

Information about

## **Sensory Motor Circuits**

for schools and parents



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## Sensory Motor Circuits

Sensory Circuits is a short and snappy sensory motor skills programme that helps to set children up for a school day. It enables children to reach the level of alertness needed to concentrate during lessons. They were developed in the Peterborough area, where most schools use it because it is so effective. Some schools run sensory circuits after lunch as well.

Children participate in a 10-15 minute session of activities designed to improve brain processing efficiency, and they generally find that the circuit is a fun way to start the day.

Some children like it so much and /or respond so well to it that they would benefit from a sensory circuit at home at the weekends or in the holidays.

This leaflet tells you what to do, in the correct order.  
*Doing the activities in the recommended order is vital. The right order results in a well regulated, happy child. The wrong order may well result in a disregulated, upset or irritable child.*

## Suggested equipment

Trampet	Skipping rope
Balance board	Gym ball
Chair	Soft mat / carpet
Selection of balls and / or beanbags	

Remove shoes and socks, as the Circuit is best done bare foot.

## Music

It is useful to play music during the circuit. At home, it can mark the beginning and the end of the Circuit. Choose music that is fast (140-160 beats per minute). At the end, during the calm down period, just turn the volume down.

## Order of activities 1. Alerting

The first activities should be those that make the head change direction rapidly.

For example:

Bouncing



Skipping



Jumping or  
Step-ups



Spinning



### Trampet ideas

- Jump
- Jump, lift knees up / kick feet out behind
- Star jump
- Jump and count / recite time tables / recite alphabet
- Throw a bean bag / ball at a target / into a bucket
- Throw a bean bag / ball to a person who is walking round the trampet
- Throw a bean bag / ball up in the air while counting
- Sequences of little and big jumps, eg 5 little, 1 big
- Change direction while jumping
- Jog and Hop
- Spotty dog march (homolateral marching)
- March, touching opposite hand / elbow with knee
- Bounce off trampet onto a crash mat / pile of cushions
- Jump while copying gestures
- Jump while following arrow chart with arm gestures

## 2. Organising

The second set of activities should be those that provide a motor challenge to the child.

**For example:**

- Funny walks: Animal walks.
- Egg and spoon walk
- Throw and catch while on a balance board
- Balance board, put bean bags around it.  
Child picks up bean bags one by one, or in a certain order.
- Walk along a gym bench (could be upturned, with the child picking up bean bags and throwing them in a bucket)
- Pass bean bag round leg, behind back
- Log rolls, hands clasped & arms stretched out above head
- Infinity Walk: walk round 2 chairs, in and out in a figure of eight. Repeat with eyes closed
- Stand inside a hula hoop that is on the ground. Spin, without going outside the hoop. Stop, stand still. Press hands down on head.
- Bend a rope into different shapes. Walk along it. Jump over it from side to side
- Make scoops from plastic bottles, use to catch bean bags
- Obstacle courses: Go over and under a chair. Climb over a chair, through a hoop, then roll on a mat or the floor.
- Commando crawling.

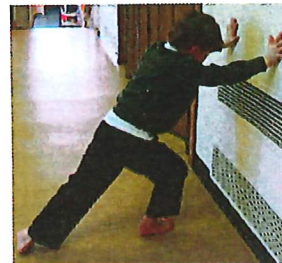


### 3. Calming

The third set of activities should be those that calm the child: deep pressure, proprioceptive input, and heavy work

**For example:**

- Press-ups on a wall:  
Count to 10. Repeat 3 times
- Press-ups on a wall: Upside down  
Walk up the wall, put feet flat on the wall and count to 10 before walking down the wall.  
Repeat 3 times.
- Half press-ups from the floor:  
Push up from knees not from the feet.
- Isometrics and Chair sit ups  
(see Isometrics on page 6)
- 'Steamroller squash':  
Student lies on their stomach.  
Roll a gym ball up and down, pressing down hard.  
Do not roll it over their head.
- Joint compression:  
See page 6, Isometrics Number 4 "Extra Calming"
- Firm massage: any of back, hands, feet, and shoulders



# Isometrics

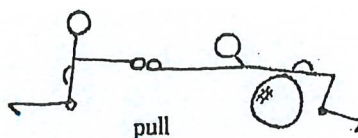
## Here's how:

1. In a seated position, place your palms together, imitating a position of praying. Push your palms against each other for a few seconds. (Parent or teacher says, "Push"). Then relax for a few seconds. (Parent or teacher says, "Relax"). Repeat 3 to 5 times. Remember the aim is to achieve lots of heavy work input to the joints and muscles, so decide on the number of repetitions accordingly.
2. Next, curl the fingers on each hand to form a semi-circle. Rotate one hand toward your body and one hand away from your body. Interlock your fingers, imitating a position of an opera singer. Pull your elbows in the opposite directions whilst keeping your fingers interlocked for a few seconds. Relax for a few seconds and repeat at least 3 to 5 times. In the opera singer position, switch hands so the hand that was on top is now on the bottom. (Parent or teacher continues throughout the steps of the isometrics to say, "Push" and "relax").
3. Place hands on seat of chair by thighs and lift bottom off seat of chair by straightening arms. (Parent or teacher says, "Push"). Then relax for a few seconds. (Parent or teacher says, "Relax"). Repeat 3 to 5 times.
4. Extra Calming Stage: Parent / teacher stands behind the student and presses firmly down through shoulders using palms of hand. Maintain the pressure for 10 seconds. Repeat 3 to 5 times.

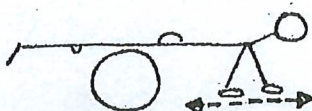


# Gym ball ideas for older students

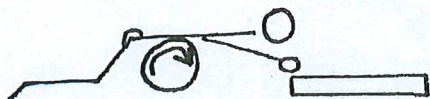
1. Pull the student towards you.



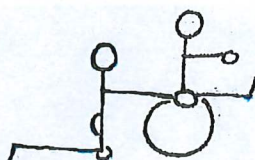
2. Student walks forward on their hands, then backwards.  
The slower the better.



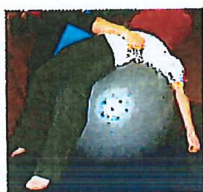
3. Roll over the ball fast and crash onto cushions or a crash mat.



4. You can hold the student at the hips to stabilise them while balancing on a ball.



5. Arch the back over a ball. A peanut ball is more stable than on a round ball.



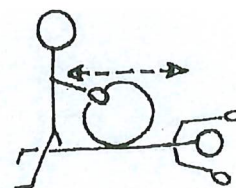
6. Movement averse students are happier on the ball against a wall.



7. 'Push against each other': Two students sit on either side of a ball, with their backs resting against the ball. When given the command, both push against the ball, each trying to dislodge the other student.



8. 'Steamroller': Student lies on their stomach. You roll ball up and down, pressing down hard. Do not roll it over their head.



## Example of a Sensory Motor Circuit

