

Why are gross motor skills important?

Gross motor (physical) skills are those which require whole body movement, and which involve the large muscles of the body to perform everyday functions, such as standing and walking, running and jumping, and sitting upright at the table.

They also include eye-hand coordination skills such as ball skills (throwing, catching, kicking) as well as riding a bike or a scooter and swimming.



Gross motor skills need to be developed in order to support and develop fine motor skills i.e. holding your body still and remaining stable while you grasp an object, such as a pencil or crayon.

Gross and fine motor skills are an essential tool that children use in the classroom, at home and on the playground. Play is one of the best ways to strengthen motor skills. When given ample opportunities to play with a variety of interesting materials, young children will grow in many new and exciting ways.

Useful websites

www.handsonaswegrow.com

www.yourtherapysource.com

www.ot-mom-learning-activities.com/gross-motor-activities.html

www.childdevelopment.com.au/areas-of-concern/gross-motor-skills/gross-motor-activities/

SEMH & Learning Team

Supporting gross motor skills at home

There are lots of opportunities to practise gross motor skills with your child:

At home:

- Sweeping with a broom
- Using a dust pan and brush
- Hoovering
- Helping with the washing and drying up
- Setting the table
- Cooking tasks that include stirring, rolling, kneading, pouring etc.
- **Play dough slime:** Both making it and playing with it
- **Water play in the bath with large toys/containers**
- **Watching TV while balancing on an exercise ball or space hopper**
- **Dusting**
- **Wiping**
- **Making the bed**
- **Bin basketball:** Screwing up paper and throwing it in the bin
- **Following movement/exercise programs:** Such as Jo Wicks
- **Movement songs:** Such as The Hokey Cokey, I'm a Little Teapot, If you're Happy and You Know it, Heads, Shoulders, Knees and Toes...
- **Playing games:** Like Twister and Simon Says



Outside:

- Bikes, trikes and scooters
- Hula hoops
- Skipping
- Jumping
- Hopping
- Trampoline
- Frisbee
- Space hopper
- Swing ball
- **Any gardening activities**
- **Football**
- **Throwing and catching** (start with a big ball/ balloon and get smaller)
- **Hide and seek**
- **Tennis or any bat/ball games** (again you can start with a balloon instead of a ball)
- **Stepping stones**
- **Balancing**
- **Skittles**
- **Any outdoor large play equipment** (swings, slides, see saws etc)



Other activities:

- Any physical after school clubs
- Swimming
- Dance and gymnastics
- Cricket
- Martial arts
- Soft play areas
- Playgrounds
- Horse Riding
- Bowling

