

Core Stability Activities

To have good control of movement, we need to be able to stabilise our joints. Poor core stability means not being able to balance the muscles in our trunks, around our hips, and around our shoulders. Check to see if your child can hold their body up for sustained periods of time, without leaning on their hands or against furniture, whilst sitting on the floor.

Superman

Have your child lie on their tummy with their arms in front of them and then simultaneously raise their head, arms and legs off the ground. Legs should be kept straight. Encourage your child by saying “you’re flying like superman”. Start with 5 seconds and work your way up to 20 seconds as your child’s strength increases.

Football Roll

Have your child lie on their tummy propping on their forearms. Place a football between their hands, ask your child to place both hands onto the ball and roll it away from their body (keeping hands/arms in contact with the ball), then roll it back to starting point. Repeat this 5 times. Then ask your child to do the same activity first with their right hand then with their left. As your child’s stamina increases increase the number of repetitions

Chin Raises

Have your child lie on their back. Ask them to lift their head so the chin touches the chest. Hold for a count of 3 and slowly bring head back to the floor, gradually build up to 5 repetitions.

Animal walks-Crab

Have your child sit on their bottom, with knees bent, feet flat on the floor, and hands flat on the floor beside or slightly behind their bottom. Ask them to lift their bottom off the floor, taking their weight through their hands and feet. Walk forwards, backwards and sideways.

Frog

Ask your child to bend their knees and crouch down, resting their hands on the floor in front of them, with their elbows on the inside of their knees. Then they stretch their arms out in front of them, and lean through their hands (keeping elbows straight) as they hop their feet forward. Remember, their legs stay outside of their arms.

Arm circles

Have your child hold their arms out to the side. Make 10 small circles from the shoulder in a forward direction. Then make 10 small circles in a backward direction.

Body awareness

These activities have been put together to practise and improve co-ordination skills and body awareness. These skills are needed to navigate around the environment and help us to be more successful when learning a new skill.

- Body scheme songs e.g. 'Heads, shoulders, knees and toes'. 'This little piggy', etc.
- Use of rhythm e.g. march around the room to the beat of a metronome.
- Dress-up games.
- Simon says – can be played with eyes open and closed.
- Follow the leader.
- Follow a sequence of simple instructions, point to body parts, touch named body parts, or tighten and relax named body part – (can be done with eyes open or closed, or lying on the floor).
- Obstacle games – moving around, over, under, towards, through etc.
- Move around the room in different ways e.g. crab walk, bunny hops, wiggly worm.
- Encourage your child to carry heavy things (within reason for size) e.g. ask them to help carry in the shopping, carry small but heavy boxes.
- Pantomime i.e. acting out character actions of a particular occupation e.g. driving a bus.
- Life size drawings – draw around the child's body while lying on the floor on top of a large piece of paper. Ask the child to identify different body parts as you draw them.
- Mirror game – stand facing a partner and copy their exact movements.
- Star jumps – Child to complete star jumps. Begin with legs only. Once achieved, bring arms in. If struggling, complete slowly, prompting the child to stand tall like a soldier, then jump out like a star. Continue slowly.

Balance

Balance is the ability to stay upright, steady and in control of your posture while undertaking a movement activity. Your child needs to have developed good back and tummy muscle strength in order to balance successfully.

Balance is an important skill as it helps a child gain confidence and skills with physical movement and coordination.

- Take your child to a local playground regularly and encourage them to use as all the outdoor play equipment e.g. swings, slides, balance beams, climbing frames and ladders.
- Walking games – create different styles of walking e.g. fairy steps, giant steps, rabbit jumps, crab walks, slow moon walks.
- Tug of war – try these in sitting, high kneeling position, as well as standing.
- Balance in crawl position – let your child practise keeping their balance by lifting up one leg or one arm when in a crawling position. Make it more difficult by getting them to lift up a leg and arm at the same time.
- Aeroplanes – Have your child lie on the floor on their tummy. They then need to lift their head, shoulders, arms and legs off the floor, trying to hold this position for 10 seconds.
- Walking along a line – child to walk along different lines e.g. straight, zig zag, circle, etc. Encourage your child to walk forwards and backwards, heel/toe, pretending to be a tightrope walker. Take turns with your child and keep a score on how many times they stepped off of the line.
- Stepping stones – place cardboard cut-outs of circles, squares or triangles on the floor. See if your child can follow the course by placing one foot on each "stone". Vary the distance between them.
- 'Grandmothers footsteps' – Players start on the starting line with one person as 'it'. Players creep up behind 'it' but must be still when 'it' turns round. Anyone moving goes back to the start. First person to win becomes 'it'.
- Standing on one leg – when standing on one leg, initially hold their hands, then encourage letting go of your hand support. Get your child to try to maintain balance on one leg with hands on hips. When learning to stand on one leg, get your child to look straight ahead and focus on an object, then slowly lift their leg and hold it raised for as long as possible.
- Feet pick up – Child picks up marbles or objects with feet and places them in a container.