

Gross Motor Delay
Aged 0-18 months

Purpose of this Leaflet-

Within this leaflet we will detail some activities and physiotherapy exercises that you can do with your baby at home in order to-

- Optimise their physical functional ability
- Maximise your babies gross motor skills
- Assist normal gross motor development
- Maintain health and well-being

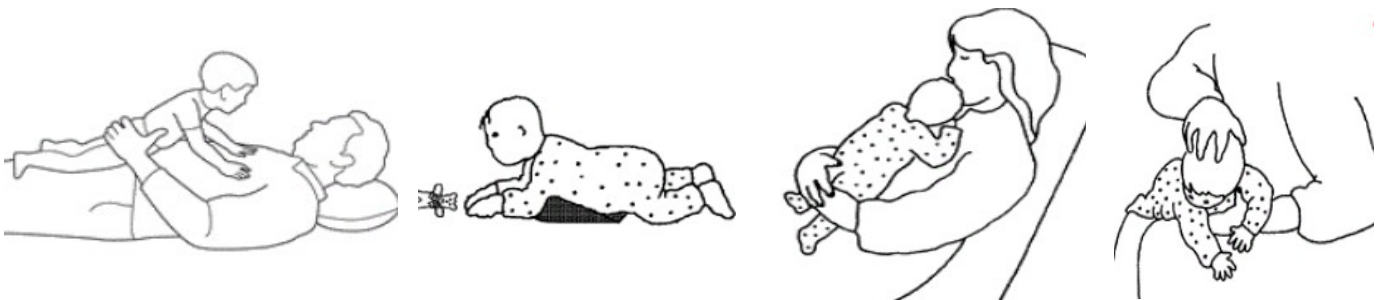
The information in this leaflet is written for children up to the stage of walking. All children develop at different rates and thus please follow the advice relevant to your child. The first activities and exercises on this leaflet are the easiest and the last ones are the hardest. Therefore start at the beginning and work through the stages until you get to the stage your baby cannot do or cannot do well and work on this stage.

Aim to slowly work through the stages as your babies gross motor skills progress. Please focus on doing these activities with quality and thus allowing your baby to do them slowly and well rather than trying to rush through the stages.

Stage 1-

Tummy time-

- It is vital that babies have lots of opportunities to spend time on their tummies. This is in order to develop the strength in their back, neck and arms.
- A baby needs to have strength in their core in order to develop more advanced motor skills to include sitting, use of their hands and eating and drinking.
- Therefore it is important to spend as long as possible on tummy time. Babies can often dislike tummy time therefore do it for a short spells (maybe only a minute or so) but do it frequently.
- Below are pictures showing lots of different ways you can do tummy time with your baby.



Side Lying-

- Side lying is an alternative position your baby can lie in. They can lie on either side.
- Initially your baby may need your support or cushions to assist them to maintain this position. But as able you can start to reduce the support offered
- In this position offer toys that your baby can try to grasp with both hands to explore. Your baby may even try to bring toys to their mouths to explore further.

On their Backs-

- Whilst lying on their backs you can encourage different activities with your baby to include
 - Tracking and following- take a toy your baby is interested in and try to get them to follow it as you move it left and right and up and down. Try this with toys that make a noise and also toys that are visually stimulating.
 - See if your baby will grasp a toy off you- encourage them to do this with both hands
 - Encourage your baby to bring toys and hands to their mouth to explore

Aim of this stage is to-

- Able to lift up head and hold it up whilst in on their tummy
- Able to reach for and grasp toys with both hands
- Bring toys to their mouths

Stage 2-

One of the first gross motor skills a baby achieves is rolling. So stage 2 is geared up to help your baby achieve rolling. Most babies will roll from their fronts to their backs first.

Tummy Time-

- Its now time to progress their ability in tummy time
- To do this encourage your baby to do the following-
 - Push up on their arms whilst on their tummies (as in the picture below)
 - Encourage them to reach out for toys
 - Get them to follow toys to turn their heads left and right (as in the picture on the right below)
 - Shift their weight from 1 hand onto another



On their Back-

- By now your baby should be reaching for toys- start now to encourage them to reach for toys across their bodies – for example- get them to use their right hand to reach for a toy near their left shoulder and visa versa.
- Encourage your baby to swap toys between hands

Assist Rolling from Front to Back-

- Whilst on their tummy use a toy to get your baby to turn to the side and reach 1 arm up towards it
- Use this arm to assist them to roll over- provide as little help as required- try to reduce the assistance you are offering over time.

Assist Rolling from Back to Front-

- Whilst your baby is lying on their back get them to reach across their body for a toy
- Bend your babies knees up if they haven't done this themselves
- Support them by providing assistance at the arm and hip to roll over
- As before provide as little help as required- try to reduce the assistance you are offering over time.

