

The Cadogan Centre

SPECIALISTS IN SUPPORT FOR LEARNING EST.1965



SUPPORTING MOTOR SKILLS AND SENSORY REGULATION

Author: Jessica Shirley

These recommendations can help anyone with dyspraxia or developmental co-ordination disorder (DCD), as well as sensory processing disorder. When students are at home, it is important to try and keep to a routine, such as getting up and going to bed at the same time, sticking to usual mealtimes, eat and drink healthily, get plenty of exercise, and having a regular pattern to your weekly activities.

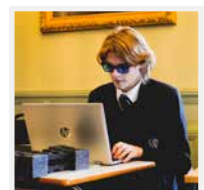
Building in regular movement to the day is important for overall wellbeing, physical health, maintaining concentration, and reducing anxiety.

Ideally, complete some exercises at the start of the day, and build in regular movement and stretching breaks, such as in-between activities.

For anyone who struggles with their co-ordination, use big gross motor movements that involve the whole body, before moving on to the more refined fine motor movements needed for activities such as writing. Household chores and gardening activities also provide a great opportunity for exercise, help to keep the brain's sensory system regulated, and support planning and organisation skills.

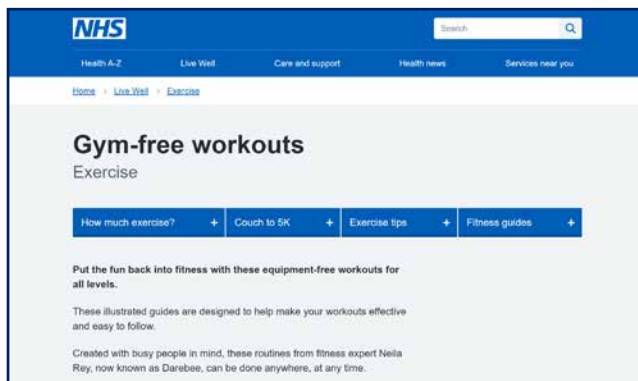
Here are some suggestions to get you started, as well as some links with further resources and ideas:

- Change positions when using laptops:
- Completing some lessons standing, with the device on a kitchen worktop/boxes (this increases heart rate and engages more muscles than sitting)
- Have the device on the floor (with suitable ventilation), and the pupil lying on their front, propped up on their elbows (this helps with sensory integration and strengthens the shoulder girdle and other upper body muscles, which will in turn help with fine motor skills)
- Use a gym ball to sit on, instead of a chair for some lessons (this help to keep core muscles engaged, and gentle bouncing on a gym ball can help wake your brain up whilst sat at a screen).
- Move and stretch regularly for a few minutes between lessons:
- Stand up and stretch your hands up to the ceiling for 10 seconds
- Bend forward and touch your toes
- Do 10 x star jumps
- Do some leg lunges – hold for 10 seconds and alternate between legs
- Do 10 x wall press ups
- Hold out your arms at shoulder height and make small circles with your hands (10 x forwards, then 10 x backwards)





The NHS also have some great suggestions for non-gym based workouts: www.nhs.uk/live-well/exercise/gym-free-workouts



Dance put on your favourite songs and have a dance! This is a great opportunity to get your heart rate up, as well as lift your spirits

Yoga: there are lots of videos on YouTube, or have a look at GoNoodle for some guided yoga-based movements (there's lots of fun activities for a range of ages: www.gonoodle.com) – yoga has lots of benefits for physical health, co-ordination, muscle strength and balance, as well as for mental wellbeing.



Fine motor activities:

- Modelling with play dough (there are loads of recipes online for making dough at home)
- Threading beads to make friendship bracelets to send to school friends
- Creating with Lego
- Jigsaws
- Pegging out washing on the line
- Making cards to send to loved ones
- Baking using the 'rubbing in method'
- Sowing seeds – you could have a sunflower competition with friends and measure their height each week as they start to grow
- Writing out menus and shopping lists for the week ahead (this also helps with planning and organisational skills)
- Heavy work chores in the house and garden are great for exercise and self-regulation
- Wiping down worktops, windows, etc.
- Hoovering/mopping floors
- Carrying the laundry to/from the washing machine
- Cleaning the car
- Weeding, raking, and digging in the garden
- Mowing the lawn
- Putting the bins out

Household chores and gardening activities also provide a great opportunity for exercise, help to keep the brain's sensory system regulated, and support planning and organisation skills. Why not have a go?

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