

Move Like a Primate

Background: Primates are masters of life in trees largely due to their grasping hands and feet. Despite this commonality, not all primates move in the same way. Some are fantastic clingers and leapers; others are swift arboreal quadrupeds, while others rely solely on *brachiation*. Let's learn how different primates can move, and test our own ability to move like they do!

Materials: Two cones or masking tape to create a starting line, measuring tape

Instructions: Designate an area in your home or backyard as a primate habitat. Place two cones as a starting point for the activity. Lay the measuring tape out, starting at the starting line and extending about 6 feet so you can measure your jump. Go through each of the following movements together.

- **Measure Up to a Chimpanzee** – Long arms help a chimpanzee climb, swing and move through the trees. Their arms are longer than their legs. Participants can measure their arms and legs with the measuring tape to see how they compare to a chimp.
- **Monkey Leap** - Colobus monkeys can leap an astounding 40 feet from tree to tree. They have an advantage over us because they use tree branches as catapults to help them clear these distances. Rather than using a catapult, test your jumping skills using a standing broad jump. Start between the cones next to the measuring tape you laid out and jump. You can measure how far you jumped with the measuring tape and compare this to a colobus monkey.
- **Lemur Leap** – Sifaka lemurs spend most of their time in trees and are excellent climbers and leapers. However, when they take to the ground, they display a very distinctive sideways leaping motion (leaping lemurs). You can try lemur leaping by leaping sideways while holding your arms straight out to the side.



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