

# Gross Motor Activity Pack

Physiotherapy &  
Occupational Therapy

The prevention of infection is a major priority in all healthcare and everyone has a part to play.

- Please decontaminate your hands frequently for 20 seconds using soap and water or alcohol gel if available
- If you have symptoms of diarrhoea and/or vomiting, cough or other respiratory symptoms, a temperature or any loss of taste or smell please do not visit the hospital or any other care facility and seek advice from 111
- Keep the environment clean and tidy
- Let's work together to keep infections out of our hospitals and care homes.


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# Children's Community Occupational Therapy

## Gross Motor Activity Pack - Identifying the Problem

This booklet has been designed to provide practical ideas and activities to help support your child to develop their gross motor skills. Gross motor skills are those which require the larger movements of the whole body for example; running, jumping and ball skills. Gross motor skills can also relate to spatial awareness, balance, coordination and motor planning (the ability to plan and perform a chosen activity).

Problem	Possible Causes	Things to Try
Clumsy / awkward movements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Poor core stability</li> <li>Difficulties with coordination</li> <li>Poor proprioception (sensory input to muscles and joints).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Refer to 'Core Stability Activities' (p5)</li> <li>Refer to 'Proprioceptive Activities for Children' (p6)</li> <li>Refer to 'Animal Walks' (p7)</li> <li>Refer to 'Activities to Develop Coordination' (p8-9)</li> <li>Cool Kids.</li> </ul>
Falls / Trips over easily	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Poor balance</li> <li>Poor spatial awareness</li> <li>Poor proprioception (sensory input to muscles and joints).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure well-fitting shoes that offer adequate support</li> <li>Refer to 'Activities to Develop Coordination' (p8-9)</li> <li>Refer to 'Spatial Awareness Activities' (p10)</li> <li>Cool Kids.</li> </ul>
Avoids physical play / sports / ball games etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reduced confidence</li> <li>Poor spatial awareness</li> <li>Poor core stability</li> <li>Poor balance</li> <li>Poor proprioception (sensory input to muscles and joints).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Refer to 'Spatial Awareness Activities' (p10)</li> <li>Refer to 'Core Stability Activities' (p5)</li> <li>Refer to 'Proprioceptive Activities for Children' (p6)</li> <li>Refer to 'Animal Walks' (p7)</li> <li>Refer to 'Fun Yoga Poses' (p11)</li> <li>Cool Kids.</li> </ul>
Difficulty using stairs (if not in line with overall development)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Poor balance</li> <li>Poor spatial awareness</li> <li>Poor proprioception (sensory input to muscles and joints).</li> </ul> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Refer to 'Activities to Develop Coordination' (p8-9)</li> <li>Refer to 'Spatial Awareness Activities' (p10)</li> <li>Refer to 'Proprioceptive Activities for Children' (p6)</li> <li>Refer to 'Core Stability Activities' (p5)</li> <li>Refer to 'Bilateral Motor Coordination Activities' (p12-13)</li> <li>Cool Kids.</li> </ul>
Difficulty following instructions or doing more than one thing at a time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Poor motor planning</li> <li>Sensitive to external distractions (e.g. noise / visual input)</li> <li>Difficulties with information processing</li> <li>Poor memory.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Refer to 'Activities to Develop Coordination' (p8-9)</li> <li>Refer to 'Animal Walks' (p7)</li> <li>Cool Kids</li> <li>See also Sensory Pack</li> <li>See also Fine Motor Pack.</li> </ul>

