



Rialtas na hÉireann  
Government of Ireland

# Developing Gross Motor Skills *Activity Ideas for Home*



Developed by the Occupational Therapy team of the  
Demonstration Project on In-school and Early Years Therapy  
Support.

*Tionscadal Léirithe um Theiripe ar Scoil agus Tacaíocht na Luathbhlianta*  
**Demonstration Project on In-school and Early Years Therapy Support**

## Tips on using this pack

The recent actions taken by the government to slow the spread of the Covid-19 virus has resulted in reduced opportunities for gross motor skill development during sports and leisure activities. Spending more time indoors due to social distancing measures will be challenging for children and parents. This resource pack aims to provide parents with activity ideas that can be integrated into your child's play at home to continue to support their gross motor skills development. This pack contains activities to support core strength, balance, bilateral integration and ball skills.

### **Core Strength**

Your child's core refers to the muscles deep within the abs and back, attaching to the spine or pelvis. Core muscles help keep your child's body stable and balanced. During these activities, have your child count aloud to ensure they are not holding their breath.

### **Balance**

Balance refers to the information that the body provides regarding position of the head in relation to gravity, and changes in the movement of the head. This maintains the body in a controlled position during activity and movement.

### **Bilateral Integration**

Bilateral Integration refers to the ability to use both the right and left sides and the upper and lower body together in a coordinated fashion.

### **Ball Skills**

This section comprises of activities that will help your child develop and improve their hand-eye coordination, timing, sequencing, motor planning, and attention. The activities include throwing, bouncing, catching, and kicking.

## Core Strength

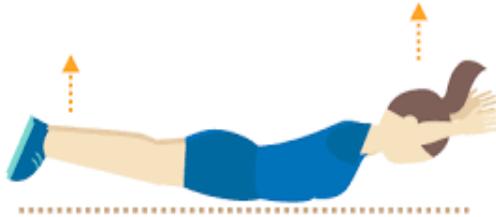
### **Egg**

- 👤 Have your child lie on his/her back with his chin tucked in against his chest and legs raised off the floor at 90 degrees and hands crossed across chest.
- 👤 Encourage your child to hold this position. Gradually increase to 30 - 40 seconds.



### **Superman**

- 👤 Have your child lie face down on the floor and lift his/her head, arms and legs off the floor at the same time. Gradually increase to 30 seconds.



### **Crab**

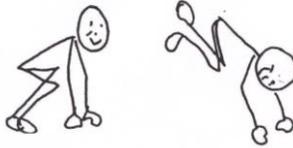
- 👤 Have your child lie face down on the floor and lift his/her head, arms and legs off the floor at the same time. Gradually increase to 30 seconds.



## Core Strength

### **Mule Kick**

- 👤 Drop to a squat position.
- 👤 Place the palms of the hands on the floor, between the knees.
- 👤 Bear weight on the hands and kick the feet backwards.



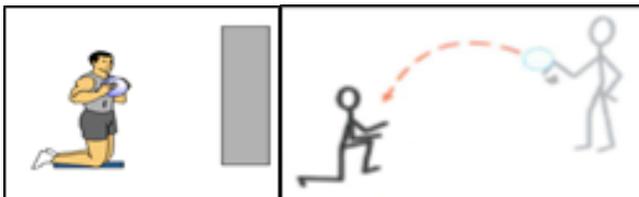
### **4 Point Kneeling**

- 👤 Kneeling on hands and knees - you can play games in this position, do a jigsaw or read a book.
- 👤 You can also practise balancing by lifting one arm or leg out straight, or opposite leg and arm out straight.



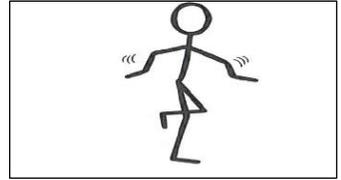
### **Half and High Kneeling**

- 🌐 Complete activities such as throwing, catching, counting, spellings in high kneeling and then progress to half kneeling.
- 🌐 Repeat on both sides.

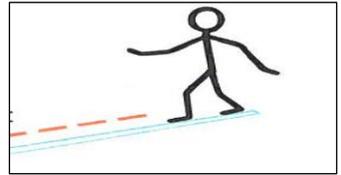


## Balance

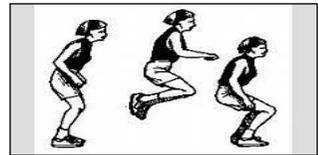
 Balance on one foot. It helps to hold your arms out. How many seconds can you hold your balance for? What is your record in seconds?



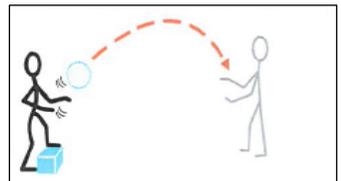
 Practice walking on your tippy toes on a 5m/10m line. Then practise walking heel to toe forwards.



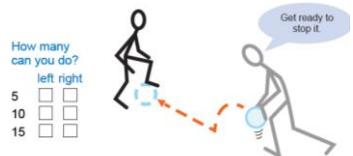
 Hopping: practice your bunny hop. Bring your too feet together and practice hopping forward and backwards into a hoop or over a line.



 Stand with your foot on a box and throw and catch a beanbag/ball.



 Try to stop a rolling ball coming towards you by placing your foot on the top.



