How to Be Great at Dodgeball

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Dodgeball is a fun and fast-paced game for both kids and adults. To win the game, dodge the ball! This sounds simple, but there are actually lots of ways to be a tougher, better player and to make the game more competitive. If you spend some time learning and practicing skills to take your game to the next level, you'll quickly become your teammates' favorite dodgeball player!

Method 1	Method 1 of 4: Being a Great Thrower

1 **Know how to knock out players.** There are several ways that players can be knocked out of the game. It's important for you to know all of them to strategize your throwing game. These rules provide the foundation for the whole game of dodgeball![1]

- Players who are hit with balls are out. These balls can either be thrown directly at them or will be rebounded balls that hit them after bouncing off the walls, the floor, or another player.

- Players who step out of bounds are out.

- Players who throw a ball that's caught are out.

- Players who cross into the the other team's territory are out.

- Players who throw headshots are out.

- Once you get knocked out, you go into the "queue" to wait to be brought back in when someone on your team catches a ball. The queue goes in order of elimination.

2 **Coordinate with your teammates.** Even though dodgeball might look like a free-for-all, the best teams work together to make strategies for throwing. Number your opponents from left to right, starting with one and ending with six. Throw multiple balls at one player together to make it harder for your opponents to dodge your attacks.[2]

- To organize your group throws, make your corner player the designated "caller." They can pick a player to target and call out that player's number. Everyone should wait three seconds and then throw at the targeted player together.

- You and your teammates should target one player at a time for the best scoring results. If you start thinking too far ahead about knocking out multiple players, you'll distract yourself from your immediate goal. Stay focused and patient. You'll get them all in the end.[3]

3 **Throw at the strongest players first.** You're probably tempted to immediately go for the weakest links. This actually isn't the best strategy. It's better to go for the best players while you're at the top of your game. It won't be good if you have to deal with them at the end when you're tired and dripping with sweat.[4]

- To figure out which players are the strongest and weakest, scout out your opponents before the game. Observe one of their games if you can. If not, see if you can find any descriptions of their team online.
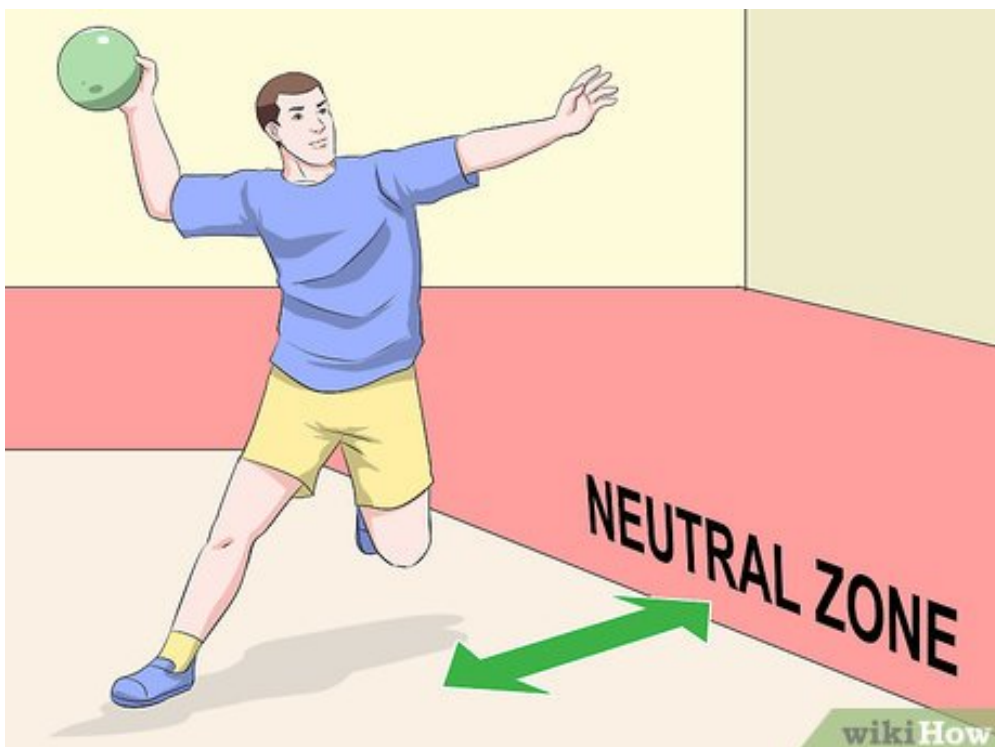
4 **Get close to the neutral zone to throw tougher balls.** The closer you are to the other side, the more accurate and powerful your throws will be. This will make them much harder to dodge. This is a bit of a dangerous strategy, however, as it also puts you closer to your opponents' balls. Move fast, throw quickly, and get back to the wall.[5]

