

Happy Face Mean Face

Spin, face your partner, show happy or mean — match their face and tag them first to win.

SCAN TO SEE IT PLAYED



The core game

How it works

- 1 Pair up and stand back to back, feet just touching.
- 2 Count down together: 3, 2, 1 — then both players jump and complete a 180-degree spin.
- 3 As you land, pull either a happy face or a mean face at your partner.
- 4 If both faces match, first to tag the other player on the arm wins. If faces are different, spin again and replay.

Ways to play

Two versions for every occasion

Way 1 — Standing Version

Best for 2–30 players · Living room, backyard, or park

- Before starting, everyone counts down from 3, 2, 1 and practises making a big happy face, then a big mean face.
- Pair up and stand back to back with feet just touching.
- Count down 3, 2, 1 — jump and spin 180 degrees to face your partner.
- Both land showing either a happy or mean face. Same face = tag your partner fast. Different faces = go again.
- Play best of 5 rounds, then find a new partner and repeat.

Way 2 — Fitness Version

Best for 2–20 players · Backyard or hall

- Pairs start in a plank position facing away from each other, feet just about touching.
- On each count of 3, 2, 1 — both do a push-up, then jump up into a squat and spin to face each other.
- Land showing a happy or mean face. Same face = tag your partner. Different faces = go back to plank and repeat.
- Winner of each round stays. Loser completes 10 reps of a chosen exercise before finding a new partner.

TIP FOR PARENTS

Try this at home

Start with a quick practice round so everyone knows what a proper happy face and mean face look like — the more dramatic the better. Once your child beats you once, they will want a rematch every time.

THE SCIENCE OF
PLAY

Why it works

The unpredictability of matching expressions fires up the brain's attention and reaction systems, while the silliness of pulling faces instantly lowers social barriers and creates genuine connection. Laughter is a powerful bonding tool, and this game generates it in seconds.

SCHOOL ' HOME

The connection

Your child played this game at school today to get energised and connect with their classmates — playing it at home brings that same joy straight to your family.