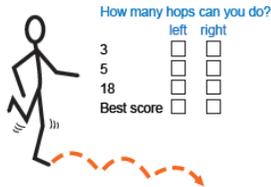
How many  
can you do?  
left right  
5    
10    
15

## Balance

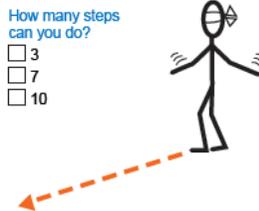
With a ball under your foot see if you can tap the ball with your foot ten times while your partner holds the ball steady, roll the ball forwards and backwards under your foot ten times, circle the ball under your foot ten times.



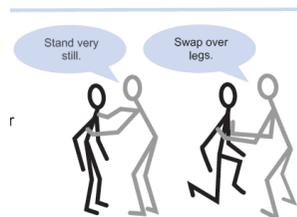
Hop on right leg and left leg. See how many hops you can do in a row.



Walk in a line, as straight as possible, heel to toe. No peeping!



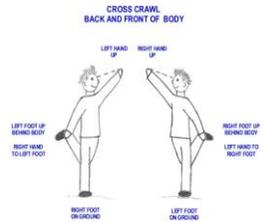
Statues: Keep very still while your partner gently tries to move you.



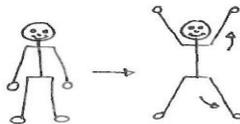
## Bilateral Integration



**Cross Crawls:** Stand with feet comfortably apart. Lift the left knee up and touch it with the right hand. They should touch in front of the centre of the body. Repeat on other sides lifting the right knee up and touch it with the left hand. Repeat behind your body.



**Jumping Jacks:** Stand with feet together, knees slightly bent, and arms to sides. Jump while raising arms and separating legs to sides. Land on forefoot with legs apart and arms overhead. Jump again until arms and legs are together.



**Windmills** Stand with feet comfortably apart. Touch your right foot with your left hand followed by touching left foot with right hand.

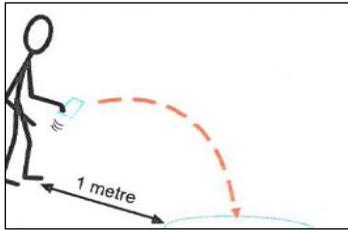


**Scissors Jumps** Position right leg in front and left leg behind. Place right arm/hand out in front and left arm/hand behind. Jump and switch legs and hands so opposite leg/arm is forward. Repeat. To progress this activity, try doing opposites.

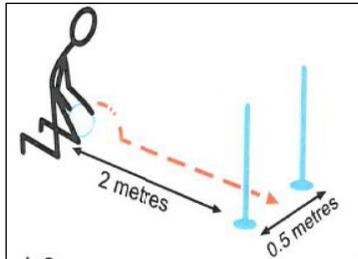


## Ball Skills

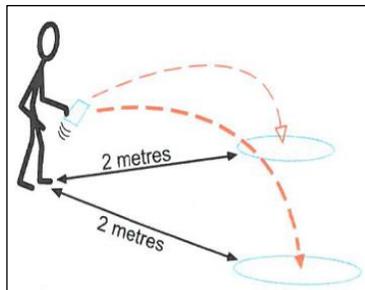
- Have your child throw a bean bag into a target e.g. hoop/box? Initially practise throwing with two hands. How many did you get in the hoop? Now practise throwing with one hand.



- Set up goal posts 2 metres away. Using one hand, can you roll the ball between the goal posts to score a goal?

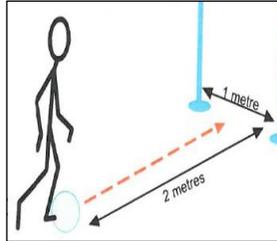


- Set up a target e.g. hoop/box to your left and right. Encourage your child to throw the beanbags into each hoop?

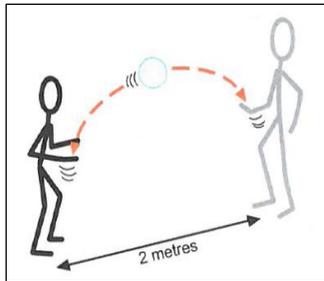


## Ball Skills

-  Can your child kick a ball between two goal posts? Remember to look at the target and not at your foot. Increase the distance from the goal to create a challenge!



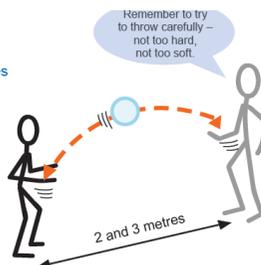
-  Throw and catch a bean bag with your child. Practice catching with two hands. Remember to keep your eyes on the target. Stand one metre apart. How many can your child catch?



-  Throw and catch the ball between two people. Start at two metres, and then try three metres. Try not to use your body to help you catch the ball.

How many catches can you do?

2 metres 3 metres  
5    
10



## Ball Skills

-  Stand close to your child. Throw and catch between you. Take a small step backwards each time you catch the ball. Try not to use your body to help you catch the ball.

Can you go back

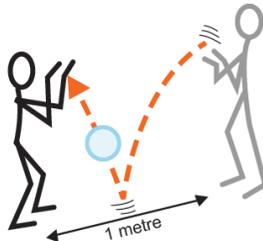
3 steps?

5 steps?

10 steps?



-  With your child, bounce the ball between you. Start at one metre; then try two and three metres.



Throw with two hands. Only let the ball bounce once.

How many times can you do this?

5

10

15

-  Have your child practice bouncing and catching a large bouncy ball with both hands.



How many bounces and catches can you do?

3

5

10