

# Beanbag Activities to Develop Gross Motor Skills

# Gross Motor Skills Groups

This is one of a series of activities designed to aid the development of a child's gross motor skills. Each session begins with some warm up exercises to improve the children's balance, co-ordination, bi-lateral integration and spatial awareness. A range of equipment is used during the sessions that have been approved and recommended by physiotherapists and occupational therapists.

Most exercises are also attempted without vision.

## **Equipment used**

Benches, hoops, quoits, cones, mats, physio balls, physio rolls, scoot boards, a variety of weights and sizes of balls, rocker board, bubble wrap, bean bags, tunnels, hockey sticks, markers and posts.

## **How the equipment is used**

**Benches:** to walk forwards, backwards, sideways, on tiptoes, heels and heel to toe. To pull along whilst on stomach, crawl and step ups. Occasionally hoops are placed around the benches and the children crawl under or over them. The benches are usually put out on angles or straight lines.

**Quoits, cones and markers:** to make courses for the children to follow.

**Mats:** these are nearly always set out diagonally. Children follow the direction around the edge of the mats by walking, running, knee walking or using hockey sticks and balls.

**Tunnels:** to crawl through, to roll in and to roll balls through.

**Physio ball and roll:** to sit on, lay on (front and back), to act as support.

**Rocker board:** for balance.

**Variety of balls:** different weights and sizes for visual and spatial perception.

**Scoot boards:** to lay on, sit on and kneel on.

**Edra cones and hoops:** are used to make an obstacle course. All the warm up exercises for balance, body awareness, body perception and co-ordination are attempted without vision.

# Beanbag Activities

- Pass the beanbag from left hand to right hand around the body. Repeat this several times. Then change the direction from right hand to left hand several times. Repeat this activity again but with eyes closed.
- Lay down on your back, knees bent, feet flat on the floor. Lift your bottom off the floor and pass a beanbag from left hand to the right hand underneath your bottom. Repeat this several times.
- Lay down on your back, knees bent, feet flat on the floor. Lift your bottom off the floor and pass the beanbag from the left hand to the right hand and over the tummy back to the left hand. Repeat this several times and then again with eyes closed.
- Lay down on your back, knees bent, feet flat on the floor. Lift your bottom off the floor and pass a beanbag from the right hand to the left hand and over the tummy back to the right hand. Repeat this several times and then again with eyes closed.



- From a standing position, back straight, looking straight ahead, place a beanbag on top of the left foot and then keeping your balance, fling the beanbag into a hoop or basket. After repeating this several times, change to the right foot and repeat the activity. The activity can then be repeated but with eyes closed to enhance visual perception.
- From a standing position, back straight, looking straight ahead, place a beanbag in between the toes of your left foot and then keeping your balance, fling the beanbag into a hoop or basket. After repeating this several times, change to the toes on the right foot and repeat the activity. This Activity can then be repeated with eyes closed to enhance visual perception.

- Lay straight across a mat on your tummy, lift your head and support yourself with your arms. Hold a beanbag in your left hand and throw it over arm into a hoop. After repeating this several times, change to your right hand and repeat the activity.
- From a standing position, back straight, looking straight ahead, place a beanbag on the top of your head and walk forwards to the bottom of the hall. From a standing position, back straight, looking straight ahead, place a beanbag on the top of your head and walk forwards to the bottom of the hall and then without turning around, walk back to the beginning backwards.
- Whilst walking forwards and backwards to the bottom of the hall and back, throw a beanbag from your left hand to the right hand, keeping a rhythm.
- From a standing position, back straight, looking straight ahead, walk forwards to the bottom of the hall whilst passing a beanbag around the body from the left hand to the right hand. Without turning around, walk backwards to the beginning whilst passing the beanbag around the body but change the direction of the beanbag.
- The activities can be alternated by walking sideways or heel/toe or hopping whilst throwing the beanbag up and down with either hand or both. Difficulty can be added by attempting these activities when walking across a bench or raised/sloping platform.

