



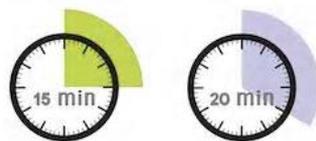
Heavy Muscle Work Activities

Activities that involve a stretch or tightening of muscles can help to calm the nervous system and can have an organising effect on the body. It helps the brain to process information about sensations and makes sense of the information it receives. **This approach can also help to reduce sensitivities when used just before or during activities that are more challenging.**

The activities listed below will have a calming and organising effect on the nervous system. All the activities involve heavy muscle work. There are many more activities that will produce the same results. All activities focus on the child working their muscles against resistance, e.g. push/pull and weight bearing, activities which involve active muscle engagement.



If you know that there are particular activities that your child finds challenging, complete 15 - 20 minutes of a selection of activities working their muscles prior to completing that task i.e. having a small but thick drink through a straw prior to sitting for a meal – by doing this you are working your muscles around your mouth to reduce sensitivity and to prepare for eating.



Activities that provide Heavy Muscle Work:

- Carrying heavy objects, carrying a box or basket of bean bags, carrying laundry in a laundry basket, carrying shopping from the car or walking whilst carrying a back pack filled with their toys.



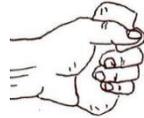
- Sweeping with a brush, digging in the garden or in sand at the beach.



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- Activities such as play dough or 'Theraputty' which involve squeezing. Squishy 'stress balls' will provide similar input.



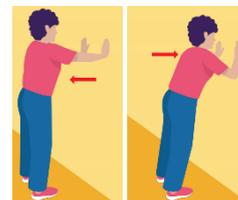
- Pushing games such as pushing a wheelbarrow/shopping trolley/toy brick cart or toy box on wheels. (Fill it with heavy objects).



- Drinking water or milk through a thin straw/drinking a thick milkshake through a thin straw at home. Drink from a sports bottle or experiment with curly straws.
- Eating crunchy or chewy foods for snack and for meal times (bagels/French stick, chewy fruit bars or dried fruit, raw carrot/apple/cereal bars etc).



- Push against palms of a partner in a high kneeling position - face palms together and push firmly, holding for 5 to 10 seconds.
- Chair push-up – push on the chair with flat palms holding for 5 to 10 seconds.
- Wall push, hold for 5-10 seconds.



- Army crawl/crab walk/cross crawl – elbow to opposite knee/superman pose – hold for 10secs, try crossing arms.
- Tug of war using a rope, sheet or towel. Do this in sitting if preferred.



- Use a climbing frame, monkey bars, climbing ropes, to encourage muscle stretching and anti-gravity resistance.



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- Obstacle course requiring climbing over and crawling under obstacles. Use large cardboard boxes to crawl through. Add extra resistance by placing bean bags or sand bags on your child's back and pretend that you are playing dinosaurs.



- Jumping i.e. hopscotch or bouncing on a trampoline or space hopper – these give strong sensory feedback.



- Deep pressure activities such as: giving your child a firm hug, press through their shoulders, roll or wrap your child up in a blanket (keeping head and neck free) and pretend to make a sausage roll.
- Activities such as swimming, climbing, childrens' yoga, horse riding.



- Individual sports, e.g. gym sessions, running (if age appropriate).

All these activities will require adult supervision and should be completed at regular intervals throughout the day under the child's control.