

PHYSICAL THERAPY AT HOME



Core strengthening

- Yoga poses
- Playing on their belly's
 - Wheel barrel walking
 - Using a theraball or bolster, have your child walk out/ roll out on their hands to pick up puzzle pieces, blocks, or other toys of interest.
 - Supermans – lying on belly, lift outstretched arms, lift outstretched legs, and then lift all limbs – can alternate right and left, or do opposite.
- Bird dogs – in all fours
 - Lift right arm, left leg
 - Lift left arm, right leg
 - Continue to alternate and incorporate a game – reaching for puzzle pieces, etc.
- Bridging – lying on their back in a hook lying position, have them bring their bottoms up from the floor while keeping their feet anchored.
 - Use stuffed animals, cars, etc. to encourage your little one to stay elevated until the toy makes it under the bridge.
 - Once mastered, you can make it a little harder by placing their feet under a pillow or other unstable surface and repeat!
- Bear walking, crab walking.
- Sitting on theraball or unstable surface:
 - place bean bags or other toys on their feet and have them alternate lifting each leg, one at a time, to place toy or bean bag in a bin.
 - Place stickers on their feet and have them pick stickers off and place on a board, alternating feet.
- Lifting items over head (weighted balls, heavier toys, etc) and have them walk while maintaining item over head.
- Climbing up a slide or swinging on a swing.
- While lying on their back, have your kiddo squeeze a ball or toy with lower legs and lift to give to you.
- Lying on their backs, give them a ball and have them tuck their chins to their chest and lift their head, neck, and shoulders from the floor to throw ball towards a target.

Lower Extremity Strengthening

- Wall sits – with your child’s back up against the wall and feet hip width apart, have them sit in a pretend chair – keeping their knees and hips bent at 90 degrees. Count to 5 or sing a song while your child maintains position.
- Tip toe walking and heel walking “Penguin walks”
 - Add in some additional core strengthening by having them carry a ball overhead while maintaining heels or toes elevated.
 - Make it fun by tracing shapes, letters, or numbers, taped on the floor or use sidewalk chalk if the weather is nice outdoors!
- Sit to stand transitions from various height benches and steps- start by sitting on a low surface and have your child stand up to reach for a puzzle piece ,then sit to put the piece in and repeat!
- Step ups on various height steps, benches, and stairs – can use the same concept with gathering puzzle pieces while stepping up and stepping down to place pieces in puzzle.

Maintaining Range of Motion

Tip: Massaging the muscles of each joint or giving your child a warm bath prior to stretching may ease muscle guarding and allow you to provide a deeper, more comfortable stretch for your child.

- It is important to slowly, smoothly, and gently go to the area of resistance when stretching your child and maintain the stretch **as tolerated** by your child. Stretches can be completed a few times throughout the day to maintain their flexibility and improve their range of motion.
- Range of motion exercises should be completed in a comfortable position for your child – lying down, in supported sitting, reclined in a chair.

Range of Motion Continued

- Neck mobility

- Neck flexion – bringing the chin to the chest
- Neck extension – bringing chin towards the ceiling
- Neck rotation – rotating the chin to the left shoulder and right shoulder
- Neck lateral flexion – Bringing right ear to right shoulder and left ear to left shoulder

- Shoulder and upper extremity mobility

- The **shoulder** :
 - You can assist your child in reaching overhead and out to the side.
 - Rotating the arm in or out is also a very important functional movement for your child – you can achieve this by bringing their arm across their body or rotating the arm outward.
- The **elbow**:
 - Flex by bringing hand towards shoulder or extend by straightening the elbow .
 - You can also bring your child's palm up or down with their elbow bent or extended.
- The **wrist**:
 - Bend the person's hand back toward his or her shoulder. The fingers should point toward the ceiling. Then bend the person's hand down so his or her fingers point toward the floor.
- The **fingers**:
 - Spread fingers apart and bring back together.
 - Curl fingers into a fist and straighten.

Range of Motion

- Trunk mobility

- Trunk rotation – rotate your child’s trunk to the left and right while providing them with the support that they need throughout their torso.
- Trunk lateral flexion – bring right shoulder down towards right hip and left shoulder down towards left hip.
- Tummy time can help to encourage trunk extension.