- Be careful not to cross into your opponents' territory. This will knock you out of the game.[6]

5 **Aim low to avoid having your balls get caught.** If you aim at the chest or mid-section, it'll be much easier for the other team's players to catch your balls. Go for below the waist, aiming especially for the shins. These throws will be almost impossible to catch. They'll also force your opponents to jump, which could provide more opportunities to get them out.[7]

- If you do aim above the waist, your throws need to be powerful enough to keep your opponents from catching them. Only go with this approach if you have an extremely fast and strong throwing arm.

6 **Push players on the sides of the court out of bounds.** If you notice that one of the players on the other team is close to being out of bounds, take advantage! It should be the "caller's" job to make the team target this player with a group throw. Your opponent could be overwhelmed by the attack and step out of bounds by accident. And then they're out![8]

7 **Grip your ball on the side for a sneaky curve ball.** Throwing curve balls can catch your opponents off guard, making it harder for them to dodge your throws. Practice this throw by gripping the ball on the side and throwing it in a half-circle, rather than a straight line. Don't break this move out in a game until you've given yourself plenty of time to perfect it.[9]

- Try doing a wrap-around curve ball by wrapping your wrist and hand around the ball and letting it loose. This will take even more practice to master, but it should give you some extra power and curve on the release.


8 **Throw at an opponent who just threw a ball.** Your opponents are at their most vulnerable right after they've thrown the ball. You've got a second or two when their attention still isn't completely re-focused on dodging balls. Target these players.[10]

- If they've just knocked out one of your teammates, this is a great opportunity for some healthy, in-game revenge.

9 **Confuse your opponent by looking somewhere else when you throw.** This fake-out should confuse your opponents, and whoever you target won't be ready for your throw. Be careful with this move, though. Your throw might not be as accurate, since you won't be looking at your opponent when you release the ball.[11]

- This could also be risky because it may give your opponents the chance to take advantage of your divided attention. Even though you'll still be looking at the other side, you'll be thinking about where your ball is going to go. This could provide an opening for a sneak attack to catch you off guard.
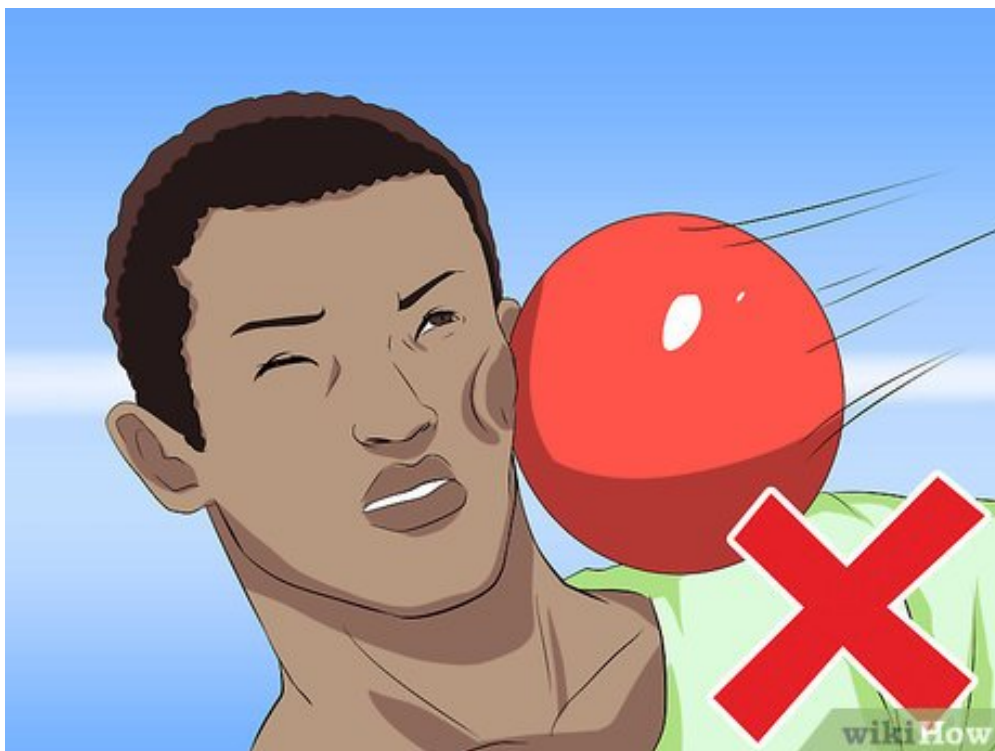

