

Gross Motor Skills

What are gross motor skills?

- The ability to complete big body movements.
- Involves movements of the muscles in the arms, legs, and torso.

Why are gross motor skills important?

- To complete everyday activities such as getting dressed, bathing, and moving throughout the environment.
- To complete physical activities such as walking, running, jumping, participating in sports, and playing.
- To complete activities in school such as sitting upright at a desk, moving between classes, carrying books, and more.

When should my child be completing gross motor skills?

- There are so many different milestones between birth and three years of age that are related to gross motor skills.
- Check out the topics below to see when your child should complete some of these basic gross motor skills!

Rolling

- Rolls from side to back between 1.5 and 2 months old.
- Rolls from stomach to back between 2 and 5 months old.
- Rolls from back to side between 4 and 5.5 months old.
- Rolls from back to stomach between 5.5 and 7.5 months old.

Sitting

- Sits with slight support between 3 and 5 months old.
- Sits briefly leaning on hands between 5 and 6 months old.
- Sits alone but may use hands between 5 and 8 months old.
- Sits without hand support for 10 minutes between 8 and 9 months old.

Crawling

- Bears weight on hands when lying on stomach between 4 and 6 months old.
- Raises hips pushing with feet when lying on stomach between 5 and 6.5 months old.
- Holds weight on one hand when lying on stomach between 6 and 7.5 months old.
- Brings one knee forward beside trunk when lying on stomach between 6 and 8 months old.
- Crawls backward between 7 and 8 months old.
- Crawls forward between 8 and 9.5 months old.

Standing

- Bears some weight on legs between 3 and 5 months old.
- Bears almost all weight on legs between 5 and 6 months old.
- Bears large fraction of weight on legs and bounces between 6 and 7 months old.
- Stands while holding on between 6 and 10.5 months old.
- Stands momentarily between 9.5 and 11 months old.
- Stands alone well between 11.5 and 14 months old.

Walking

- Makes stepping movements between 8 and 10 months old.
- Walks holding onto furniture between 9.5 and 13 months old.
- Walks with both hands held between 10 and 12 months old.
- Walks with one hand held between 11 and 13 months old.
- Walks alone 2-3 steps between 11.5 and 13.5 months old.
- Walks without support between 13 and 15 months old.

Running

- Runs (hurried walk) between 14 and 18 months old.
- Runs well between 18 and 24 months old.
- Runs and avoids obstacles between 24 and 30 months old.

Steps

- Walks upstairs and downstairs with both feet on a step and holding onto the railing between 15 and 18 months old.
- Walks upstairs with one hand held between 17 and 19 months old.
- Walks downstairs with one hand held between 19 and 21 months old.
- Walks upstairs alone with both feet on a step between 24 and 25.5 months old.
- Walks downstairs alone with both feet on a step between 25.5 and 27 months old.
- Walks upstairs alternating feet between 30 and 34 months old.
- Walks downstairs alternating feet starting around 34 months old.

Playing Ball

- Throws ball forward between 15 and 18 months old.
- Kicks ball forward between 18 and 24.5 months old.
- Throws ball into a box between 18 and 20 months old.
- Catches large ball between 24 and 26 months old.

Jumping

- Jumps in place with both feet between 22 and 30 months old.
- Jumps 8-14 inches between 24 and 30 months old.
- Jumps backwards between 27 and 29 months old.

Home Activities for Gross Motor Skills

Support for Sitting

- You can use different items in your home to help your child learn to sit up on their own.
- Try using anything soft to place around your child to give them support when sitting. Some examples of items you can use are pillows, blankets, couch cushions, and bean bags.
- Gradually decrease the amount of support as your child starts to get stronger over time.



Support for Standing

- You can use different items in your home to help your child learn to stand up on their own.
- Place your child next to items they can hold onto such as different furniture, large boxes, hampers, or anything else that is safe to hold onto. Remember to check that the surface they are holding onto is sturdy and will not tip over.



Support for Walking

- You can use items in your home to help your child learn to walk.
- Place your child next to furniture and have them hold onto it while walking back and forth.
- Give your child an item that they can push on the floor to help support them when walking. For example, use a large empty box, a laundry basket full of items, a wagon, a chair with wheels, or anything else that can easily slide on the floor.
- Remember to check that the surface they are holding onto is safe and sturdy so that it will not tip over.



