

Intro to
**MOVEMENT
THERAPY**



INTEGRATED
Learning Strategies

Parent Guide



MOVEMENT THERAPY



At a glance...

- Occupational Therapy (OT), Pediatric Therapy (PT) or any other therapy that includes a specific movement program helps children who struggle with everyday tasks.
- It's a treatment to improve motor skills, balance and coordination.
- Movement therapy can help kids get better at doing basic tasks, which can improve their self-esteem.
- The overall goal is to help kids reach their fullest academic, physical and emotional potential.

Inside Movement Therapy

Movement therapy targets a child's fine motor, gross motor and motor planning skills. It also helps kids with self-regulation, sensory processing and other diagnoses.

It is tailored and customized to a child's specific needs and unique circumstances. A therapist evaluates the child's strengths, challenges and tasks the child struggles with on a daily basis.

Based on those results, the therapist will build a customized program of activities and exercises for the child to work on. The program will target challenging areas that can build a stronger foundation for the child.



THERAPY OVERVIEW

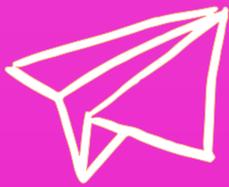


If a child struggles with attention and focus, the therapist may have the child do full-body exercises during their sessions and before doing homework.

If the child has messy handwriting, can't write straight across the page or lacks the strength to write, therapy may include multisensory techniques to help with arm strength and handwriting.

Areas of therapeutic focus...

- Self-care routines like getting dressed (fine motor skills and motor planning)
- Writing and copying notes (fine motor skills, hand-eye coordination)
- Holding and controlling a pencil, using scissors (fine motor skills, motor planning)
- Throwing and catching (balance and coordination)
- Reacting to sensory input (self-regulation skills)
- Retained Primitive Reflexes (potential cause for w-sitting, toe walking, bedwetting)
- Writing across the page, tracking for reading (crossing the midline exercises, head, arm and shoulder strength)
- Attention and focus, fidgeting (Swinging, core muscle, rolling, balance)
- Catching balls, catching and throwing bean bags (Proprioception, Processing, Processing Speed)
- Chewing, biting, sucking, picky eating (Oral sensory)



THE RESEARCH

One of the most common questions parents ask is "Is movement therapy evidence-based?" If you are asking yourself this question, here's the research. Click links below for details.

[Teaching with the Brain in Mind](#)

"It has also been documented that stimulating the vestibular (inner ear) and cerebellar (motor activity) system through movement activities (spinning, crawling, rolling, jumping, bending, etc.) can result in 'significant gains in attention and reading'" (Jensen, 2005, 62).

[Classroom-based physical activity, cognition, and academic achievement](#)

"Physically active academic lessons of moderate intensity improved overall performance on a standardized test of academic achievement by 6% compared to a decrease of 1% for controls."

[Evidence that aerobic fitness is more salient than weight status in predicting standardized math and reading outcomes in fourth- through eighth-grade students](#)

"A 2013 study of nearly 12,000 Nebraska students... found that aerobically fit students were more likely to pass the state's standardized math and reading tests, regardless of their weight or socioeconomic status." (via The Hechinger Report)

[Effects of a Classroom-Based Program on Physical Activity and On-Task Behavior](#)

"Simple in-class activities can boost performance. Studies suggest that children who participate in short bouts of physical activity within the classroom have more on-task behavior, with the best improvement seen in students who are least on-task initially." (via a paper by Matthew T. Mahar, et al)

[Integrating Poetry and Movement for Children with Learning and/or Behavioral Disabilities](#)

"Students demonstrated increased positive social interactions with peers in other classes while participating in the Movement Poetry Program" (Boswell, Boni and Mentzer, 1995). "Poetry combined with movement encourages growth not only in movement expression, but also in reading and vocabulary" (Boswell, B. B., & Mentzer, M. (1995)

[Using Mindful Movement in Cooperative Learning While Learning Angles](#)

"The more the learners used learning activities with movement, the higher their academic achievements, especially with the following activities: sustained movement-assisted learning activities; physical contact with the learned environment; use of visual and movement modeling; and socio-kinesthetic interaction" (Shoval, 2011, p. 462).



THERAPY RESOURCES

News Articles

- [Learning in Motion: Bring Movement Back to the Classroom](#)
- [Move Your Body, Grow Your Brain](#)
- [Exercise improves test scores, study of Minnesota students finds](#)
- [4 Physical Activity, Fitness, and Physical Education: Effects on Academic Performance](#)
- [A Silicon Valley School That Doesn't Compute](#)
- [Why Young Kids Learn Through Movement](#)

Books

- [Sensory Integration and the Child](#)
- [Attention, Balance and Coordination](#)
- [Raising a Sensory Smart Child](#)
- [Bright Kids Who Can't Keep Up](#)
- [The Out-of-Sync Child](#)
- [Occupational Therapy for Children and Adolescents](#)



THERAPY SESSIONS



Here is a list of key areas commonly worked on to enhance movement sessions. Exercises are customized to fit your child's individual needs.

Big Motor Skills

- Gross Motor
- Core Muscle
- Bilateral Coordination
- Posture
- Proprioception
- Motor Readiness
- Body Awareness
- Crossing the Midline

Small Motor Skills

- Fine motor
- Visual Motor
- Arm, shoulder, hand strength
- Hand-eye Coordination
- Speech and language

Sensory

- Sensory Integration
- Tactile
- Retained Primitive Reflexes

Attention and Focus

- Vestibular
- Balance and Coordination
- Auditory Processing
- Reaction Time

ENVIRONMENT &



EQUIPMENT



Many movement activities only require a child's body. However, there are some movement therapy tools that are beneficial at home to enhance sessions with your therapist. Here are a few recommendations for your home.

Environment

****Reminder:** When doing exercises at home, remember to do the following:

- ✔ Create a quiet space with few distractions
- ✔ Find a space with plenty of room to move
- ✔ Complete exercises 3 to 5 times a week
- ✔ Perform exercises for at least 20 minutes
- ✔ Repeat exercises 3 to 5 times each
- ✔ Doing exercises correctly is more important than frequency
- ✔ Exercises must be done slow and purposeful

Equipment

- Balance Beam
- Balls
- Hula Hoops
- Bean Bags
- Bosu Ball
- Pool Noodles
- Weight Bars
- Exercise Ball
- Stretchy Bands
- Balloons
- Scarves
- Floor Scooter
- Jump Rope



AT-HOME ROUTINE



To further your child's progress, at-home therapy can enhance weekly therapy sessions. Here is a suggested daily routine to help prepare the brain for higher development.

Morning Routine

- ✔ 10 Minutes
- ✔ Slow and purposeful
- ✔ 3-5 times for each activity
- ✔ Bean Bag Toss (up and down, track the bean bag)
- ✔ Jump in and out of Hula Hoop
- ✔ Call out body parts and put in hula hoop
- ✔ Balance Beam (on the floor)

Night Routine

- ✔ 15 Minutes
- ✔ Slow and purposeful
- ✔ 3-5 times for each activity
- ✔ Animal poses (Bear Walk, Seal, horse gallop, spider, gorilla, elephant)
- ✔ Stretchy Bands – Feet, legs, arms
- ✔ Crossing the midline
- ✔ Brain Gyms