10 **Don't throw headshots.** It's against the rules, and it's dangerous. It's also a bad move, as it knocks you out of the game. Throwing a ball anywhere near the head or neck isn't worth injuring someone, especially since it could lose you the game anyway.[12]

1 **Stay back toward the wall.**   This will put lots of distance between you and your opponents, and it'll make it harder for them to target you. Don't stand right against the wall, as this could cause deflected or uncaught balls to hit you from behind once they've bounced off the wall. Leave a few feet (or about 1 meter) of space behind you.[13]
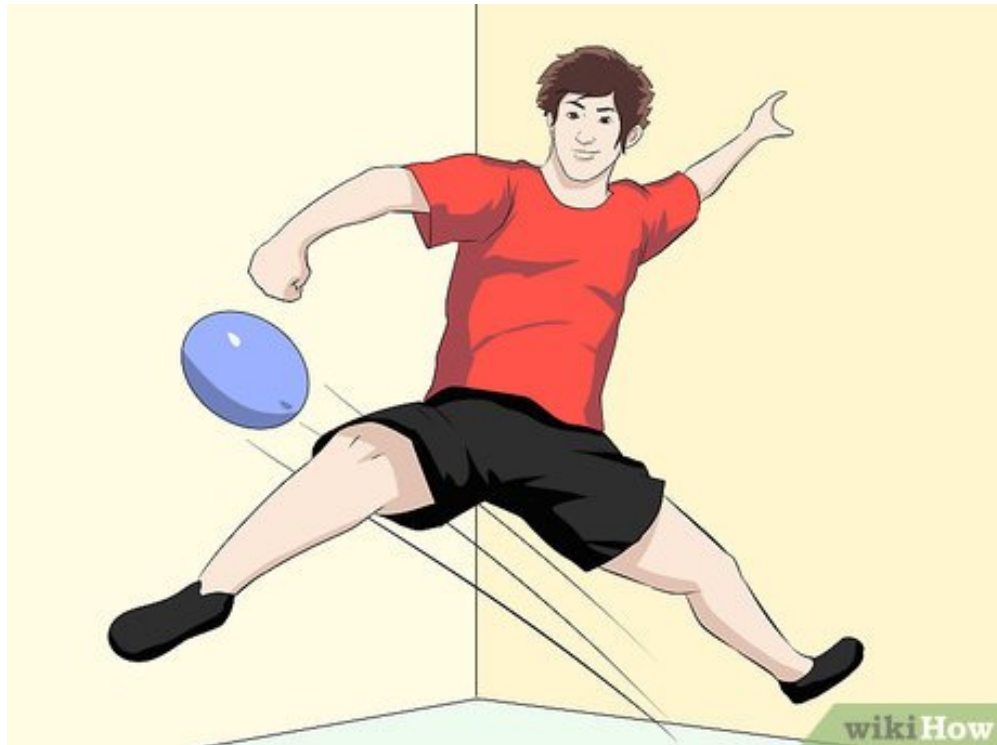
2 **Jump high or with split legs.**   Since your opponents are probably going to be aiming at your legs, you'll need to be a good jumper. Practice jumping higher every chance you get. You can also increase your flexibility to split your legs in the air. [14]

