

Orangutan Physical Fitness Challenge

Part of keeping our orangutans healthy is making sure they get up and move around like they would in the wild. Physical health is just as important for orangutans as it is for people.

Get a grown-up and anyone else who wants to play, and head over to your local park or backyard for the orangutan physical fitness challenge!

Supplies needed: timer, small plush animal, measuring tape, something to record scores on (paper, note section on phone, etc.)



Round One: Swing!

Orangutans are almost exclusively arboreal (tree-dwelling) and spend the overwhelming majority of their lives high in the treetops. They are the world's largest arboreal animal and have long, flexible arms to support their tree-living lifestyle.

Swing like an orangutan: time each person at how long or how far they can get on the monkey bars (for this game we call them APE bars). No playground? No problem! Mark out a starting point and see how far everyone can get in three “swings”: stretch out your arms like you are grabbing branches and move as if you are in the trees. Record everyone's time in your log sheet.

Round Two: Hang by your arms!

Orangutans can hang from their arms or even their legs to grab hard-to-reach fruit in the trees.

Hang like an orangutan: Find a safe place to hang by just your arms. Time how long everyone can hang out and record those times. Record everyone's time in your log sheet.

Round Three: Roll!

Every once in a while, orangutans will need to walk on the ground to get somewhere. Since they are pretty slow walkers, sometimes they roll to get there faster.

Roll like an orangutan: Mark out around 10 feet on the grass and time how fast everyone can roll 10 feet. Just like orangutans, you can choose to somersault or log roll, or time each method and see which way is faster. Record everyone's time in your log sheet.

Round Four: Forage!

Foraging is another word for searching for food. Orangutans have to search far and wide certain times of the year to find the fruit they eat.

Forage like an orangutan: For each person playing the game, take a turn hiding the animal plush in an agreed-upon area of space (for example, only the backyard, not the front yard). Have the person whose turn it is to forage close their eyes while the others hide the plush. Once hidden, the person timing things yells “forage!” And time the person foraging to see how long it takes them to find the plush. For an added challenge, you can hide more items. Record everyone's time in your log sheet.

BONUS ROUND: Curl up for a nap!

Did you know that orangutans build nests to sleep in each day and night? They join together branches, leaves and small twigs to create a comfy resting place safely off of the ground. They have been observed making leaf “pillows” and “blankets.” They will even construct a roof to keep out of the rain!

Nap and nest like an orangutan: This round is just for fun. Since you have worked so hard exercising, go ahead and take this time to stretch like you are getting ready for a nap. As a bonus, this could be the time that you can do the orangutan nest-building activity from enrichment day of Orangutan Caring Week and take a good long nap in your new nest...you have earned it.

Who is the winner?

Circle the winning time on each challenge on your log sheet. Did anyone win more than one round? Next time you are at your local zoo, visit the orangutans and see if you can spot them doing any of these natural behaviors.

Share your results with us by posting on social media with the hashtags:

#OSSP

#OrangutanCaringWeek

#OrangutanAwarenessWeek

#WeCareAboutOrangutans

