



Reflexes

WHAT ARE REFLEXES?

A reflex is a consistent involuntary response to a specific stimulus. They help us to develop our muscle tone, support our central nervous system to mature and essentially support us to survive. Some are designed to keep us safe, whilst others are designed to help us learn to move in a way that is coordinated and smooth. Reflexes follow a pattern where they emerge, develop, do their 'job' then integrate or transition into another reflex.



WHY DO WE NEED TO INTEGRATE REFLEXES?

Reflexes are the building blocks for organised and voluntary motor patterns. They are essential for a period of time to underlay and help initiate learning of controlled and coordinated motor behaviours. However, when a reflex is retained or not integrated, it can impact the body's ability to smoothly coordinate movement and respond appropriately to stimuli. This can mean completing everyday tasks such as writing, sitting, reading, attending, walking and even regulating emotions can be extra challenging. Anyone can present with retained reflexes and there is no clear evidence as to why reflexes don't always integrate.

TYPES OF REFLEXES

Intrauterine Reflexes: Develop in the womb in as little as 5 weeks and are whole body responses to a stimulus. They should integrate before the baby is even born.

Primitive Reflexes: Are a physical response to either a change in position or sensory input and they help not only the baby travel through the birth canal, but create the foundation for control against gravity. They integrate as higher level thinking skills develop and we gain voluntary control over our movement.

Transitional Reflexes: Are an 'in-between' reflex that support the body to move between primitive and life-long reflexes.

Life-Long Reflexes: Are designed to 'take over' when we are in immediate danger and will never integrate or diminish.





Reflexes

SPECIFIC REFLEXES

Tonic Labyrinthine Reflex



Purpose: head control, muscle tone
Movement: head/body movement looking up and down
Supports: posture, balance, using stairs, visual stability, sequencing and organising

Asymmetrical Tonic Neck Reflex



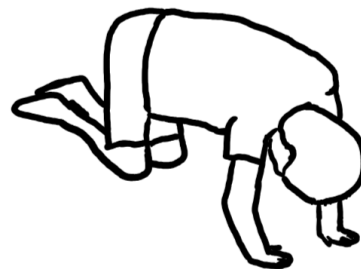
Purpose: birthing process
Movement: head/body movement looking left and right
Supports: crossing the midline, reading, writing, bike riding

Moro



Purpose: survival
Movement: away from midline, into midline
Supports: balance and coordination, flexibility, change, motion sickness, feeling safe and secure

Spinal Galant



Purpose: birthing process
Movement: back flexing side to side
Supports: bladder control, clothing sensitivities, tickling, sitting still

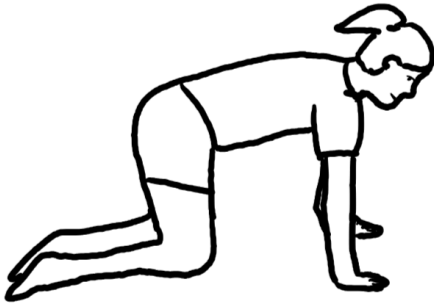




Reflexes

SPECIFIC REFLEXES

Symmetrical Tonic Neck Reflex



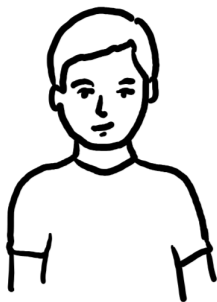
Purpose: crawling, mobilisation
Movement: head/body movement looking up and down
Supports: sitting position, hand-eye coordination, swimming, vision

Amphibian



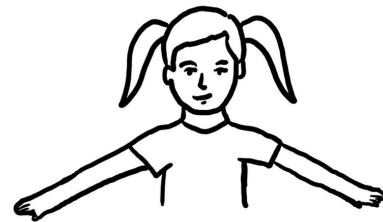
Purpose: crawling, walking, running, jumping
Movement: flexing the hip
Supports: rolling, crawling, coordinating lower limbs

Righting Reflex



Purpose: survival
Movement: head in midline

Protective Extension



Purpose: survival
Movement: extending arms when falling

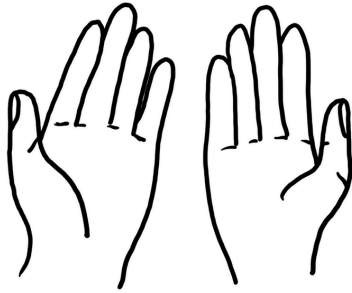




Reflexes

SPECIFIC REFLEXES

Palmar Reflex

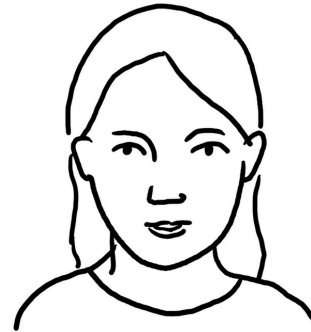


Purpose: grasp, motor control, connection

Movement: fingers flexing

Supports: fine motor control, pencil grip, tactile sensory processing, speech and mouth movements

Rooting Reflex



Purpose: feeding

Movement: turning of the head, opening of the mouth

Supports: swallowing and chewing, connection

Babinski



Purpose: crawl, walk, run

Movement: toes extending

Supports: balance, coordination, midline awareness, spatial orientation, language, tactile sensory processing

Plantar Reflex



Purpose: crawl, walk, run

Movement: toes flexing

Supports: balance, coordination, midline awareness, spatial orientation, language, tactile sensory processing