3 **Stay aware of the boundaries.** There's no more frustrating way to be eliminated than to put a foot out of bounds. Especially if you're a corner player, stay hyper-aware of your position on the court. This is even more important when you're dodging, since you'll won't be able to dodge in one direction.[15]

4 **Spread out to make it harder for the other team.** If you clump together in the center of the court, you're creating a huge and easy target for your opponents. Even if there are just a few of you left, use the whole court. Always evenly space yourselves out. This will give you room to move around and dodge those balls.[16]

5 **Deflect balls with a blocking ball.** Most teams and leagues will allow blocking. This involves a player who uses one ball to keep other balls from hitting them. For some players, it may be easier to learn how to block balls than to dodge them. You can even have designated "blockers" on your team.[17]

- Blockers can also protect their teammates from getting hit.

- Keep a good grip on your blocking ball. If you drop it, you're out!

6 **Don't panic if it's just you left on your side.** This is what's called on all-on-one. It has to happen eventually for most games to end, so you'll probably have to go through this at some point. Focus on dodging and look for that perfect catch, as this will bring back one of your teammates.[18]

- Stay low and crouched close to the ground during this scary time. This makes you a smaller target.

**Method 3 of 4:
Catching the Ball**

1 **Be ready to catch every ball.** Catching is the underappreciated skill that wins dodgeball games. Remember that catching balls knocks people out just like throwing them. It's actually better, because now you have another ball to throw and another teammate on your side! Always be prepared to take advantage of this part of the game.[19]

2 **Avoid trying to catch balls that are out of reach.** Even though you should always be on the lookout for balls you can catch, don't catch balls that you think you might drop. You drop it, you're out. If you'd have to reach for the ball even a little bit, let it go.[20]

3 **Catch the ball with both hands.** Balls that you can catch with both hands are the golden ones. This means that they're coming right at you. You'll also be much more likely to keep control of balls that you can catch with both hands, rather than diving for one that you'd barely pull in with your fingertips.[21]

- Be sure to catch balls with your whole hand, taking the brunt of the catch on your palms. Fingertip catches are much harder to maintain without dropping them.

4 **Catch the ball in your chest and cradle it.** Once you've got the ball in your hands, bring it into your chest. You may be able to catch some balls with your whole body, and that's even better. Cradle it there until you're sure you've got control. This will help you avoid dropping it.[22]

5 **Recover quickly after a catch to avoid being eliminated.** Yay, you caught the ball! Now get moving again. Don't celebrate, as this is the moment when you'll find yourself targeted. Immediately after you have control of the ball, get back in the game and be ready to dodge and throw again.[23]

