Passive resistance is essentially 'going limp' when police or security are trying to move you. There are usually 2 reasons why people choose to passively resist – the ideological and the tactical.

1. Ideologically it's a gesture of non-cooperation with the police or security guards that are trying to move you from an area. This can be very empowering.
2. Tactically it takes a lot more effort to move a passively resisting protester than a tense one. So passive resistance can tie up police resources and slow down the process of removing protesters. Arguably it can also keep you safer, as a relaxed body bruises less easily than a tense one.

Why use this exercise?

- Demonstrating and practising passive resistance gives participants a chance to think about and experience a technique in a safe space; to consider the practical aspects of safety such as what to wear, and what (not) to carry with them; and to be able to make mistakes without it mattering.
- It's a great exercise for getting a group working with each other. The physical nature of it breaks down some barriers.
- It can be a useful warm up to other physical sessions such as blockading techniques.
- It's an effective action technique.

Issues to explore

- Effectiveness – is the technique useful? In what situations?
- Health & Safety – what are the possible risks involved? What can you do to mitigate them?
- Empowerment – how does it feel to passively resist? Who has the power in the relationship with the police/ security?
- 'Fashion Tips' – what practical issues are there about the way you're dressed? What accessories are useful and what are potentially dangerous?

How to run the exercise

1. Issue a warning at the beginning that this isn't an exercise suitable for people with back problems or other physical limits. Make sure the group know it's optional and that there's always value in having observers (if you do have observers though, involve them by asking for feedback at relevant moments).
2. Demonstrate briefly with one facilitator sitting or lying in a tense fashion, and at least 2 volunteers trying to move them a few feet, Repeat with the 'protester' relaxing and going limp.
3. Ask for comments from observers, from the 'police' and add comments from the point of view of the protester. In your demonstration draw attention to the head and neck – emphasise that the chin can be tucked in tight to the chest to prevent injury to the head even when the rest of you is relaxed.
4. Divide your group into smaller groups of 3 or 5 (to practice 2 police moving 1 protester, or 4 police moving 1 protester as appropriate).
5. Ask the groups to find a space and practice until everyone that wants to has had a chance to be the protestor. It can be useful to ask the groups at this stage to be aware of any issues to do with safety or
clothing.
5. Circulate amongst the groups trouble shooting any problems, checking people understand the technique and aren't getting hurt!
6. Feedback to the full group – possible questions to ask them include: How did it feel? Was it effective? What was it like to be a police officer? How do you think they might feel after moving several protesters? Would that effect their behaviour? What safety issues arose? What about clothing?

Timing:
You can normally demonstrate and practice this, briefly, in 15 minutes but it would almost certainly benefit from longer.

Notes:
- The exercise should show clearly that relaxing makes it more difficult to move you.
- Draw out any other learning points related to clothing, jewellery, wearing rucksacks (see below).
- You might need to emphasise:
  - In the workshop, be aware that some people may not like this amount of physical contact with same or opposite sex. You might need to switch groups around or offer people the possibility of being an observer.
  - Also in the workshop, be aware of your own health and safety – if you're lifting protesters lift with a straight back, using your knees to give you the strength you need! OK, OK lecture over!
- On an action you need to be conscious of the difference between passive and active resistance (actively pulling away from the police, or in any way tussling with them can constitute a crime – obstructing a police officer – with obvious legal consequences. Passively resisting may not be liked by the police, but it isn't usually viewed as a crime, although in Scotland you are much more likely to face an 'obstruction' charge than in England).
  - It's your choice whether or not to passively resist, so you can get up and walk at any time if it gets uncomfortable or intimidating. It's not a competition, so don't feel obliged to passively resist.

Fashion Tips:
Hopefully most of these will arise from the groups' own experiences when practicing, but if not you might like to feed them in at appropriate moments:

- Wear appropriate clothing – for the weather and the style of action: e.g. being dragged across tarmac by the police whilst in inadequate clothes / shoes can lead to injury.
- Wear several layers of clothing to protect your body – you can remove clothing if it gets too warm, but can't add clothing if it gets cold if you haven't brought it with you!! Spare clothing also serves as padding in your rucksack, protecting your spine & kidneys against injury and helping keep your head off the floor.
- Removing jewellery – any jewellery can get caught on clothing or people in the melee of direct action. You might unintentionally injure yourself, fellow protesters or the police (which could lead to prosecution). Better to remove it in advance rather than lose it on an action.
- Tie up hair – helps prevent entanglement, and gives police & security less to get hold of.
- Cut finger nails and remove false nails – as with jewellery, helps prevent injury to you and others.