

Home Activities to Develop Gross Motor Skills

Gross Motor Skills Groups

This is one of a series of activities designed to aid the development of a child's gross motor skills. Each session begins with some warm up exercises to improve the children's balance, co-ordination, bi-lateral integration and spatial awareness. A range of equipment is used during the sessions that have been approved and recommended by physiotherapists and occupational therapists.

Most exercises are also attempted without vision.

Equipment used

Benches, hoops, quoits, cones, mats, physio balls, physio rolls, scoot boards, a variety of weights and sizes of balls, rocker board, bubble wrap, bean bags, tunnels, hockey sticks, markers and posts.

How the equipment is used

Benches: to walk forwards, backwards, sideways, on tiptoes, heels and heel to toe. To pull along whilst on stomach, crawl and step ups. Occasionally hoops are placed around the benches and the children crawl under or over them. The benches are usually put out on angles or straight lines.

Quoits, cones and markers: to make courses for the children to follow.

Mats: these are nearly always set out diagonally. Children follow the direction around the edge of the mats by walking, running, knee walking or using hockey sticks and balls.

Tunnels: to crawl through, to roll in and to roll balls through.

Physio ball and roll: to sit on, lay on (front and back), to act as support.

Rocker board: for balance.

Variety of balls: different weights and sizes for visual and spatial perception.

Scoot boards: to lay on, sit on and kneel on.

Edra cones and hoops: are used to make an obstacle course. All the warm up exercises for balance, body awareness, body perception and co-ordination are attempted without vision.

Activities for Home

All these exercises can help to improve hand/eye/foot co-ordination, hand/finger/wrist strength/shoulder/arm/leg strength, balance, body and spatial awareness.

If the exercises involve being stood up then make sure the child is stood straight, feet pointing forwards, shoulders back and looking straight ahead. Sponge exercises can also be attempted in the bath.

- Put a small sponge ball into the palm of your left hand and with your arm outstretched in front of you, squeeze the ball to the count of 10.
- Put a small ball into the palm of your right hand and with your arm outstretched in front of you, squeeze the ball to the count of 10. Then open your hand. Repeat 10 times. Repeat with the left hand.
- Get a piece of bubble wrap and use each finger alternately to pop the bubbles.
- Get a piece of bubble wrap and pop the bubbles using your thumb and finger together.
- Get a piece of bubble wrap and try to pop the bubbles with your toes.
- Get a large piece of bubble wrap, hold one end in each hand and wring it to pop the bubbles.
- Get a tea towel or piece of cloth and wring it backwards and forwards.
- Get a piece of paper and squeeze it into a ball. Use your left hand, right hand and then both hands.
- Get a piece of paper and fold it into the smallest piece possible using your finger and thumb.
- Make a dough recipe (salt dough, play dough or bread dough) then knead the dough using your right hand, left hand and both hands.
- Throw and catch a balloon individually or with a partner tracking the balloon with your eyes.
- Crawl across the floor whilst blowing a balloon.
- Sit on a chair with your back straight, feet flat on the floor and stand up and sit down. Repeat this 10 times.
- Use your stairs for step-ups. Step up with your right leg first, then your left, then come back down with your left leg first. Alternate which leg you start with. (Facing up the stairs)

- Step down (as though you are coming downstairs) with your right leg, then left leg. While still facing downstairs, with your right leg, step up backwards and then your left leg. Repeat 10 times.
- Play clapping games, alternating the rhythm and speed. Slow, fast, 2 claps then 4 claps etc.
- Control a small bag using your left foot then right foot around the room, watching the ball the whole time. Alternatively, set up a small obstacle outside.
- Outside, bounce a ball using your left hand, then right hand and then both hands alternately. Try to keep a rhythm going.
- Chalk wavy, curved or zig zag lines outside and get the child to follow the pattern when walking, running, hopping, skipping, jumping or whilst riding a bike.