6 **Don't stall the game by holding balls.** Stalling occurs when the referee decides that a player is trying to delay the game. Generally, you should be doing something with a ball after having it your hands for a few seconds. This could include blocking, rolling the ball back to the other team, or throwing it. After ten seconds, the ref can call on you for stalling and send you out of the game.[24]
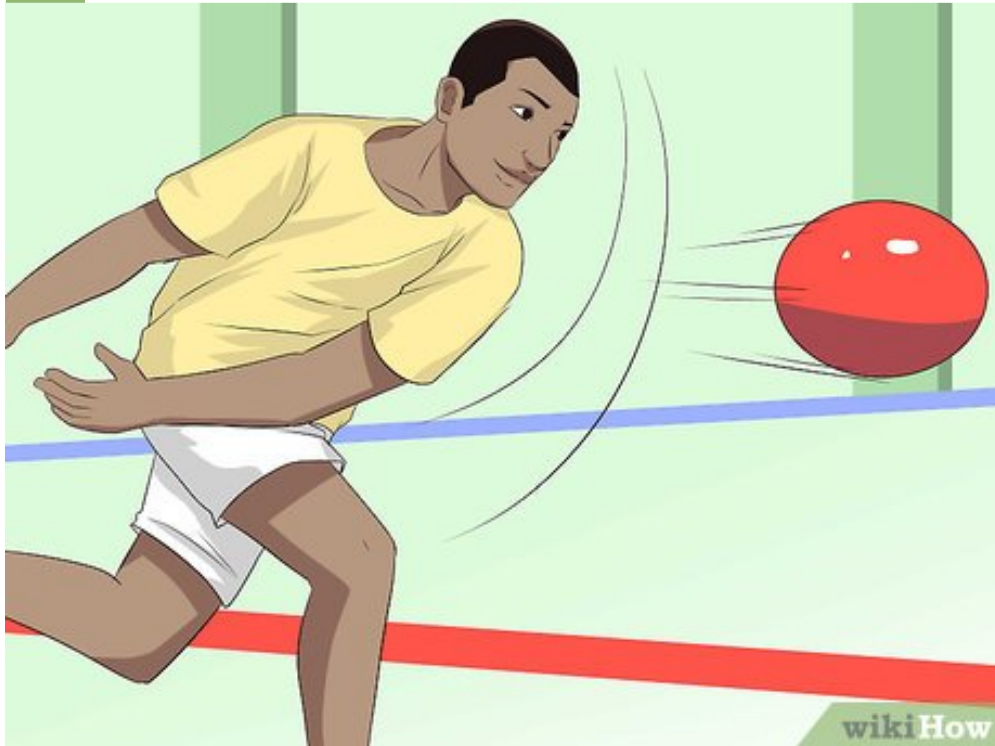
1 **Have a corner player ready to counter opponents.** Countering is when a player sneaks in from the corner of the court and very quickly moves toward the neutral zone to attack an opposing player. It's a risky move, and it can only be performed by a single (and brave) countering player. If you're countering, be speedy and go for the element of surprise.[25]

- Reserve countering for when you've only got a single ball on your side.[26]

- Countering is a good move to break out after there's been an elimination. Players might be distracted, and this is the time to strike![27]

2 **Dive or side-jump to dodge countering.** Because counters are all about speed, they're hard to dodge. You may not be able to jump fast or high enough straight up into the air to get away from this ball. Do a back dive or side-jump to avoid these tough throws.