<p><b>Difficulties following page layout e.g., writing on the line, no spaces between words etc.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Poor motor planning</li> <li>• Sensitive to external distractions (e.g. noise / visual input)</li> <li>• Difficulties with information processing</li> <li>• Poor memory</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Refer to 'Activities to Develop Coordination' (p8-9)</b></li> <li>• <b>Refer to 'Animal Walks' (p7)</b></li> <li>• Cool Kids</li> <li>• See also Sensory Pack</li> <li>• See also Fine Motor Pack</li> </ul>
<p><b>Difficulty doing activities using two sides of the body together e.g. catching, jumping, marching etc</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Poor bilateral integration</li> <li>• Poor motor planning</li> <li>• Poor sequencing</li> </ul> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Refer to 'Activities to Develop Coordination' (p8-9)</b></li> <li>• <b>Refer to 'Spatial Awareness activities' (p10)</b></li> <li>• <b>Refer to 'Proprioceptive Activities for Children' (p6)</b></li> <li>• <b>Refer to 'Core Stability Activities' (p5)</b></li> <li>• Cool Kids</li> <li>• <b>Refer to 'Bilateral Motor Coordination Activities' (p12-13)</b></li> </ul>
<p><b>Muscles seem weak or child tires easily</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Poor proprioception (sensory input to muscles and joints)</li> </ul> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Refer to 'Activities to Develop Coordination' (p8-9)</b></li> <li>• <b>Refer to 'Spatial Awareness Activities' (p10)</b></li> <li>• <b>Refer to 'Proprioceptive Activities for Children' (p6)</b></li> <li>• <b>Refer to 'Core Stability Activities' (p5)</b></li> <li>• Cool Kids</li> </ul>
<p><b>Reduced awareness of personal space</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Poor spatial awareness</li> </ul> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Refer to 'Activities to Develop Coordination' (p8-9)</b></li> <li>• <b>Refer to 'Spatial Awareness Activities' (p10)</b></li> <li>• <b>Refer to 'Proprioceptive Activities for Children' (p6)</b></li> <li>• Cool Kids</li> <li>• <b>Refer to 'Animal Walks' (p7)</b></li> <li>• <b>Refer to 'Fun Yoga Poses' (p11)</b></li> </ul>
<p><b>Unable to, or difficulty jumping with two-feet together (if not in line with overall development)</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Poor balance</li> <li>• Poor motor planning</li> <li>• Poor coordination</li> </ul> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Refer to 'Spatial Awareness Activities' (p10)</b></li> <li>• <b>Refer to 'Proprioceptive Activities for Children' (p6)</b></li> <li>• Cool Kids</li> <li>• <b>Refer to 'Animal Walks' (p7)</b></li> <li>• <b>Refer to 'Core Stability Activities' (p5)</b></li> <li>• <b>Refer to 'Bilateral Motor Coordination Activities' (p12-13)</b></li> </ul>

## Core Stability Activities

Core stability activities help to improve a child's coordination and underlying postural stability and balance. They also assist in providing proprioceptive input which has a calming and grounding effect.

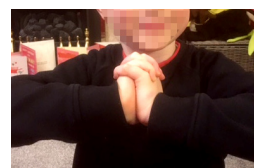
- Skipping (with a rope)
- 'Superman' pose (to maximum of 20 seconds) – on a mat, lie on tummy. Lift arms and legs off floor simultaneously, keeping arms bent and legs straight
- Tummy ball – Lie on tummy and push a large ball into a goal using two hands, elbows off the floor. Rest arms on floor in between each go
- "Hedgehogs" – lie on mat. Cross hands on chest. Bend knees. Lift head and shoulders off mat towards knees. Repeat twice with a rest in between. Increase the length of each hold up to a count of 20
- Sit-ups (knees bent) – lie on mat with knees bent, arms stretched out. 'Sit-up' sufficiently to touch knees, then lie back down. Repeat several times
- Cross-over half sit-ups – lie on mat with knees bent. Touch elbow of right arm to left knee and vice versa. Repeat several times
- Ball sit up – lie on mat with knees bent. Sit up to reach a ball held by partner. Lie back with knees bent and throw the ball to partner
- Four point balance – starting on all fours in crawling position, lift different combinations of hands/legs off the floor e.g., left arm and right leg and then swap sides. Hold position for the count of 5
- Play the game "twister" for a few minutes. Useful to use with a group
- Sit on ball, lift one leg and maintain, lift opposite arm and maintain. Try combination of positions. Catch ball whilst sitting and balancing
- Monkey bars or Trapeze bar - to swing and hold
- Bottom Walking- sit on floor with legs straight in front and arms and shoulders out, move forward on bottom, again good to do with others.



## Proprioceptive Activities for Children

Proprioception is the information that we get from muscles and joints to tell us where our body is in space. Activities that include heavy muscle work, such as pushing, pulling or carrying, give us lots of proprioception. These activities can help a highly sensitive child to calm, or to increase alertness in children who take their time to get going. They aim to get the child's 'arousal' levels just right. They can be used to calm a child when they need to be more focused e.g., before doing homework, or when they are becoming wound up. They also help to improve body awareness.

