

Activities for improving Gross Motor Skills

1 – Toss bean bags into baskets

Provide laundry baskets. Then get your learners in several rows, and have them take turns tossing **bean bags** into the target.

2 – Move on paper plates

Buy some coloured paper plates. Then get creative! Place them in a row (red, green, red, green) and have students step on just the red ones. Or have them get down on all fours and “skate” with a plate under each hand. Put the plates in a row to get your students moving around the classroom. Put the plates far apart for biiiig steps. Or put them close together for tiny steps.

3 – Learn with a ball toss

If your learners are able to catch a simple toss, put them in a circle. Then think of a way to incorporate learning with a ball toss. For example, you can throw a ball to a student and name a word. Then s/he names a rhyming word and tosses the ball back to you. Toss it to another student with a new word for him/her to rhyme.

4 – Play “find and tag it”

This is a versatile game that can be used to review many different skills. Just tell your learners to find something and tag it. For example, “Find and tag something blue.” Or “Find and tag something that starts with /s/.”

5 – Move like an animal

You’ll need some open space, but this is a great way to get kids using new muscles. Here are some ideas:

- Move like a bird (run with arms outstretched)
- Move like a snake (wiggle on tummies on the floor)
- Move like a bear (walk on all fours)
- Move like a frog (get down on haunches and hop)
- Move like a kangaroo (take big leaps with arms in front of chest)
- Move like an elephant (with heavy stomping)
- Move like a penguin (waddle with ankles close together and arms pinned to sides)

6 – Have fun with painter’s tape

Painter’s tape is one of the best inventions ever. It goes on (and comes off) easily – whether you’ve got a smooth floor or a carpeted one (but be sure to test it first just to be sure). And there’s so much you can do with it! Put it on the floor like a ladder. Then have students see how many rungs they can jump. Can they jump farther with a running start?

See how many rungs they can stretch – or how far they can go on one foot.

7 – Play indoor hopscotch

I really think painter’s tape is the way to go on this one. Create a simple hopscotch board with numbers. Then have students toss a bean bag on a space and jump to get there. Another idea is to **use cardboard squares** that you can pull out at any time.

Tip: Change the skill that learners review with hopscotch; instead of putting numbers on the squares, consider letters, shapes, or sight words.

8 – Use balloons

Blow up enough balloons for each of your learners (plus extras, because you know you'll need them after the inevitable popping). Have them put a balloon between their knees and walk like a penguin. Or they can toss the balloon and catch it so that it never hits the floor.

Can they balance the balloon on a part of their body (like an outstretched arm) and walk a few steps – or across the room?

9 – Copy me!

This is where you can get in *your* workout for the day. Simply do a series of exercises or silly actions, and have your students copy you. Jump like a kangaroo. Scratch like a monkey. Run in a place. (Whatever it takes to get that heart rate up!)

10 – Create a wiggle jar

Print action cards and place them in jar. When your students need a movement break, pull a few cards for everyone to do. Here are some ideas for a preschool wiggle jar:

- Jog in place while you sing the alphabet.
- Touch the sky and then your feet five times in a row.
- Pretend you're playing the drums.
- Fly around the room like a bird.

11 – Tape balance beam

This is ultra simple, but surprisingly fun! Grab several rolls of **colourful painter's tape**, and set it on the floor in different lines; make the lines zigzag, curvy, straight, or shaped like a circle, square, or other shape. Then challenge your learners to walk each colored line from beginning to end.

12 – Dance like this

If your learners like to dance, put on some music – but give them instructions to dance a particular way. They can dance slow, fast, in a circle, silly, etc.

13 – Roll and move

Grab a large soft die and write a list of simple exercises on cards. Have one learner draw a card, and another roll the die. The die tells you how many times to do the exercise. Here are some ideas for the exercise cards:

- Touch your toes
- Do arm circles
- Run across the room
- Hop on one foot
- Jump forward
- Take big steps
- Take tiny steps

14 – Be an athlete

Have your learners pretend to do one of these sports. Think of it as heart-pumping charades!

- basketball
- football
- skiing
- rope climbing
- tennis baseball
- rowing

15 – **Be the weather**

Children can use their bodies to be different kinds of weather, such as:

- rain
- snow
- earthquake
- tornado
- wind

16 – **Learning scavenger hunt**

Write things your students are learning on sticky notes – they may be letters, numbers, shapes, sight words, etc. Put the sticky notes in various places around the room (some hidden and some obvious), and see how many your learners can find and identify.

17 – **Sing active songs**

Sing one of these classic songs, and add some actions!

- I'm a Little Teapot
- If You're Happy and You Know It
- The Hokey Pokey
- Ring around the Rosie
- Head, Shoulders, Knees, and Toes
- Teddy Bear, Teddy Bear, Turn Around
- Here We Go 'Round the Mulberry Bush

18 – **Do alphabet yoga**

If you have nap mats or towels, pull them out and challenge your learners to do a yoga pose for various letters of the alphabet.

A – Aeroplane (hold still and move arms to the side)

B – Bicycle (lie on your back and pedal your feet)

C – Cat pose (get on all fours; then round your back while tucking in your chin; release)