- Be extremely careful when you do a back dive. These dangerous moves could injure you, especially if you hit your head on the ground. Try and absorb the fall on the fleshy part of your bottom, and keep your head and neck up off the floor.
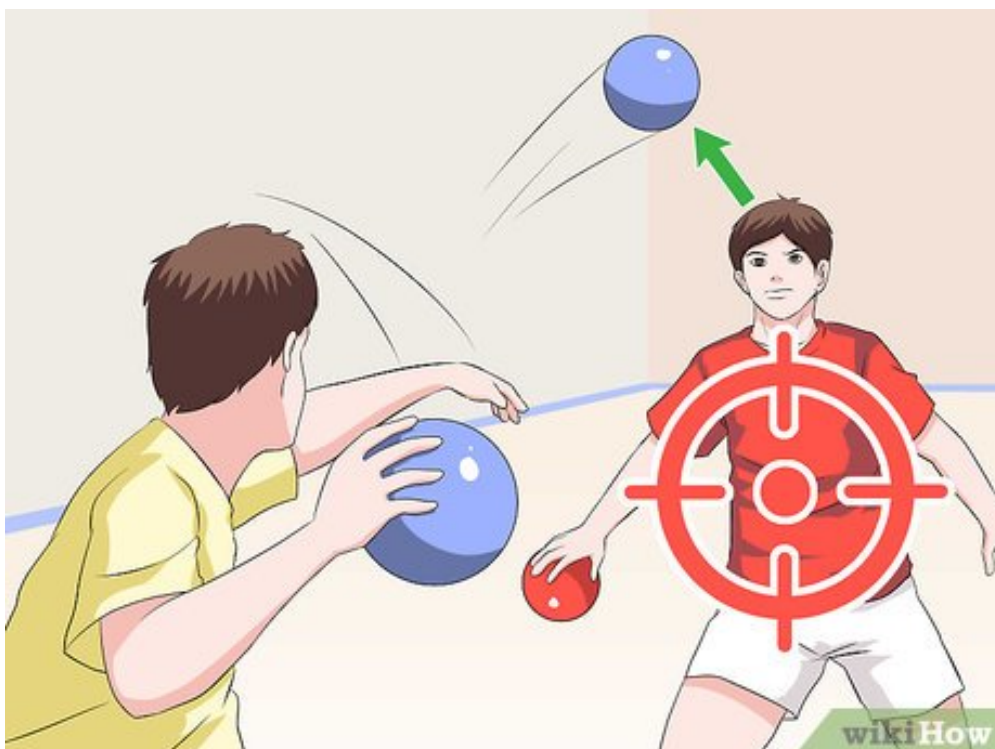
3 **Eliminate your opponent by distracting them with two balls.** This tricky move is called the "butterfly and the bee." Throw one ball up in the air to confuse your opponents. While their attention is on that ball, throw a second ball straight at them.[28]
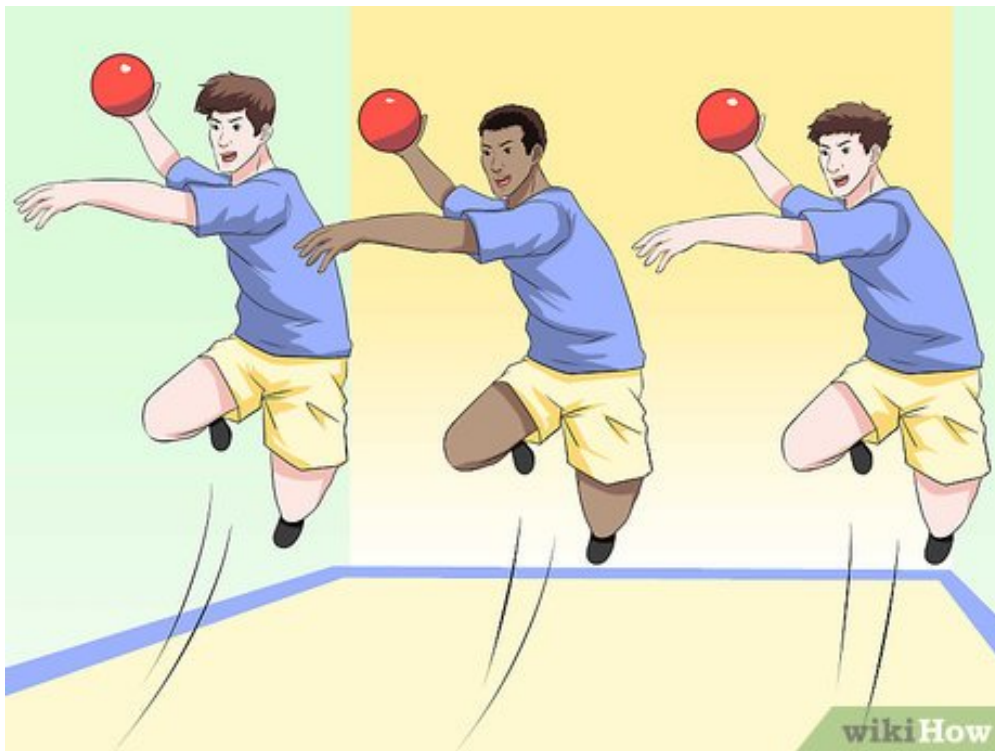
4 **Add distractions to your game plan.** Dodgeball can be a fun and even quirky game. If you're in a league that allows cartwheels and coordinated jumps, do them! You'll have fun with these slightly weird strategies, and they'll confuse your opponents.[29]

- Time a group jump or a cartwheel by using a codeword.