- Hip and lower extremity mobility

- Hip mobility:
 - Bring the knee up towards your child’s chest, one at a time. Then, gently straighten.
 - Bring the leg out to the side and gently bring back to the middle.
 - With leg extended, roll toes outward and inward.
 - Tummy time will assist with stretching the anterior portion of your child’s hips.
- Knee mobility
 - Bend and extend the knee.
- Ankle Mobility
 - Bend the person's foot so the toes point toward the ceiling and gently bring back down.

Stair Climbing

- Practice stair climbing at your home – if stairs are available.
 - Provide your child with visual cues (stickers, dots, tape, etc.) to encourage step over step pattern, cueing them to put one foot on each step.
- Practice stepping up on to and down from various height steps, benches, and step stools in the home.
- When possible, take some time to go outside, focusing on curb negotiation and stepping up on to and down from various height obstacles during your walk without holding on to your hand or using their hands for support.



Jumping goals

- Place targets on the floor, using stickers or other objects in the home that will stick to the floor, and have your child jump in place, remaining on target.
 - Cue them to squat down, bending at the knees and hips and jump like a frog!
 - Demonstrate for them bringing both feet off of the floor.
 - Provide them with support at first, holding both of their hands. Progress to one hand and then no hands.
 - Bubbles can be a good resource and target to have them jump up to pop in the air or jump forward to pop on the ground.
- Once your child has mastered jumping in place, you can add a target and have them jump to the target – start with 1- 2 inches away and continue to progress.
- Children often first begin jumping on an unstable surface versus stable surfaces (jumping on the bed, a trampoline, or couch – with supervision, ofcourse!).



Balance/ Coordination Activities

- Tape a line on the floor and have your child pretend they are walking a tight rope – maintaining both feet on, in heel to toe pattern, without stepping off!
- Crossing midline – Marching play while bringing left elbow to right knee and right elbow to left knee.
- Simon Says – Imitation games, follow the leader.
- Red Light, Green Light
- Galloping, Skipping
- Riding a bike
- Squatting and returning to stand on unstable surfaces – pillows, couch cushions.
 - Pick up a puzzle piece down low and then come back up to place the piece in.
- Walking on uneven or unstable surfaces indoors or outside
- Twister
- T – Ball or Soccer
- Bowling

Balance/ Coordination Activities continued..

- Single leg activities:
 - ❖ Popping bubbles with their toes – catch bubbles with bubble wand and hold out for child to pop with toes
 - ❖ Tapping elevated cones or blocks with their feet
 - ❖ Putting their pants on while standing
 - ❖ Placing bean bags or stuffed animals on the top of their feet and have them lift them into a basket or bin to clean up – Don't let the animal fall off!
 - ❖ Kicking activities
 - ❖ Placing stickers on your child's foot – have them lift their foot while in standing and peel the sticker off to place on a board to make a picture or design.

Ball Play

Catching/ Throwing:

- Begin by rolling a larger ball back and forth. (a larger ball offers a greater visual target and more surface area for your child's hands.)
- You can then move to a balloon and have your child tap the balloon back and forth to you without letting it hit the floor.
*Start at a close distance and continue to progress to further away.
- You can offer hand over hand assistance once you feel your child is ready to use a ball or try to use balls that allow for better gripping.
- Provide targets –building blocks, stacking toys to knock over, or a peer to throw to.

Kicking:

- In order to kick a ball, your child needs to develop the skills to stand on 1 foot and maintain their balance.
- You can build a block tower and ask them to focus on kicking it over.
- Once mastered:
 - Start by using a bigger ball, light ball, or balloon. Demonstrate to them how to kick and then place the ball in front of them. Once they have mastered, you can progress to a smaller or heavier ball.
 - It helps to give your child a target, such as stacked blocks or cones, to kick towards or knock over.
 - You can also tape lines on the floor and have them try to keep the ball in the lines.

Running

- Races – race towards a specific goal or make a game of it – who can get to the puzzle piece, leggo, etc. first to build the puzzle or building?
- Time them – how fast can you get to the target? Let's see if you can do it faster this time!
- Imitate – follow me or your sibling. Do what I do.

Reducing tripping or falls on unstable/uneven surfaces and distracting environments

- Help your child to pace themselves when walking on more difficult terrain.
 - You can use counting or sing repetitive songs to have them slow down and walk with you.

- Cue your child to obstacles in their way and ask them to scan their surroundings.
 - Look for other people that may cross their path.
 - Search for curbs, uneven pavement, inclines, declines, or areas that may require them to step up or down so that they can plan how to manage their environment with your help.