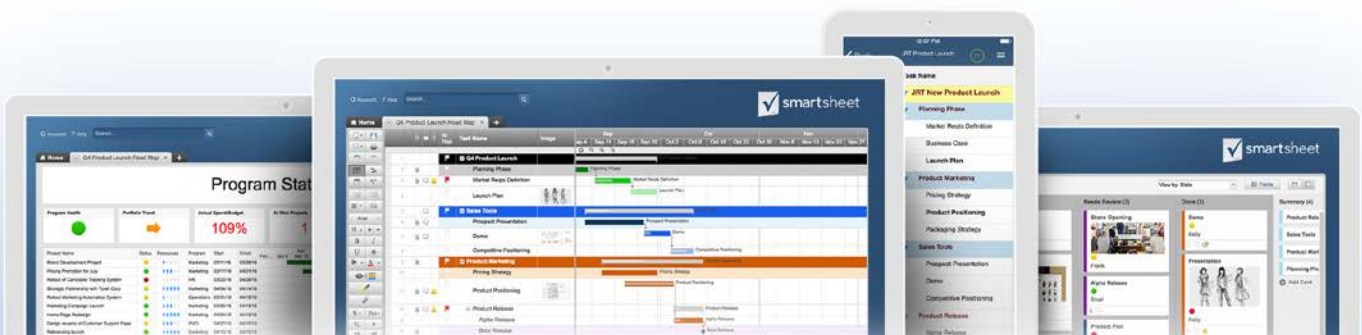
### NOTES

Remote, fast, inexpensive, minimal setup

## Top 20 Team Building Exercises and Activities

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