



**Group Size** Individuals or teams of 2

**Age Range:** Elementary School — Adult

**Intensity:** Mental=2, Physical=1

**Time:** 5 — 30 minutes

**Space:** Minimal — Medium — Lots

**Set Up Time:** 60 seconds

**Props:** Each person (or pair) is supplied with: eyedropper, penny, small water container, paper towel

### **Objective**

Using a regular eyedropper, place as many drops of water on the head of a penny as you can. Keep track of the number of drops.

### **Setup / Preparation**

Provide one eyedropper, one penny, one paper towel, and one small container of water (half a cup) per person. Have everyone place his or her penny heads up on the paper towel. Before the group starts placing drops of water on their penny, ask them to FIRST determine how many drops of water they think they can get on the head of their penny (and write this number down). Then begin. Remember to count drops.

### **Rules**

The game is over when you place so many drops of water on the head of the penny that the water leaks off the penny and on to the paper towel.

### **Safety Warning**

Follow general safety procedures.

### **Comments**

The first time I did this activity I was asked to set a goal as to how many drops I thought I could fit on the head of a penny. I figured I could get 20 drops on. The reality? I was able to get over 50. I was totally amazed. The science behind the ability to place lots of drops of water on the head of a penny is called "surface tension".

### **Debriefing Suggestions**

This is an awesome activity to show the effect of setting goals. The first time I did this I way underestimated the number of drops I could fit on the head of my penny. I learned a great lesson - - or should I say, I EXPERIENCED a great lesson: I must be careful when setting goals because I may be greatly underestimating my real potential.

### **Quote**

"Everyone has faith in God though everyone does not know it. For everyone has faith in himself and that multiplied to the nth degree is God. The sum total of all that lives is God. We may not be God, but we are of God, even as a little drop of water is of the ocean."

-- Mohandas Gandhi

### **Variations**

Before the group arrives, contaminate one of the cups of water with a small amount of liquid soap. This will severely reduce the water's surface tension which means the person who ends up with this cup of water will not be able to get nearly as many drops of water on the head of their penny. When I've done this in the past I watch the reactions of the person with the cup AND the reaction of the people around this person. Often times people will place judgment on this unfortunate soul because they are having such miserable luck getting the water to bead up on their penny. During the debrief (process) I'll ask this person to share the frustration they felt and then I tell them about the soap I added to their water. This leads to a discussion about "contaminating the environment we work in" and how contamination (rumors, back stabbing, jealousy, etc.) decreases the capacity of the team rather than increases it. How can we manage the culture of our team / organization to maximize capacity?

By [Teamworkinaction.com](http://Teamworkinaction.com)