



## Maximum Potential



Pediatric Occupational Therapy  
Specializing in Sensory Integration  
25 Devonshire Place, London, W1G 6JD  
Telephone 0207 486 4747 Mobile 07980 311960

Email [mel@maximumpotential.info](mailto:mel@maximumpotential.info) Web <http://www.maximumpotential.org.uk>

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Melanne Maddalene Randall, MSC, OTR

Director

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### **Classroom Strategies**

**“Heads up”**: Whilst seated, ask the children to tilt their heads backward to look at the ceiling and count to ten. This movement stimulates the vestibular system as fluid is moved in the semi circular canals in the inner ear and will help increase alertness.

**“Heads down”**: Whilst seated ask all children to lean forward and place their heads in between their knees. You will need to ensure that chairs are pushed back away from the tables to avoid bumps and bruises. This movement also stimulates the vestibular system as fluid is moved in the semi circular canals in the inner ear and will help increase alertness.

**“And turn around”**: Ask the children to stand up and turn around once. This movement also stimulates the vestibular system as fluid is moved in the semi circular canals in the inner ear and will help increase alertness.

**“Sit down and stamp your feet”**: Ask all children to sit back on their seats and stamp their feet up to 10 times. Impact provides good information to the proprioceptive system from receptors in the joint capsules.

**“Hold your seat and stretch side to side”**: Ask the children to firmly grip the sides of their chairs and to lean side to side. Repeat 10 times. This provides a good stretch through the arms and stimulates the proprioceptive system.

**“Push your body up and down”**: Ask the children to place their hand on their seats and lift their whole body up/bottoms off their chairs. Repeat 10 times. Pushing activities also stimulate the proprioceptive system.

**“Clap your hands 1,2,3”**: Clapping hands provides proprioceptive input as impact provides good information to the proprioceptive system from receptors in the joint capsules.

**“Piano fingers. do, ray, me”**: Ask the children to drum their fingers on the table and pretend to play piano. Impact provides good information to the proprioceptive system from receptors in the joint capsules.

**Wall push-ups**: These can be utilized during transitions when the children line up in the corridor. Ask the children to stand facing a wall with arms extended at shoulder height and hands pressed flat against the wall. Then ask the children to push against the wall as if they are trying to make the room bigger. Hold for 20 seconds and repeat 5 times.

### **Movement Breaks**

- Heel to toe walking
- Soldier walking (knees high up or give them a challenge by tapping their knees with opposite hands)
- Stretch a piece of theraband around the front legs of a chair
- *Jumping 20 times on the spot (star jumps, tuck jumps etc.)*
- *Running errands, eg. delivering attendance list, picking things up from other classrooms etc.*
- *Carrying heavy books, bags around the classroom*
- *Changing position regularly :*
  - cross-legged*
  - side-sitting*
  - high-kneeling*
  - half-kneeling*
  - prone prop*
- *5-10 spins in place (make sure you spin both ways!!!)*
- *Standing with hands stretched up in the air then touching toes - repeat 20 times*
- *Windmill*
- *Chair push-ups*
- *Clapping games*
- *Stretches, or different yoga poses*
- *Hopping, jumping, marching on the spot*
- *Wall pushes (could have 2 children pushing against each others hands)*
- *Self hugs*
- *When moving from table to carpet or floor to chair, or leaving the classroom have them do different animal walks (eg. walk like an elephant, gallop like a horse, hop like a bunny, move like a tortoise etc.)*

## **Calming Activities**

These can be used when the child is over-aroused or agitated, or can be used preventatively prior to 5tasks which you know may be difficult for the child or cause agitation.

- *Rocking Back & Forth- Using rocking chair or Moon seat rock back and forth in a rhythmical and constant pattern.*
- *Squishing with Gym Ball- Have child lie on his/her stomach and squish his/her legs, trunk and arms with the gym ball. Only some children like having their head gently squished!*
- *Hiding in the Tent- Allow the child to have a set amount of quiet alone time in the tent- use a timer/clock so child knows how long they have in there.*
- *Weighted Vest- Child wears the vest for a period before a sedentary classroom activity OR child wears weighted vest and is allowed quiet time in the tent/rocking chair to calm & re-focus.*
- *Sausage Wrap- Roll the child up like a sausage in a yoga mat or blanket being careful to not wrap their head. Allow some quiet time wrapped up.*
- *Gentle Swinging- Rhythmic and constant back and forth movements on the swing can be calming. Try minimize any rotational or spinning movements.*
- *Music- Play a classical relaxation CD in the background.*

## **Alerting/Organizing Activities**

Use alerting strategies to 'wake-up' a child mid-way through the day or activity. They can also be used as a warm-up prior to tasks which may require the child to be focused and attend for a period.

- *Bouncing on Gym Ball- Sitting on the gym ball like it's a chair and gently bouncing up and down (trying to keep both feet on the floor).*
- *Log Rolling- Rolling across the floor like a log*
- *Spinning- Spinning movements on either the swing or spinning chair.*
- *Squeezing Stress Toy/Putty- Stretching & squeezing putty or a stress toy, especially before fine motor tasks, handwriting or typing practice!*
- *Crashing- Crashing, bumping or jumping games into soft pillows*
- *Trampoline- Jumping up and down. Doing star jumps, stride jumps, clap jumps etc.*
- *Music- Motivational music, or pop music played in the background can be alerting.*

- *Wheelbarrow Walks- Hold child at the hips or if strong enough at the knees/ankles.*
  - *Fun animal walking...*
    - Crab walking- walking with hands and feet, backwards, keeping bottom off floor.*
    - Bunny hops- child places hands at sides of head forming rabbit ears. Hop forward, keeping both feet together.*
    - Bear walk- both hands on the floor and knees extended.*
    - Frog walk- placing hands on the floor, hopping, leaning through her hands. Once legs are back on the floor, move arms forward and repeat the action.*
    - Donkey walk- as above but kicking the legs backwards and upwards*
    - Snake- pulling body along the floor using just the arms.*
    - Elephant walk- child bends forward from the waist, allowing arms to hang limply with hands clasped; walk forward taking big steps.*
    - Rocking Horse- Child stands with hands on hips and feet astride. Child leans forward, keeping knees stiff, lifts heels from the floor; rocks backward, lifting toes from the floor.*
- Try also kangaroo, penguin, bird, monkey etc.*