



# Gross Motor Skills

## WHAT ARE GROSS MOTOR SKILLS?

Gross motor skills are using the bigger muscles of the body (torso, arms and legs) for stabilising and coordinating whole body movements.



## WHY DO WE NEED GROSS MOTOR SKILLS?

We use gross motor skills in many activities of daily living, including walking, sitting, riding a bike, swimming, jumping, climbing a ladder, getting dressed, using stairs, kicking or throwing a ball and so many more things!

## WHAT ARE THE COMPONENTS OF GROSS MOTOR SKILLS?

### visual-motor integration

- hand-eye coordination
- visual input coordinated with motor output

### sensory processing

- receiving, interpreting and responding to sensory input
- predominantly includes tactile, visual, vestibular (movement and balance) and proprioception (body awareness) senses

### postural control and stability

- control the body's position against gravity
- being able to balance when still and in motion
- 'proximal stability for distal mobility' (being able to keep bigger, central muscles still to allow for movement and precision of the smaller, outer muscles)

### midline crossing

- reaching across the middle of the body

### core

- activation of inner core muscles
- supports stabilisation for balance and movement
- supports breath (and regulation!)

### praxis

- planning, sequencing and executing movements
- one of the most complex skills!



### bilateral coordination

- a sense of left and right
- using both sides of the body together (at the same time or alternately)

### reflex integration

- integrating automatic responses to develop smooth and coordinated motor patterns (such as being able to turn our head without whole body movements)

### push and pull

- activating muscles to push something away or pull something towards us
- involves balance and coordination

SEE OVER PAGE FOR ACTIVITY IDEAS TO DEVELOP GROSS MOTOR SKILLS





# Activity Ideas



## Posture and Stability, Bilateral Coordination



- bouncing on a fit ball
- throwing and catching a ball (add challenge levels such as on high knees, sitting down, standing on one leg)
- kicking a ball
- riding a bike or scooter
- balloon volley ball (use hands or paddles to keep off the floor, can add targets for points)
- obstacle courses
- crawling games (tag, through tunnels)
- animal walks (kangaroo, frog, giraffe, bear, dog, penguin, rabbit, tiger, crab)
- balancing (beam, balance pods)
- hopscotch
- swimming
- crawling on scooter boards

## Crossing Midline



- pool noodle fight
- twister
- wash a surface (windows, table, car)
- crawl through tunnels
- balloon volleyball with one hand
- drawing chalk rainbows
- using water and paintbrush to paint on an outside wall or footpath

## Push and Pull



- tug of war
- driving vehicles on a track
- wall push ups

## Core

- bubble monsters (filling a cup with water and a little dishwashing liquid, blow through a straw to create monsters/volcanoes - the longer, slower breaths the better)
- straw soccer (use a straw to blow a ping pong ball or cotton ball across the floor or table, while the other person tries to block it)
- naughts and crosses using a straw
- superman
- meatball



## Praxis

- 'Simon says'
- freeze dance
- obstacle courses, teach someone how to go through the course, use a blindfold for extra challenge!
- follow the leader
- swimming
- movement videos such as :
  - Just Dance or Go Noodle
- giant Jenga



## Visual-Motor Integration

- cricket
- soccer
- basketball
- netball
- dodge ball
- totem tennis
- heel-toe/balance beam walking
- riding a bike