- Lemon squeezes (making a tight fist) and star stretches for fingers – Repeat 5 times
- Hand presses – interlock fingers, press together and release 10 times
- Head presses – interlock fingers on top of head and push down
- Playing with playdough or using other resistive materials such as pastry
- Sitting on hands, tense whole body and lift legs off the floor – hold for 20 seconds then relax
- Wall presses – lean on the wall pressing firmly with both hands – press for 20 seconds. Try to 'push the wall over'
- Table push-ups – standing between two tables with a hand placed firmly on each. Lift legs to support full body weight with arms and hold for a count of 5 or 10
- Carrying, pushing and pulling objects e.g., The supermarket trolley, carrying their school bag or pushing a pram
- Have the child carry weights in their pockets as they are walking
- Crashing into beanbags or crash mats
- Jumping on a trampoline – supervised and only used if the child enjoys it!
- Giving firm hugs
- Wrap up tightly in a towel after bath time and rub their limbs and back firmly
- Ask the child to be a sausage for your 'hot dog'. Wrap them up tightly in a blanket (the bun). Ask them if they want onions or sauce – add them by applying pressure to their body
- Chewing gum (if suitable for your child)
- Sucking thick milkshakes through a straw
- Cycling
- Hopscotch
- Using heavy blankets or well tucked in bedding
- Climbing
- Using monkey bars
- Playing Tug of War
- Animal walks – pretend to be elephants, bears, frogs, kangaroos' etc. Try positions that get them on all fours or jumping
- Wheelbarrow walks
- Moving furniture to help with vacuuming
- Washing the car / floors / windows.



# Animal Walks

## What types of walks can my child try?

### Kangaroo:

- Stand with hands and feet together
- Jump across the room
- Land with two feet together



### Bear:

- Stand and put hands on the floor
- Walk on hands and feet
- Stride across the floor with your bottom in the air



### Chicken:

- Stand and bend elbows
- Hands tucked under your arms
- Flap across the room



### Frog:

- Stand and weight bear on hands and feet
- Move both hands forward
- Jump bringing the feet to join the hands
- Leap across the room



### Newt:

- Lie on the floor on your tummy
- Put one arm forward
- Bend the opposite leg
- Move across the floor using one arm and then the opposite leg



### Duck:

- Stand on your feet
- Grip ankles with your hands
- Waddle across the floor



### Crab:

- Sit on the floor
- Bend knees so that your feet are flat on the floor
- Put your straight arms behind you
- Hands are on the floor
- Lift your bottom up and down
- Progress to walk sideways across the floor



### Snake:

- Lie on the floor on your tummy
- Crawl across the floor using your elbows and dragging your legs



### Giraffe:

- Arms by your sides
- Stride across the room



### Penguin:

- Wobble across the floor
- Hands by sides
- Walking on heels



# Activities to Develop Coordination

## How do our bodies achieve coordination?

Good coordination depends on your body giving the right information to your brain about your balance and the position of your arms and legs. For children who have problems with poor balance or coordination this automatic process may not work as well as it should.

Some children with poor coordination also have difficulties with speech, and activities such as blowing or sucking. They may also have a tendency to dribble and may not be able to blow their nose.

The sensations which are most important for coordination are:

- **Touch** – being able to explore with our skin (usually fingers or mouth). A variety of textures gives us greater tactile (touch) experience
- **Body awareness (proprioception)** - a sense of your body's position based on information from your muscles and joints. It helps you to know where your body is and how to move it. We increase our body awareness by actively using our muscles to push, pull or lift
- **Movement & gravity (vestibular)** - comes from special cells in your inner ear and gives you your sense of movement and gravity. This is important for balance and muscle tone, posture and eye movement. We increase our vestibular input when we take part in activities that involve movement and change of head position.

## What activities can help to improve coordination?

These are broadly grouped around the senses which will benefit the most from the activities:

### 1. Activities related to touch.

**A note of caution:** Some children are very sensitive to sensations such as touch, sound and smell. Please do not force your child to take part in any activity that makes them feel uncomfortable – this could lead to more overreaction. Instead you might want to focus more on the 'body awareness' activities.

