



# OT Mom Learning Activities



## Did you know that good gross motor skills are not just for sporty kids?

If your child's gross motor skills are poor, it can affect their work in the classroom!

Here are some of the ways that your child uses gross motor skills in the classroom:

- ✓ Strong, stable muscles in the shoulders and core (trunk) help your child to **sit upright** and not slouch while sitting at a desk. This also helps with **concentration**, as he/she won't have to wiggle around as much to keep upright.
- ✓ Strong, stable muscles at the shoulder can help your child to develop good **fine motor skills**, which are needed for scissor cutting and a good pencil grip, as well as for good pencil control.
- ✓ Hand-eye coordination can help with **handwriting** skills.
- ✓ Good bilateral coordination means your child can use both hands together well. This is essential for preschool activities such as lacing and threading but will also enable your child to **cut with scissors**, **use a ruler** properly, **tie shoelaces** and use a **knife and fork** together properly.
- ✓ Visual tracking skills (from all kinds of ball games) can help with **reading** ability.
- ✓ Taking part in gross motor games can help your child to learn to **follow instructions** and to be good at planning, both of which are essential in the classroom.
- ✓ Midline crossing, spatial perception and directionality skills also develop through gross motor games. These skills help your child to **space written work well** on the page, and aid in overcoming **letter reversals**.

And that is not to mention some of the other benefits that come with a healthy active lifestyle! Here are just a few...

- ✓ Long-lasting good health that comes from regular physical activity
- ✓ Increased confidence and improved self-esteem that comes from being able to successfully take part in games with other children
- ✓ Release of stress and frustration through physical activity

So, get active with your child today! Even if your child is not naturally the sporty type, there is still lots of fun to be had playing rough and tumble games in the garden, going to the park, or playing with a ball.

On the next page you will find some ideas for easy gross motor activities to do with your child at home.

For photos and full descriptions of these and other fun and inexpensive activities, visit the Gross Motor Skills and Coordination Skills pages at

[www.ot-mom-learning-activities.com](http://www.ot-mom-learning-activities.com)

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# OT Mom Learning Activities



	<b>Suggested Activities:</b> all activities should be done under parental supervision and with the permission of your doctor
Strengthening the shoulder muscles	Climbing (trees, jungle gyms, climbing walls), monkey bars, crab walk, leopard crawl... (see <a href="http://www.ot-mom-learning-activities.com/shoulder-exercises-for-kids.html">www.ot-mom-learning-activities.com/shoulder-exercises-for-kids.html</a> )
Strengthening the core (trunk) muscles	Climbing (trees, jungle gyms, climbing walls), tummy crunches, bridging, crab walk... (see <a href="http://www.ot-mom-learning-activities.com/core-exercises-for-kids.html">www.ot-mom-learning-activities.com/core-exercises-for-kids.html</a> )
Developing hand-eye coordination and visual tracking skills	Throwing and catching a ball/beanbag. Tie a ball into a vegetable net, attach it to a rope and hang it from a bar/door frame. Get your child to hit it with a bat, or push/catch it... (see <a href="http://www.ot-mom-learning-activities.com/hand-eye-coordination.html">www.ot-mom-learning-activities.com/hand-eye-coordination.html</a> )
Developing bilateral coordination	Pulling on a rope, using a rolling pin, squashing and rolling playdough with both hands, throwing and catching a ball... (see <a href="http://www.ot-mom-learning-activities.com/bilateral-coordination.html">www.ot-mom-learning-activities.com/bilateral-coordination.html</a> )

## **A physically healthy body is no guarantee that gross motor skills will be well developed!**

There are many factors that can affect your child's gross motor development:

- ❖ Playing computer games and watching TV has given our kids great exposure to all kinds of information that the previous generation did not have, but the cost is that physical motor skills (both gross motor and fine motor) may not have developed as they should have.
- ❖ Low muscle tone or high muscle tone can affect your child's ability to control his body.
- ❖ Growing up in a protected environment can actually be hazardous to our health! We don't let our kids play outside, walk to the park or cycle to friends anymore. We are trying to keep them safe, which is great, but their motor skills have been affected!
- ❖ Babies tend to spend a lot of time in car seats, walking rings and in front of the TV, all adaptations made necessary by the demands of modern life. But these things can have a detrimental impact on their motor development.
- ❖ In the West, a sedentary lifestyle accompanied by too much rich food, means that adults are less likely to engage in physical games with their children. Kids then don't have good role models, and prize other things more highly than physical activity and good health.
- ❖ Underlying difficulties with coordination, balance, motor planning, and concentration can all affect a child's ability to take part in, and benefit from, gross motor activities.