Tape Games

- All you need for these games is some tape! Place lines of tape (about a foot apart from each other) on your floor. Remember, you can also do this activity outside and use chalk or small sticks.
- Jump forward:
 - Jump from line to line or try skipping over lines.
 - Start at the first line and see how far you can jump.
- Jump backward:
 - Jump from line to line or try skipping over lines.
 - Start at the first line and see how far you can jump.
- Jump on one foot:
 - Hop from line to line.
 - Start at the first line and see how far you can jump on one leg.
- Reach out far:
 - Stand on the first line.
 - Bend over and touch the line with your hands.
 - Walk forward with your hands and see how far you can reach.
- Stretch out:
 - Start with your foot on the first line.
 - See how far you can stretch while keeping your first foot on the line.



Hopscotch

- Playing hopscotch is a fun activity that can be done indoors or outdoors.
- Create your own hopscotch game by using materials in your home such as chalk, tape, cardboard, paper, rope, or anything else you may have.



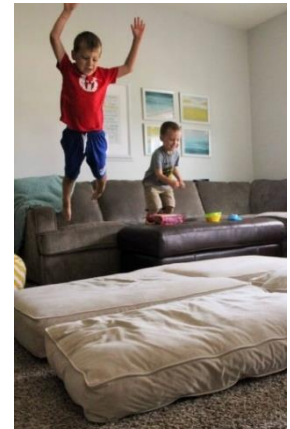
Animal Walks

- Walk around the house like different animals.
- This is a great way to work the big muscles in the body!



Crash Mat

- Use couch cushions, pillows, blankets, bean bags, or anything soft and squishy to create a crash mat for your child.
- Allow your child to run around and crash to get some energy out.
- Encourage your child to run, jump, hop, and skip around and on the mat.



Bubble Wrap Stomp

- Save bubble wrap from your packages and turn it into a fun activity for your child.
- Place it on the floor and have them stop and jump on it to pop the bubbles.



Explore Outside

- Spend some time outdoors to work on various gross motor skills.
- Explore walking and running on different and uneven surfaces.
- Balance walking on a curb.
- Jump and climb over sticks, branches, and logs.
- Pull weeds or pick some flowers.
- Throw small rocks.
- Play in the dirt and mud.
- Make up your own games and activities while exploring nature.



Pillow Activities

- Pillow Jump
 - Place pillows around the floor and jump to each pillow.
 - If you have different colored pillows, you can even encourage your child to jump on a specific color.
- Pillow Balance Beam
 - Line up pillows so they are in a straight line and try and balance by walking across it.



- Pillow Throws
 - Throw pillows back and forth with your child so they can practice throwing and catching items.
 - Use a large bucket, basket, or an empty box and have your child throw the pillow into the target.



- Pillow Kicks
 - Have your child lay flat on their back with their feet up in the air.
 - Place a pillow on their feet and encourage your child to kick the pillow into the bucket, basket, or box.



- Pillow Push
 - Use a bucket, basket, or box, and fill it up with pillows.
 - Encourage your child to push it around the room.
 - If you have any other siblings or small children in the house, you can encourage them to take turns pushing one another in the container with the pillows to make a fun ride.

- Pillow Stomp
 - Fill a bucket, basket, or box with pillows.
 - Have your child stand on top of the pillows and stomp on them as hard as they can to squish them down.



Obstacle Course

- You can use many different items in your home to make an obstacle course for your child. Set up the obstacle course inside the house or get some fresh air and do it outside.
- Some items you can use for your obstacle course are:
 - Tape
 - Furniture
 - Blankets
 - Towels
 - Pillows
 - Plastic containers
 - Empty boxes
 - Buckets
 - Baskets
 - Stuffed animals
 - Paper
 - Balls
- Some activities your child can complete are:
 - Throwing objects into a target (ex: pillow into a box)
 - Crawling through a tunnel (ex: under a table, chair, or fort of blankets)
 - Jumping (ex: on pillows, blankets, or cushions spread out)
 - Climbing (ex: on couch cushions, pillows, or blankets or from one chair to another)
 - Balancing pillows or stuffed animals on your head while walking
 - Walking on a balance beam (ex: made of pillows or tape – you can even make it go different directions)
 - Moving around obstacles (ex: containers set up on the floor)
 - Completing animal walks across the floor
 - Doing jumping jacks or marches
- Be creative!! You can use anything for an obstacle course and complete any activities you want.



Book Jumps

- Use books, notebooks, or binders and stand them up in a line. Space them about a foot apart.
- Encourage your child to jump over them. If they cannot jump over them, just practice stepping over them one foot at a time.
- This is a great way to improve their balance.



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