

Physical Activities for Children and Young People



Why is it important?

Keeping physically active is important for your child especially once they have finished their physiotherapy as it:

- Keeps a strong heart and ensures healthy growth and development
- Improves posture, balance and general coordination
- Builds and maintains strong healthy muscles, bones and joints
- Means children are less likely to become overweight
- Reduces anxiety, depression and improves self esteem

What are the guidelines?

The NHS recommends that children and young people between the ages of 5 – 18 should carry out the following in order to keep healthy:

Children and young people need to do 2 types of physical activity each week:

- aerobic exercise
- exercises to strengthen their muscles and bones

In order to carry this out the following is advised:

- aim for an average of at least 60 minutes of moderate intensity physical activity a day
- take part in a variety of types and intensities of physical activity across the week to develop movement skills, muscles and bones
- reduce the time spent sitting or lying down and break up long periods of not moving with some activity. Aim to spread activity throughout the day. All activities should make your child breathe faster and feel warmer

In view of the Government Guidelines for COVID-19

- It is important that your child continues to be as active as they would be at school so make sure they walk and run around as they usually would

- You may go out once a day for exercise but must stay at least 6 feet (2 meters) away from other people. Viruses can spread when someone sneezes or coughs out tiny droplets. These droplets don't usually travel more than 6 feet before falling to the ground.

- Even people who look healthy can still be infected and spread the virus that causes COVID-19 which is why it is important to **stay away from everyone**, even if they don't seem unwell. Keep away from family members if they are sick or self-isolating
- Ensure your child washes their hands for at least 20 seconds (2 lots of Happy Birthday!) as frequently as possible especially when they come back into the home, blow their nose, sneeze or cough, or eat. Otherwise use hand gel.
- Discourage them from touching their eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands and to cough or sneeze into a tissue and throw into a bin and wash hands. Also ensure you frequently clean and disinfect touched objects, toys/games and surfaces in the home
- **Keep up to date and follow the [government guidelines](#) related to Coronavirus**

The following activities are recommended for you to do at home with ONLY people from your household.

Ideas to do at home:

General:

- Brisk walking - start at 10 minutes and increase time by 5 minutes per week until you can do 20 – 30 minutes
- Riding a bicycle or scooter
- **NB - remember to keep a distance of 2 metres if you meet other people on your walk**

In the garden:

- Hopscotch
- Swing ball, badminton, tennis, other racket games
- Bowling
- Football – kick the ball in and out of small obstacles such as empty plastic bottles or kick the ball to another person or into a goal. You can make up goals using garden furniture or items they find and try out different sized goals
- Obstacle courses
- Jumping, hopping, skipping around the garden
- Long jump – see how far you can jump
- Family races such as walking quickly, walking sideways or backwards running, skipping, hopping, sack races, walking around obstacles with a small ball in a cup without dropping the ball
- Obstacle courses

- Treasure hunt
- Hit the bubbles – blow bubbles in the air and see how many you can catch before they reach the ground
- Tug of war with just your child at one end and one person at the other end
- If you have a dog, playing with your dog, chasing, throwing the ball or taking him/her for a walk
- Skipping with a rope (for those able to)
- Using a trampet or bouncer
- Rounders, cricket
- Kick bowling
- Throwing and catching balls in the garden, throw a ball against the wall and catch it
- Using a bat or even your hands, practice batting a balloon or ball to yourself
- Hide and seek

- Especially for younger children:
 - When the weather is nice, water paint the outside walls
 - Fly a kite
 - Use some rope or tape to walk along the line forwards and sideways. Practice jumping over the rope too
 - Walk in and out of boxes or if you have ladder in between the struts
 - Make paper airplanes and throw them as far as they can go
 - Puddle jumping
 - Keep the balloon up: practice hitting the balloon up in the air without letting it touch the ground (could be done in the house)

In the home:

- Going up and down stairs at least 3 times – try doing this quickly too. You can also increase the number of times
- Push over the parents “parents stand still and your child has to try and push you over”. You can also do this in high kneeling
- Games such as Twister, Simon Says
- Dance mats or dance routines
- Computer games such as VR games, Wii which include physical movement
- Inside races such as walking on knees, crab walking, bear walking, push alongs
- Musical chairs and statues
- Darts, inside bowling (use empty plastic bottles and a soft ball)

- Especially for younger children
 - Animal walk: encourage your child to slither like a snake, hop like a frog, gallop like a horse, walk like a bear (this can be done outside too!)
 - Islands game: Set out cushions around the room just far enough for your child to be able to step onto each one and make a game of going onto the islands to collect treasure to take back to the beginning
 - Ribbon sticks; tie some ribbons onto a stick and make waves and swirl
 - Walk around the room/ house balancing a bean bag on their head.
 - Bubble wrap – if you have any bubble wrap practice popping it with fingers or even jumping on it to see how many you can pop
 - Walk with a balloon between your legs trying not to let it burst
 - Hang a balloon by a string from your doorway or outside so it is a few inches higher than your child's arm reach. See how many times they can tap the balloon gently with their hand.
 - Use rolled up socks (Dad's socks work best!) and practice throwing them into boxes or onto specific spots on the floor (you can practice this standing, high kneeling or standing on a cushion)
 - Use a towel or sheet and make it into a parachute so you and your child hold the edges and see if you can toss up rolled up socks or scarf
 - Indoor obstacle course (go under tables, over sofa, walk on knees around furniture etc)

This Information Sheet was produced with thanks to Dyspraxia Foundation Patron, Michele Lee MBE

Further information is available from

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