

Vancouver Regional Pediatric Team

Gross Motor Skill Development



Jumping with Both Feet

- Pull down on the child's hands to encourage them to bend their knees. Then the child straightens up quickly.
- Progress to having the child bend their knees and then raise/swing both arms up as they straighten up.
- As the child straightens up, encourage them to push off so that they jump up in the air.
- A rebounder (mini trampoline) is useful to give the child the idea of bouncing/jumping.
- Practice jumping up, gradually increasing the height the child jumps.



Jumping Down



- Start by having the child jump down from a low height (i.e. down from the first step of stairs or curb). You may need to hold hands to start.
- Reduce contact with the child gradually (2 hands held → one hand held → One finger held) so that the child touches hands only on landing. Finally, hold out hands but do not allow contact throughout the jump.
- Gradually increase the height from which the child is jumping, using the same procedure of gradually giving less help.





Hopping



- The child will require a degree of balance on one leg before she can hop.
- You may need to hold the child's hand at first to help with balance. Start holding 2 hands and as they improve give less help (2 hands → one hand → on finger)
- Encourage the child to bend the knee and then straighten it.
- Try bouncing (bending and straightening the knee) without leaving the floor.
- Gradually encourage the child to hop in place.
- Progress to hopping forward on one foot.
- The child may do better on one foot than the other
- Use a non-slip target for the child to hop onto (I.e. Non-slip decals that are usually used on a bathtub or a shape cut out of a piece of felt).
- Increase the number of hops in a row. Count or monitor and record progress.
- Try hopping to either side over a ruler or piece of string or masking tape on the floor



Jump Rope

1. Stretch out a rope in a straight line on the ground. Start at one end of the rope and jump with two feet side to side over the rope to the other end. Also try jumping forwards and backwards over the rope and continue down to the end. Ask 2 students to gently swing rope forward and back, without going overhead for student to jump over.
2. Attach a small weight (1/2 lb) to one end of a rope. Swing the rope around in a circle slowly so that the child can jump over the rope as it passes by. Make sure the rope is not too far off the ground.
3. The child holds an end of the skipping rope in each hand (making sure that the rope just touches the ground behind the feet). The child swings the rope overhead from back to front, keeping arms out to the side approximately waist high. Begin by having the child turn the rope once, letting it hit the floor in front and then just step over it. Progress to having the child jump the rope instead of just stepping over it. The child can practice jumping the rope by just swinging it from the front to the back without bringing it over the head.

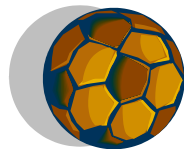
Ball Activities



Some general guidelines regarding ball activities are:

- a) Start with a larger ball and progress to a smaller one.
- b) Start with a soft “Nerf” type of ball or a beach ball if the child is hesitant or turns away from the ball due to fear of being hit.
- c) Start by practicing throwing; it is easier to throw than to catch.
- d) Start with overhand throwing; it is easier to throw overhand because it gives a stronger throw. When trying to hit a target, have the child use an underhand throw as this is easier to aim with an underhand throw.
- e) When throwing to a child, throw to the middle of the body at first rather than to the side.
- f) When learning catching, it is easier for a child to “catch” a rolled or a bounced ball, or a light weight (Nerf, beach) ball because it gives the child more time to respond.
- g) When bouncing a ball, start by having the child drop the ball and then catch it with both hands. Progress to bouncing with one hand.
- h) As skill with throwing or kicking a ball improves you can have the child direct the ball at a target (i.e. kicking to a goal).
- i) If a child is having particular difficulty you may want to start by rolling the ball rather than throw it to the child, and then having him/her catch it or kick it back to you.

Rolling



- Start with the child sitting on the floor
- Sit behind the child and use hand-over-hand to show the child how to roll the ball
- Try rolling to someone (brother or sister or friend) to teach turn taking
- Try rolling the ball to knock something over (aiming or targeting)
- Remind the child to watch the ball when he or she is catching it. He or she may need hand-over-hand help.
- Start with a large ball and move to a smaller one as the child improves.

