

PHYSICAL THERAPY

Gross Motor Activities

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*ACTIVITIES SHOULD BE COMPLETED WITHIN COMFORTABLE RANGE. DISCONTINUE ANY ACTIVITY THAT CAUSES DISCOMFORT AND IF YOU ARE NOT SURE HOW TO PERFORM PROPERLY.

Bridging: Lay on back with knees bent and feet flat on floor. Push through heels and lift buttocks off surface. Hold position and focus on keeping pelvis and shoulders level. Engage lumbar stabilizers and gluteals.



Add a little more: Hold one leg out straight but still keep hips lifted and pelvis level. Repeat on other side. Try lifting and lowering with one leg.

Add a small ball: Place a ball between the knees and hold it there while performing the same exercises. This will engage the adductors and stabilizers more. Or place the small ball under the pelvis while trying to hold it steady.

Add a larger ball: Place feet on ball and attempt to lift hips and bridge. This can be tried with knees bent or straight.

Make it fun: Zoom cars under the bridge see how many can pass under. Place a musical or squeak toy under the pelvis that will sound as the child lifts and lowers.

Prone Extension/Superman: Lay on stomach with arms overhead. Lift arms and legs so upper chest and upper thighs lift off surface, engaging spinal extensors. Arms and legs should be straight.



Add a little: Change arm position so elbows are flexed to engage rhomboids and middle trapezius more.

Add a little more: Bring hands down by hips with palms up and lift torso and legs.

Add a small ball: Lift arms and legs while holding a ball.

Add a larger ball: Perform arm or leg lifting when torso is on a larger therapy ball in prone.

Make it fun: Reach up for items that can be hidden under the body. Play catch from this position.

Perform this on a swing or supported by a parent in the air.

Quadruped Alternating Arms and Legs: On hands and knees, hold spine stable and straight. Alternate lifting and straightening the opposite arm and leg while holding spine and pelvis stable.



Add a little: Crunch engaging abdominals by pulling in elbow to opposite knee under the body.

Add a little more: Hold arm and leg out to the sides or lift arm and leg on the same side.

Add a small ball: Place the small ball on the low back and do not let it roll off while performing this exercise.

Add a larger ball: Perform exercise while arms are weight bearing on a ball (possibly weight bearing on forearms).

Make it fun: Add movement and crawl around with a small stuffed animal on the low back, pointing to other animals in the "forest" while not letting the animal drop off a stable spine.

Plank: Assume a push-up position (body and legs straight, supported on extended arms and balls of feet). Hold a straight neutral spine in this position.



Add a little: Lift one foot off the ground and maintain stable position

Add a little more: Move to a side plank, supported on arm and side of foot on same side with hips and trunk in one line. Lift free arm. Moving between plank and side plank on each side is a very challenging exercise.

Add a larger ball: Perform plank with forearms on the ball or with calves on the ball and arms extended.

Make it fun: Have a timed contest to see who can stay up in the position longest. Set up play kitchen toys on back pretending child is a table.

Sit-Ups: Lay supine with knees bent and feet on floor. Lift head and shoulders off surface. Breathe out as you lift and in as you lower.



Add a little more: Add rotation to engage the obliques by reaching arm or elbow for opposite knee.

Add a small ball: Lift and lower holding a small ball (a weighted medicine ball would add to the challenge). Or hold the small ball between the knees to better engage the adductors.

Add a larger ball: Perform sit-ups while sitting/lying on a large ball.

Make it fun: Play catch with the ball as the child lifts and lowers. Have the child grab a puzzle piece with each lift to then complete a puzzle.

Lunges With a Twist: Stand with feet in stride, supported on a flat foot in the front and on the ball of the toes in the back. Flex the front knee, keeping back leg straight and engaged to lower into a lunge. Push to return to upright. Be cautious to keep front knee directly over ankle and not coming forward in front of the foot.



Add a small or larger ball: Lower to pick up and put down a small ball. Play catch while lifting and lowering

Make it fun: Make the lunges walking lunges and have a race performing walking lunges.

Build an obstacle course out of chairs and cushions at home, and have the child crawl or climb over it.

Climb up a slide instead of using the steps, then turn around and slide down.

Hold relay races in wheelbarrow, crab walking and bear positions.

Standing on an uneven surface (i.e. bed or pillows) while playing catch. This can also be done in a **half-kneel** if the child is tall.