



Ninja Roll Tag

Intro

Learning rolls inside is great. Take it outside onto uneven terrain with obstacles and a bunch of moving creatures and predators, and you have a recipe for adrenaline and accelerated learning. This game takes the ninja skills of rolling, zenpo and koho kaiten, and puts them into an action packed game for adults or kids, or a mix of the two. This is a good old fashioned game of tag, with some ninja twists.



Prepping for the Game

The playing zone

You will first need to set some boundaries. Pick a place that has a good space to run around. You can do it in more challenging terrain such as in the forest, but know your audience and their abilities. If you have 8-12 players, an area the size of a half basketball court works. You don't want it too big or else you'll end up with players who get tagged that are stuck all alone out on the periphery. Too small a zone and there will be a lot of crashing into each other. Again, know your players and the terrain in deciding how big your boundaries should be.

Safety

Check out the area before you play a game to see if there are any noticeable hazards such as gopher holes, sticks, sharp rocks, poison oak, broken glass etc. You may need to do a little preliminary clearing of the site. Eventually in a game of tag, there's going to be an occasional wipe out or two players that crash into each other. Just know that this eventually happens in nature. If there are adults playing, it is really easy for them to get way into the game, so I like to remind them to have awareness of the littler ones playing and not to go full force. Always have a first aid kit with some band aids handy.



Learning the Rolls

If they haven't already learned the rolls, teach them zenpo and koho kaiten (forward and backward rolls). Show them the video we shared with you. Mobile phones can work if there isn't too much crowding and everyone gets a chance to

see. Kids and videos are like moths to a flame sometimes. The next thing is to actually practice the rolls. Spend a little time doing this before playing the game.

Playing the Game

After the group gets a chance to practice the rolls, it's time to play the game. Give everyone a chance to spread out. When the game starts, it's basically tag. If you get tagged, you squat down and wait for someone to leap over you. Once this happens you can reenter the game by doing either a forward or backward roll.

The Power of Rock, Paper, Scissors

Eventually two people will tag each other simultaneously, or a disagreement happens. When this happens, it's time to pull out the good old rock paper scissors. 2 out of 3 for official international R,P, S rules.

Variations

Team Playing

Form teams. If your teammate is tagged, help them get back in the game by leaping over them. A team is out when everyone on the team is tagged and down.



Lizard Tail Ninja Roll Tag

Lizards' tails will break off if a predator grabs them. Blue bellied lizards also do push ups as a display of dominance, so you can warm up for the game by doing some lizard push ups.

For this version, everyone will need a bandana, or something that they can dangle out of a pocket or belt. First rule is that you can't touch your own bandana, and that the bandana needs to be dangling far enough out of a pocket or belt so that someone can snatch it. In this version if someone takes your bandana, they then throw it down on

the ground. You must then stand on your bandana and wait for a someone to jump over you before you roll and get back in the game. Another way to get back in the game is to pivot on one foot to steal a passer by's bandana. If you are successful, then you do a dive roll and are back in the game. The person's whose bandana was stolen must remain at that spot standing on their own bandana.

A second version is to make teams. In the team game when you steal a bandana, you keep it, adding it to your belt or pocket so that you now have multiple bandanas dangling from your belt (it must also be dangling so someone can steal it). If your bandana is stolen, you are stuck in one place until your teammate gives you a bandana that they have stolen, then you do a roll and you are back in the game. If you have multiple bandanas and someone steals one, you keep playing until you have no bandanas left. Only when you run out of bandanas are you stuck in one spot

waiting for a teammate with a rescue bandana for you. A team is out when all of their team members are down, having had their bandanas all stolen.

Flying Ninja Lizard Roll Tag

This is a slightly more advance version for adults or those that have proficiency in doing dive rolls (hicho kaiten). In this game, after you are tagged or get your bandana taken, to get back in the game someone needs to do a dive roll over you. Again, it's really important to know the physical limits of your audience and don't play this version unless the group has this dive roll under their belt. You can do the tag, team, or lizard tail (bandana) version in this game.

Mentor's tip

Always leave them wanting more. Stop the game just after the peak of energy passes and you start to see a few kids getting tired and dropping out. If too many players get tired and quit playing, it's harder to motivate them for future games.

Creative Ideas

Come up with your own creative variations. We'd love to hear what you come up with. Share your ideas in the comments section or on our facebook page:

[/www.facebook.com/ninjasinnature/](http://www.facebook.com/ninjasinnature/)



(The End)