- Using 'feely bags' – hiding objects in a bag or a box of dried lentils for your child to find, match or describe
- Playing with sand – drawing pictures, patterns or letters
- Finger painting
- Leaf rubbing with a wax crayon
- Writing or drawing patterns in shaving foam on a worktop
- Tearing paper or making papier mache
- Making peg board patterns.



### 2. Activities related to body awareness.

- Pushing – for example, helping to move furniture, a heavy trolley or wheelbarrow
- Pulling – for example, tug of war
- Crawling – using tunnels, or just around the house
- Walks in the fresh air with boots or a rucksack
- Playing swingball – children can hit the ball as hard as they like!
- Wheelbarrow walking – as the child gets stronger, support the knees and then ankles of the child
- Completing obstacle courses – homemade ones, to include rolling, crawling, jumping
- Playing with play dough, pastry or modelling clay
- Reaching overhead – this stretches muscles for good posture before doing homework
- Hand squeezes and stretches – an excellent activity to try before writing





### 3. Activities related to vestibular function.

**A note of caution:** some children can appear to seek vestibular input, but then their nervous system can overreact. This might not be apparent until much later but can include feeling sick, appearing to be 'spaced out', misbehaving or being more emotional than usual. Each child is different so please be guided by your child.

These are some of the things which might be suggested:

- Swinging. If your child can't swing on their own you may need to push them if asked
- Riding a scooter or bike
- Hanging upside down – very close supervision will be needed for those children with poor coordination in case their arms and legs let go suddenly
- Spinning, twirling, rough and tumble play
- Rocking – using a rocking horse, or on motorised rides
- Running
- Using a mini trampoline (this can also help with body awareness).



### 4. Activities related to oral (mouth) motor control.

- Blowing games – using blow pens or straws to blow bubbles in water
- Sucking through a straw. Using a narrower straw or a thicker fluid (like a milkshake) will increase the amount of effort involved
- Using blow toys and musical instruments – the recorder is good for improving controlled breathing through the mouth and also finger movements.



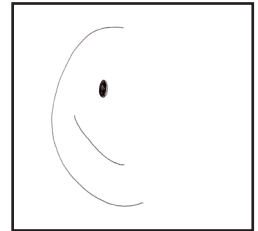
### Is there anything else I can do to help with my child's coordination?

Children with coordination difficulties can become reasonably skilful at an activity if they enjoy it, and are motivated to work hard at it. These activities can in turn help to develop their coordination. Finding an activity your child really enjoys can be the key to them managing their coordination and feeling better about themselves.

## Spatial Awareness Activities

Any of the following activities may be suitable:

- **Singing 'action songs'** – using different parts of the body
- **Playing movement games** – requiring the child to use space and position
- **Completing obstacle courses** – using tunnels
- **Swimming** – improves awareness of body and position
- **Following directions** – using PE games or other physical activities
- **Line walking** – ask the child to walk along a line of chalk on the floor. Ask them to walk along the left side of the line and then the right side
- **Playing 'follow the leader'** – (group activity) – put the children into groups of about 8. Appoint one child as the leader. The others have to follow the leader and copy their actions as they go. Change the leader after a couple of minutes
- **Climbing activities** – using a range of large and small apparatus
- **Balancing activities** - using a range of large and small apparatus
- **Drawing a person** – encourage the child to look carefully at the position of the features of a real person
- **Drawing around a person** – ask one child to lie on the floor on a large piece of paper (e.g., lining paper) and ask the other children to draw around them
- **Practising animal walks** – pretending to be elephants, bears, frogs, kangaroos etc.
- **Making snow angels** – on the floor
- **Playing 'twister'** – this can also help children in using 'left' and 'right'
- **Using maps** – reading directions or following directions on a map with others
- **Using 2-dimensional shapes** – arranging them or drawing around them.



# Fun Yoga Poses



Mountain



Tree I



Tree II



Warrior 1



Warrior 2



Warrior 3



Standing forward bend



Cow



Cat



Downward facing dog



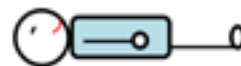
Cobra



Superman



Crossed Leg



Relax

## Bilateral Motor Co-ordination Activities

Bilateral motor co-ordination refers to the ability to co-ordinate both body sides.

