

THERAPY BALL EXERCISES FOR GROSS MOTOR DEVELOPMENT

PRONE: Have your child lie on his or her belly over a therapy ball and support themselves using their arms. Get creative in fun activities for them to do in this position. They can assume this position to grab something like a puzzle piece or hold it for a longer duration as they color a picture. This exercise requires them to use a variety of muscles and provides increased proprioceptive input to their upper extremities.



SUPINE: Have your child lie on his or her back over a therapy ball and then return to an upright position. See how long they can hold this position by having them reach for an object or by rolling a tennis ball back and forth. This activity will provide your child with vestibular sensory input while really working to activate their core musculature.



SITTING: Depending on the age and ability level of your child, you can have them sit on a therapy ball with support or self-supported. This is a great time for them to; read a book, play a favorite game, complete their homework, or watch a cartoon. This will help increase your child's balance, provide core strengthening, and provide them with various forms of sensory input.

PUSH MAZE: Use painters' tape, sidewalk chalk, or various objects to outline a distinct path for your child to push a therapy ball through. This activity is great because you can increase or decrease the challenge depending on your child's ability. You can make a simple or more complex maze or change the directions for completion. Perhaps instead of pushing the ball through the course you want your child to try to kick the ball focusing on controlling their body movements. You can have them crawl on their belly as they push the ball through the maze or dribble it like a basketball. Add a timing element for an increased challenge.

BOUNCING: Use the therapy ball like a basketball and have your child dribble and pass the ball back and forth. The increased size of the ball is not only fun and engaging but requires your child to use increased gross motor coordination skills.

OBSTACLE COURSE: Obstacle courses are great because you can set them up to meet the needs and abilities of your child. Depending on the objects you use, a variety of skills can be addressed while simultaneously providing increased sensory input.

LEG GAMES: Have your child put the therapy ball in between their legs as they lie on their backs. Stand at your child's head and see if they can use their legs to bring you the ball. Another easy exercise is having them toss the ball to you using their legs. Get creative with this. It's easy to see a ball and think use only with your arms, but ball games using your legs requires increased motor planning, bilateral coordination, and develops gross motor skills.



TOSS & CATCH GAMES: Think of this activity as being similar to an egg toss game but requiring increased gross motor skills. Stand close to your child and toss the large therapy ball back and forth. With each successfully catch, take a step back. You can easily change this game up by having one person kick the ball and the other person catch it, both individuals can kick the ball back and forth, roll the ball back and forth, or start back-to-back and roll the ball between your legs to the other person. Not only is that a great way to increase gross motor skills but it provides increased sensory input.