



# The Inclusion Club

This is a quick explanation of Twin Sticks exercising provided by Niina Makela from Finland. The Inclusion Club would like to thank Niina and Tarja Javanainen-Levonen from Satakunta University for allowing us to share this with the world, particularly the Inclusion Club subscribers. This document is part of a full explanation of Twin Sticks, with video taken from the EUCAPA Conference held in Ireland in May 2012. You can see the full episode on [http://theinclusionclub.com/episodes/twin\\_sticks/](http://theinclusionclub.com/episodes/twin_sticks/)

We'd love to hear from anyone that gives Twin Sticks a go in their own environment so we can add to our body of knowledge here. Please get in touch at [admin@theinclusionclub.com](mailto:admin@theinclusionclub.com)

Thanks.

## **Twin-Stick exercising**

Twin-Stick exercising demonstrates a new way to utilize two gymnastic sticks (plastic or wooden) in exercising or even dancing with a partner.

Participants grip both sticks, facing each other. In Twin-Stick exercising the emphasis is on social interaction and reciprocal movement. The level of facilitation provided by the more "skilful" partner (related to coordination, sense of rhythm or level of experience) enhances the other partner's performance.

Twin-Stick exercising can be carried out in recreational settings with a large group of equal participants, as well as in more intimate rehabilitative settings with an instructor and a client. Therefore, Twin-Stick exercising offers a modified exercise option to persons who need additional support in physical activity. For example, this might be a suitable way of working with persons with vision impairment or intellectual disability in various settings in the field of adapted physical activity.

The idea of Twin-Stick Exercising was born during my physiotherapy studies at Satakunta University of Applied Sciences in Pori, Finland. Actually, it happened in the course of

Didactics of Physical Education (Module: Instructing and promoting physical activity) lead by senior lecturer Tarja Javanainen-Levonen, PhD in sport sciences. In the course, the task was to plan a physical activity session for working aged adults. My part was to plan the warm up and the general theme of the session was “exercising with the stick”. The major part of the session was carried out with the help of Gym Sticks.

Our lecturer inspired me to use, in the warming up part of the session, two simple, traditional sticks in a new, innovative way and demonstrated some simple movements to me in front of the mirror. She encouraged me to utilize my former education of dance pedagogy in teaching. That was the starting point for exercising. The warm up was carried out with music and included influences from dancing. The aim was to increase heart rate and warm up the joints. In the first implementation the two sticks were in different colors (blue and yellow) and the name of the color was used instead of left and right in guidance. The session was rousing and received an enthusiastic reception. This led to further development of Twin-Stick exercising as a contribution to the subject of my Bachelor’s thesis.

My background includes education in professional dance and currently I’m a final year physiotherapy student. In my idea of Twin-Stick exercising the purpose is to combine my knowledge of the both fields and create an innovative way to enjoy the rhythm and facilitate movement with a partner.



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