Aim of this stage is to-

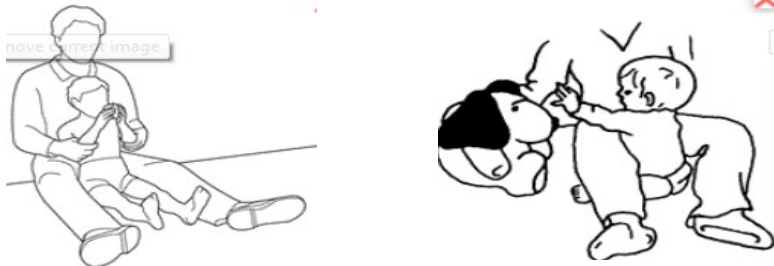
- Push up onto extended arms whilst lying on their tummy
- Swap toys between hands
- Achieve rolling from tummy to back
- Achieve rolling from back to tummy

Stage 3

After a baby can roll the next gross motor skills they try to achieve is sitting. Initially a baby will need support of an adult to help them in sitting, then they should be able to sit for a short periods whilst propping with their hands on the floor. Finally a baby should be able to sit and reach out for toys whilst maintaining their balance.

Supportive Sitting

- Sit your baby in front of you and support them to hold this position and play in sitting
- Encourage them to look up for toys to encourage them to straighten their backs and sit up straight- initially they may only be able to do this for short periods
- As your baby starts to sit better you can start to reduce the support you offer and support lower on the back or down on the hips as able.



Independent Sitting

- When your baby is able to sit for a short time without you supporting them reduce your support. They will require cushions around them and for you to remain close by as they will often fall and at present will not have any saving reactions
- In sitting initially your baby may use their arms to sit in propping. Try to encourage them to look and reach up even momentarily initially
- When they are able to sit up well by themselves you can then progress this to include-
 - Getting your baby to reach out to the sides and upwards for toys when you pass them
 - Place toys slightly out of reach for your baby
 - Place toys slightly behind them so they need to twist behind

Move from lying to sitting

- Assist your baby to move from lying down to sitting as per the pictures below-



Aim of this stage is to-

- Sit independently without support and without use of hands to prop
- Able to reach out of base of support for toys
- Move from lying to sitting

Stage 4

The next gross motor stage is crawling. Crawling is a more complex gross motor skill as it requires strength in the core, arms and legs as well as the processing ability to move all limbs together.

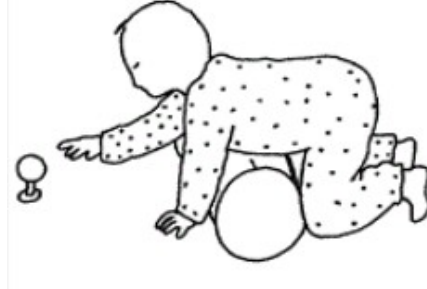
4 point kneeling

4 point kneeling is the static crawling position. There are lots of ways you can build up a baby's ability and strength in this position to include-

- 4 point kneeling over your leg- place your baby in the crawling position with their tummy over your leg
- 4 point kneeling over a roll – place a roll or firm cushion under their tummies instead of your knee
- Supportive 4 point kneeling- place your baby in 4 point kneeling and then support them at the hips to maintain this position

Whilst in these positions you can then try the following-

- Rocking forward and back and side to side
- Lifting the head to look at something
- Reach out with 1 hand for toys



High Kneeling

Place your baby in a high kneeling position at a low table and encourage them to play. Initially they may require some support to achieve this.



Moving into and out of 4 point kneeling

Once your baby can hold 4 point kneeling it is important they can move from the floor and from sitting into and out of this position. Try to support them to do this- as per pictures below.



Aim of this stage is to-

- Hold the 4 point kneeling position independently
- High kneel at furniture independently
- Move into and out of 4 point kneeling independently
- Start crawling

Stage 5

Prior to walking there are a few other skills a baby requires to do these include-

- Pulling to stand
- Cruising
- Independent standing

This stage works on all these skills that are required prior to walking

Pulling to Stand

Assist your baby to pull to stand at the sofa or a low table. Your baby should use their arms to hold on and pull themselves onto their knees and then push up into standing. You can help them move from the floor onto their knees until they can do this themselves

Standing at Furniture-

There are lots of activities you can do with your baby whilst they are stood at furniture this includes-

- Reaching for toys
- Reach to the floor to pick up toys
- 2 handed play- play with toys that need 2 hands or clapping games
- Shifting weight to left and right
- Encourage to step along furniture

Once your baby is standing well and doing the above activities you could try to progress them by-

- Standing with a push along walker
- Stand and hold onto an unsteady object- i.e. large ball, rocking chair
- Encourage your baby to let go of furniture for a moment.

Prior to walking independently you may find your baby will walk with a push along walker, this is good to encourage. But never use a baby walker for your baby as these are unsafe to use.

Aims of this stage is to-

- Pull to stand at furniture
- Cruise along furniture
- Stand independently without holding on
- Walk with a push along walker



University Hospitals Birmingham
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By working through all of these stages you will have provided your baby the strength, skills and processing required for walking. The next gross motor stage for your baby to achieve is walking. Give your baby lots of opportunities to practice all of the activities in this leaflet and when they are ready they should start walking independently.

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