Throwing



- Start with the child sitting and use a large ball. Use hand-over-hand as needed.
- Types of throwing form easiest to hardest:
 - 2 handed overhand →
 - 2 handed underhand →
 - 2 handed bouncing →
 - 1 handed overhand →
 - 1 handed underhand →
 - 1 handed bouncing →
 - Throw to a target (i.e. empty plastic pop bottle)
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- For 2 handed throwing use a large ball, for one handed throwing use a small ball

Catching



- To practise tracking, start with the child sitting on floor with legs apart, using a large ball rolled to the child
- Use hand-over-hand help as needed
- Remind the child “get ready” with their “arms out”
- Once the child can catch a rolled ball, try bouncing a large ball so that it hits the ground once before it reaches the child and they catch it.
- Progress to throwing the ball underhand and then to overhand. It is easier to catch an underhand toss than an overhand toss.
- Progress to using a smaller ball
- You may also wish to practice catching with bean bags as they are easier to hold onto than a small ball.

Kicking



- Start with having the child kick a large ball that is standing still. You can practice by kicking over other objects like a tower of blocks.
- Kicking requires short term balance on one leg, so you may need to hold your child's hand or let then stand by a wall or a piece of furniture that they can hold onto.
- Progress to kicking a rolling ball
- Progress to kicking to a target such as kicking the ball through a goal post or to knock over plastic bowling pins or a tower of blocks

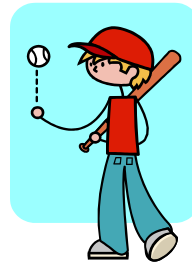
Advanced Ball Skills

Targeting Games



Velcro mitt catch games
Bowling
T-ball
Basketball

Ball and Stick Games:



Golf
Baseball
Hockey

Balance

If your child is having difficulty with balance, try these activities, listed in order of easiest to hardest:

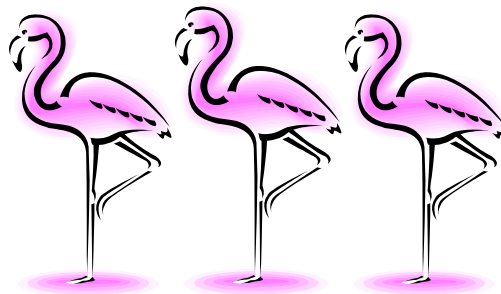


- Try balancing on hands and knees while a) lifting one limb at a time b) lifting the arm and leg on the same side c) lifting the arm and leg on opposite sides
- Try having the child practice walking on their knees
- Play catch games in which they have to reach, causing them to have to adjust to maintain their balance in kneeling and standing.
- Play catch games in a half kneeling position (balancing on one foot and one knee)
- Standing in place with feet in a heel-toe position
- Have the child walk along a path made with two masking tape lines on the floor. Gradually move the lines closer together to encourage a smaller base of support.
- Try walking on a single line of masking tape on the floor
- Try walking heel to toe on a line
- Try walking along a bench, a curb or border of playground equipment
- Try walking on a bench forward (heel to toe), backwards, sideways
- Try walking on a bench/balance beam while stepping over objects placed on the balance beam.
- Try exercises on a physioball while seated to improve balance in sitting.

Single leg standing



- Practice standing on one foot, with the other foot resting on a large ball. You can help by holding hands, but gradually decrease the amount of help given (2 hands held → 1 hand held → one finger held → No help).
- Practice standing on one foot without a ball. Give help as needed but reduced assistance as able
- Ask the child to stand on one foot while imitating arm and leg positions (ie. a one legged standing version of "Simon Says"; such arms straight or bent, free leg bent to 90 degrees, free foot against standing leg)
- Try standing on one foot on a curb or bench
- Stand in a scale position; arms straight out to the side, trunk leaning forward with free leg stretched out behind



Please note: These suggestions are not appropriate for every child. Some items may be too easy and others too hard. Choose to practice a variety of items, some that allow the child to be successful and others that provide a bit of a challenge. As the child improves you can follow the suggestions on how to progress that particular skill.

Keep in mind that every child develops at their own rate, so you may need to spend a long time on one particular skill while another skill develops quickly. Try not to get frustrated and remember that a lot of repetition is needed in order to learn a new skill. If the child becomes frustrated, however, give them a break and focus on a different skill that gives them more success. You can always come back to the difficult task in a few weeks.