

Gross Motor Equipment for PT

The following are inexpensive toys that can be used to assist motor skills in typical and differently-abled children, along with some of the benefits achieved through use of the equipment. Please feel free to contact us with any questions or concerns.

1. Hoppy ball:

Benefits:

- a. Sensory input
- b. Increase endurance: repetitive hopping increases heart rate.
- c. increase strength: calves, quadriceps, gluteals, core
- d. improve posture: repetitive jumping increases axial extension (ability to sit up straight)



2. Bungee Jumper

Benefits:

- a. Sensory input
- b. Increase endurance
- c. Strength: arms, legs, core
- d. Improve balance: child has to balance while moving dynamically
- e. motor planning: arms have to pull, body has to balance, while jumping



3. Whack a mole

Benefits:

- Midline integration: child has to cross over from 1 side of the body to the other without switching hands
- eye hand coordination
- upper extremity strength: if you don't hit hard enough, the game will not register.
- visual motor benefits: eyes have to search for the mole that is lit
- you can also do this game with child lying on stomach propped on elbows which works on scapular strength and trunk extension.



4. Fun slides Carpet Skates

Benefits:

- Good to use for toe walkers or children who toe in
- Children can walk/slide forwards/backwards/sideways on carpet with adult supervision
- Leg strengthening
- Balance
- Sensory input (whole foot contact sliding over carpet)



5. Launch rocket (stomp rocket)

Benefits:

- a. Use: ask child to run/jump/skip/gallop/frog jump/heel walk/hop to launch rocket
- b. Use: launch with foot/feet or hands
- c. Works on motor planning:
- d. Eye/foot coordination: timing activity and landing on air bladder
- e. Fine motor skills putting the rocket back on the launcher
- f. Endurance/cardiovascular benefits



6. Roller skates/roller blades

Benefits:

- a. Good to use for children who toe walk/toe in and/or have difficulty with body awareness. They are also great for leg/ankle strengthening.
- b. Variations:
 - Skating on carpeting makes it easier to balance.
 - Skating outside on the sidewalk increases sensory feedback
- c. Leg/ankle strength
- d. Balance
- e. Leg endurance
- f. Sensory input: the vibration from the skates on the floor gives lots of sensory feedback



7. Wacky Trax/snow stompers (there are many variations online)

Benefits:

- a. Great activity for indoors/outdoors/at the beach/in the snow
- b. Great for children who toe walk or toe in
- c. Muscle strength: children are “forced” not to toe in with these so the lateral ankle muscles have to work hard. They also work all the leg muscles: to a child, it is the equivalent of walking with small weights on their legs.
- d. Increase body awareness: the child has to lift legs and keep feet apart when walking with these.
- e. Improve Balance



8. Twister

Benefits:

- a. This game can be done with children from ages 3 on up
- b. Ways to use:
 - Use the spinner
 - Adult calls out the moves depending on the child’s ability
 - The children playing take turns picking a move
 - For young children who don’t know L or R, you can just say “1 foot on blue/1 hand on green” or you can say “switch the blue foot to yellow”
- c. Strengthening: holding positions strengthens the core, arms and legs
- d. Motor planning: figuring out how to hold the position while switching an extremity to the different color.
- e. Flexibility: stretching into the different positions can stretch legs/back/arms
- f. Midline crossing: arms and legs have to cross over the midline to hold the positions which helps integrate the L and R side of the brain
- g. Learning L and R: reinforcement of the 2 sides of the body
- h. Body awareness: while twisted, the child needs to know which is the L arm even if it’s on the R side of their body in the current position.



9. Zoomball (splashball)

Benefits:

- a. Ways to use: (different ways strengthen different muscles)
 - Standing doing it forwards with arms moving laterally
 - Standing doing it backwards
 - Standing doing it forwards with arms moving up/down
 - Lying on your stomach lifting arms up and moving
 - Kneeling doing it the above ways
 - ½ kneeling
- b. Strengthening:
 - Facing forward works core, lateral shoulder muscles, and triceps
 - Facing backward works scapular and back muscles and triceps
 - Lying on your stomach adds a lot of trunk/neck extension
 - On your knees and ½ kneeling adds hip strengthening
- c. Motor planning/coordination: timing the arm movement when the ball comes back to the handles
- d. Endurance: do as many as possible to work on endurance
- e. Sensory feedback: helps to desensitize when the ball hits the handles
- f. Visual tracking: works on eye muscles as the child's visual scan follows the ball



10. Jump Stick

Benefits:

- a. Great to teach pre-jump rope skills
- b. Ways to use:
 - Adult turns the stick while child jumps (easier)
 - Child turns the stick and jumps (more difficult)
- c. Motor planning: coordinating the timing of the rope/ball and jumping
- d. Visual tracking:
- e. Coordination between arms and legs: when the child is holding the stick, turning it and jumping themselves.



