

Inuit Wrestling Instructional Resource

Introduction

Wrestling is one of the oldest known sports and is practised in every Indigenous culture in the world. Since the beginning of time Inuit have been wrestling and the tradition continues in Nunavut and the Northwest Territories.

Wrestling is a one-on-one competition that traditionally was done with no mats. The sport involves technique, speed, strength, endurance and strategies where equal size opponents compete. People are attracted to the sport regardless of gender, size, and physical ability; everyone can be successful.

Inuit values aim to empower wrestlers to make positive change by...

☐ **Inuuqatigiitsiarniq**

Respecting others, relationships and caring for people

☐ **Pilimmaksarniq / Pijariuqsarniq**

Developing skills through observation, mentoring, practice, and effort

☐ **Piliriqatigiinniq / Ikajuqtigiinniq**

Working together for a common cause

☐ **Pijitsirniq**

Serving and providing for family and/or community

This booklet and video were created to be a guide to assist coaches in NWT and Nunavut to successfully implement a wrestling program.

The video is _____ minutes and divided into _____ sections.

Basic Wrestling Practice: Practice Layout for Beginners/Kids

Time	Activity
5 min	Welcome Take attendance, stress physical & mental safety, benefits and having fun.
2 min	Canadian and Inuit Wrestling History It is important that the youth are aware of the history of Inuit and Canadian wrestling. This can be done through discussions or questions and answers. Question/answer example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Who was the youngest Canadian wrestler at the 1976 Olympics? (Ray Takahashi) <input type="checkbox"/> Which Canadian heavyweight represented Canada at 3 Olympics? (Harry Geris) <input type="checkbox"/> Name an Inuit wrestler who has won NAIG, CSG or AWG and their community.
20 min	Warm-up Pick different activities from the list. These activities can vary from practice to practice. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Army crawl <input type="checkbox"/> Bear crawl <input type="checkbox"/> Duck walk <input type="checkbox"/> Crab walks backward and forward <input type="checkbox"/> Seal crawl <input type="checkbox"/> Back push <input type="checkbox"/> Knee run <input type="checkbox"/> Alternate knee drive <input type="checkbox"/> 2-foot broad jump (be sure to stick the landing) <input type="checkbox"/> 1-foot hop <input type="checkbox"/> ABCs <input type="checkbox"/> Karaoke crossovers <input type="checkbox"/> Cartwheel

Time	Activity
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Front roll <input type="checkbox"/> Diving front roll <input type="checkbox"/> Back roll <input type="checkbox"/> Cartwheel <input type="checkbox"/> Sprawl <input type="checkbox"/> Break fall (sideways, backwards)
30 min	<p>Games and Tasks</p> <p>Pick an activity from the list. These games are demonstrated in the accompanying video. Vary the activities from practice to practice. Don't eliminate players when playing games — have them do a physical challenge, then return to the game.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Pair Games <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knee tap <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sumo wrestling • Go behind • Grab a single leg • Flip the turtle • Offensive/defensive ball game. <input type="checkbox"/> Group Games <p>Fox tail & Flag in sock (when out, the participant will have to do push-ups etc., to get back into the game)</p> <p>British bulldog (10 sec to get across)</p> <p>Wrestle for the ball when the coach calls out a number.</p> <p>Cranes & Crows game on knees (must hold your opponent to prevent them crossing the line)</p> <p>Wrestlers do a physical activity away from their partner somewhere on the mat. Then the coach calls out "backpack" or "chicken in a hen" or "front pack" or "airplane" (last pair to do the action does push-ups, then back in game).</p>
15 min	<p>Wrestling Techniques</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Freestyle Technique <p>All technique is first approached by giving them a task and making it a game.</p>

Time	Activity
	<p>After wrestlers have experimented with the task, the coaches will then get the wrestlers to show the different ways they completed it.</p> <p>The coaches will then break down the technique. Always start with stance, hand fighting, arm drag and duck under because these moves require minimum strength and youth can succeed.</p> <p>When participants are wrestling, restrict the number of moves they can do, as it will be beneficial for the youth to become proficient at the move before moving on to the next technique.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stance • Hand fighting • Arm drag • Duck under • Single leg • High crotch • Double leg • Half nelson • Cross face • Chicken wing • Defence par terre • Sprawl defence to leg attack • Front headlock defence to leg attack <p><input type="checkbox"/> Advanced Technique Options</p> <p>Body lock throws using crash mats, shoulder throw, head & arm throw, gut wrench, cross ankle.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Inuit Wrestling</p> <p>Inuit wrestling has been practised for thousands of years in the Canadian Arctic by the Inuit. Inuit wrestling was used as a form of recreation and to develop mental and physical strength. This form of wrestling involves very little strategy and is about strength and muscular endurance.</p> <p>Rules:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The wrestlers face each other standing chest to chest and take an over and under position where one arm is under their opponent, the other is over and

Time	Activity
	<p>their hands are joined around the back of their opponent.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The head is kept on the overhook side at all times. • While keeping your hand joined, the goal is to bear hug your opponent to the ground. • If you break your grip you lose! • No tripping or back bending throws are allowed. • The hands must remain on the back and cannot come up toward the head. • There are no time limits, and the match continues until someone wins. <p>Tip: When teaching Inuit wrestling, start first on the knees and then progress to the standing position.</p>
10 min	<p>Situations/Live Wrestling</p> <p>Very specific for different positions. When beginning live wrestling and situations, limit the moves to one or two; as they become proficient in those moves, add more.</p> <p>E.g., 10 seconds to turn your opponent when in par terre using a half nelson.</p>
10 min	<p>Cool-down/Wrap-up</p> <p>E.g., gauge how things went, provide information about competitions/practices, check out.</p>

Coaching Tips

- ☐ Be flexible (willing to change immediately)
- ☐ Keep it simple, and coach what you know
- ☐ Be positive and encouraging
- ☐ Don't use exercise as a punishment
- ☐ Always remember — safety and fun first

Contact

If you have any questions about the video/manual or starting a wrestling program in Nunavut, send an email to cambaywrestling@gmail.com. You can also check out the website www.cambridgebaywrestling.com for information.

If you are interested in starting a wrestling program in the Northwest Territories, contact the Sport North Federation: <https://www.sportnorth.com/>.