- Make sure that these moves don't get you eliminated. Only do them if you're sure you can dodge balls while you're distracting the other team with your unexpected skills.

5 **Trick your opponents into throwing you a ball you can catch.** This is called a drop-catch. Hold the ball you've got in front of you, inviting the other team to target you. Drop the ball, and catch a ball that's been thrown at you.[30]

- Only do this if it looks like you'll be able to catch one of the incoming balls. Otherwise, continue dodging the balls, or keep hold of the ball you've got to block them.

Community Q&A

How do I improve my accuracy?

Community Answer

Practice! Make a target in your backyard and start throwing balls from different distances and angles until you're hitting it every time.

Helpful 59   Not Helpful 15

How do I catch the ball in dodgeball?

Community Answer

Put your body in front of it -- if it bounces off you, you will still have a chance to catch it.

Helpful 61   Not Helpful 26

What does "lob and throw" mean?

Community Answer

If you have two balls in your hand, you lob one in the air, which distracts the opponent. While he tries to catch the ball, attack him with the second ball.

Helpful 34   Not Helpful 14

How do I make a fast and accurate throw when I'm short?

Community Answer

You can use the "backhand throw", which is more about power than accuracy. Simply step with your left foot (if you're right-handed), then twist your torso to the right and throw the ball. Gripping the ball and releasing it properly can improve the accuracy of your shot.

Helpful 29   Not Helpful 9

How can I strengthen my throw?

Community Answer

Practice throwing at targets. Do strength-building exercises such as arm spins, windmills, push-ups, anything that will add muscle, which will in turn put power behind your throw. But accuracy is the most important factor.

Helpful 42   Not Helpful 18

Is it bad to hit someone directly on the head or chest?

Community Answer

It is okay to hit someone directly on the chest, but there may be rules about hitting someone in the head, ask ahead of time.

Helpful 36   Not Helpful 17

Which is the best dodge?

Community Answer

Ultimately, it depends on the situation. The best dodge is the one where you don't get hit, plain and simple, but which also allows you to quickly transition into your "ready mode" for another incoming throw.

Helpful 29   Not Helpful 16

Do you have any suggestions for other advanced moves?

Community Answer

When the opponent loses concentration on the task at hand and stops paying attention, these are the easiest moments to make a score! Time your throws based on this, and make them regret their lack of focus.

Helpful 5   Not Helpful 9

Does catching or throwing a football help?

Community Answer

No, a dodgeball will have more weight and difficulty when throwing compared to a football. If you want more accuracy then throw a softball or baseball. If you want more strength in your throw get a medicine ball and throw it against a wall, this should help your all around offense.

Helpful 14   Not Helpful 9

In my school, we use really small balls in dodgeball instead of the regularly sized red ones. The small ones are easy to grasp onto. How can I develop a good and accurate throw with the regularly sized red balls?

Community Answer

You'll probably have to practice outside of school. See if a friend (or several) is willing to practice throwing and catching the normal balls with you.

Helpful 10   Not Helpful 9

See more answers

💡 **Tips**

- If there's another person on your team who's a better thrower than you are, give them the ball! Teamwork is key to dodgeball.

- Always check to make sure your shoes are tied before games and practices. Don't let your shoes get too old before replacing them, as you need good traction to play dodgeball.

- Remember to warm up and cool down before and after the games for about 10-15 minutes.

- If you have sweaty hands don't be shy to quickly go wash wash them or blow on them. The other team does will not care.

- Be quick! It doesn't matter if you're good at dodgeball or not, throwing the ball fast makes them have less time to think.

⚠ Warnings

- Be aware that you may be injured while you play dodgeball. If you respect the rules, however, you, your teammates, and your opponents will be less likely to get seriously injured.

- If a ball comes for your head, duck to protect yourself.

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116 votes - 78%

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