11. Pop and Catch game

Benefits:

- a. Eye hand coordination
- b. Visual tracking
- c. Hand strength: hold handle while thumb pulls on lever to launch the ball.
- d. Force control: pulling on the lever to launch the appropriate amount for the ball to reach your partner.



12. Velcro catch game

Benefits:

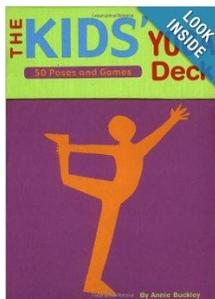
- a. Eye hand coordination
- b. Visual tracking
- c. Pre-catching skills: it is easier to catch the ball on the mit than to catch with 2 hands
- d. Strengthening: pulling the ball off the Velcro is good for hand/arm strengthening
- e. Midline: when pulling the ball off the Velcro the child must cross midline



13. Yoga cards/videos

Benefits:

- a. Flexibility
- b. Breathing
- c. Strengthening, especially core
- d. Relaxation
- e. Motor planning looking at a picture and getting into the position
- f. Sequencing: putting several movements in a row and having child transition from 1 movement to the next



14. Stomp Spiders Game

Benefits:

- a. Midline integration
- b. eye foot coordination
- c. Lower extremity strength: if you don't hit hard enough, the game will not register.
- d. visual motor benefits: eyes tracking the spider that is lit
- e. balance: when stomping on a spider, one leg has to balancing
- f. coordination



15. jump rope with 1 person turning the rope and the child jumping: using a longer rope, tie one end around a bench/table/fence/i.e. something stationary.

Benefits:

- a. cardiovascular: increase heart rate
- b. Motor planning
- c. Prerequisite to jumping rope on their own
- d. Motor fluency: ask questions while the child is jumping to the child's ability. Working the brain while doing a physical activity "strengthens" the brain.
 - Count backwards from i.e. 20
 - Ask simple questions: i.e. name 2 things you eat for breakfast, name 2 things you do at the beach, name 2 vegetables, etc
 - Alphabet
 - Name 2 words that begin with "a"
 - Simple spelling
 - Simple math

16. Hyper dash game: game talks to you and tells child to strike the requested color. You can set it to give one command at a time or the memory way (first command strike red, second command strike red then blue, third command strike red, then blue, then yellow, etc)

Ways to use:

- a. Ask child to run/skip/jump with 2 feet glued together/ hop on 1 foot/gallop etc. while striking targets
- b. Set targets closer together or further apart depending on child's ability

Benefits:

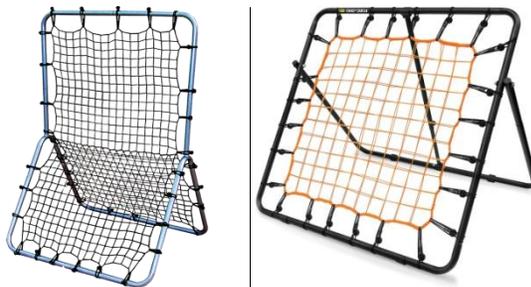
- a. Reinforces colors in very young children
- b. Motor fluency: memory game works on strengthening cognitive skills while doing a physical activity
- c. Practice gross motor skills: i.e. gallop, jump, hop, etc.
- d. Sensory stimulation: changing directions, bending down/standing up stimulates the vestibular system.



17. Pitch back-rebounder: you can use a standard pitch back or just prop a mini-trampoline up against a wall for the same effect.

Benefits:

- a. Child can play ball by themselves
- b. Can use any variety of ball: playground ball, small balls, medicine balls, etc
- c. Practices catching and throwing skills
- d. Visual motor training and eye-hand coordination



18. Mini trampoline

Benefits:

- a. Cardiovascular benefits
- b. Balance
- c. Sensory input
- d. Strengthening
- e. Increase complexity by throwing and catching a ball while jogging/jumping
- f. Increase mental complexity by counting, doing simple math, simple spelling, asking questions, etc. while jumping/jogging