*Ideas for developing bilateral activities / using two hands in a co-ordinated way*

### a. Arms work together, moving in the same direction:

- Hitting a balloon or a ball strung on string, with cardboard middle of an empty kitchen roll, holding it with one hand at each end
- Pushing a large ball or trolley with both hands
- Clapping and knee slapping action games – hands together, hands against person 5-10times
- Playdough – using rolling pin or both hands – cutting it up with knife
- Playing a drum, banging it with both hands at the same time.
- Stencils – animals, objects, shapes – ensure independently holds the stencil. To colour in, ensure child stabilises paper. To cut out, ensure outline is clear.

### b. Arms move in opposite or reciprocal directions:

- Marching, swinging arms
- Action songs
- Finger painting, making a big circle with each hand at the same time
- Pushing together/pulling apart activities (bubble paper, popper buttons).

### c. Arms alternate movements:

- Hitting a balloon with a bat in both hands
- Walking on hands (wheelbarrows)
- Playing a xylophone
- Crawling, creeping on hands and knees.



### **To encourage crossing the midline of the body**

When children are doing activities and at mealtimes, always put the tools that the child is using in the middle or in front of them (for e.g., cutlery, pencil /pens / crayons / scissors), so that they can decide which hand works best for them. If tools are put to either side, the child/young person is likely to pick up using the nearest hand and may not swap to the hand which is more skilled.

### **These games can help them to learn to reach across:**

- Batting activities, keeping bat in one hand only (forehand and backhand movements)
- Drawing the largest circle possible or a line across a blackboard using just one hand and keeping body still
- Sitting on floor and drawing biggest arc (curved, rainbow shape) with chalk (or in sand at the beach)
- During fine motor activities – play games side sitting (with both legs to one side, leaning on one arm) on floor placing game on same side as arm they are leaning on
- Throwing bean bags at different targets on the opposite side of the body ensure body doesn't turn
- Play 'Simon Says' games with arms and hands crossing over to the other side of body
- When the child is playing a game or doing a puzzle on the floor, encourage them to get onto their hands and knees, put part of the game (e.g. the puzzle pieces) on one side of them and the rest (the puzzle board) on the other. Encourage them to keep one hand on the floor and just use the other to pick up the pieces and put into the puzzle (reaching across) or play the game.



## English

If you need information in another way like easy read or a different language please let us know.

If you need an interpreter or assistance please let us know.

## Lithuanian

Jeigu norėtumėte, kad informacija jums būtų pateikta kitu būdu, pavyzdžiui, supaprastinta forma ar kita kalba, prašome mums apie tai pranešti.

Jeigu jums reikia vertėjo ar kitos pagalbos, prašome mums apie tai pranešti.

## Polish

Jeżeli chcieliby Państwo otrzymać te informacje w innej postaci, na przykład w wersji łatwej do czytania lub w innym języku, prosimy powiedzieć nam o tym.

Prosimy poinformować nas również, jeżeli potrzebowaliby Państwo usługi tłumaczenia ustnego lub innej pomocy.

## Punjabi

ਜੇ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਇਹ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਕਿਸੇ ਹੋਰ ਰੂਪ ਵਿਚ, ਜਿਵੇਂ ਪੜ੍ਹਨ ਵਿਚ ਆਸਾਨ ਰੂਪ ਜਾਂ ਕਿਸੇ ਦੂਜੀ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਵਿਚ, ਚਾਹੀਦੀ ਹੈ ਤਾਂ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਦੱਸੋ।

ਜੇ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਦੁਭਾਸ਼ੀਏ ਦੀ ਜਾਂ ਸਹਾਇਤਾ ਦੀ ਲੋੜ ਹੈ ਤਾਂ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਦੱਸੋ।

## Romanian

Dacă aveți nevoie de informații în alt format, ca de exemplu caractere ușor de citit sau altă limbă, vă rugăm să ne informați.

Dacă aveți nevoie de un interpret sau de asistență, vă rugăm să ne informați.

## Traditional Chinese

如果您需要以其他方式了解信息，如易读或其他语种，请告诉我们。

如果您需要口译人员或帮助，请告诉我们。