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Sensory Motor Warm Up Exercises and Strategies for Classroom, Gym and Recess

This is a list of some exercises and strategies that can be performed in the classroom or gym to regulate (calm or alert) sensory systems and improve attention. These techniques will ensure optimal alertness for optimal academic performance. Students should understand “engine” concept prior to implementing strategies for eventual self-regulation of alert status.

Classroom Strategies (see sample classroom setup next page)

1. **Mouth**

- suck-type water bottles on desks
- gum prior to instruction or during work time
- chew theratubing on pencil end
- chew on straws

2. **Move**

- wiggle time”: chair push ups, body like popcorn popping, jumping bean bodies, do a chair dance
- alternate work positions (e.g., chair, floor, sit, lie, desktop, window sill, pillows, bean bag, inner tube chairs, stand/kneel @ board)
- stretch “up and long and wide” and breathe
- squeeze arms to body, legs together, make a funny face
- make secret hand signals (learn sign language), “signals only” time to create quiet space
- ALWAYS allow recess, bodies need stimulation, just like they need food
- move-n-sit cushion, therapy balls, mini-trampoline, exercise bike, stationary weights, trapeze/chin-up bar
- hand/chair/desk/floor/wall push-ups
- push/pull/lift/carry = heavy work
 - push heavy object (milk crate with sand bags, book shelf)
 - pull each other on carpet, sheet, blanket, “magic carpet”

3. **Touch** (keep in basket on teachers desk)

- flour/sand/rice balloons
- fidget objects (string or paper clips, spiny ball, fabric swatches, theraputty)
- bean bag or inner tube chairs

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4. Look

- reduce visual clutter on walls
- create sensory hide out or cave with room dividers, tents, study carrel
- visual filters, colored paper, "L" or window keys
- use multisensory teaching techniques (show, tell, touch, move)

5. Listen

- alternate learning centre (library, quiet room)
- ear protectors, listening centre, discman/walkman
- music (rhythmic for calming, arrhythmic for alerting)

Gym Strategies (can set up stations)

1. Gym Mats/Weighted Blankets/Sofa Cushions

- sandwiches, rolls, magic carpet

2. Big Therapy Balls (available @ Sears or Physio Clinics)

- roll body over ball
- sit and bounce on ball
- roll ball over body "pizza"

3. Trapeze/Chin Up Bar

4. Mini Trampoline

5. Stationary Bike with Resistance

6. Floor Push Ups

7. Spinning in Discs/Saucers

8. Commando Crawl/Army Crawl/Animal Walks (crab/bear walk)

- under mat positioned over supports, make tunnel with barrels
- under zigzagged string

9. Push/Pull/Lift/Carry = "Heavy Work"

10. Yoga Stretches

Outside/Recess Strategies

- play in sandbox with damp, heavy sand
- colour a "rainbow" with sidewalk chalk on hands/knees
- jump over or climb inside inner tubes
- play catch with heavy ball
- play tug of war with heavy rope
- roll or sled down hill
- swing from monkey bars and climb on playground equipment
- participate in scheduled activities such as gymnastics, horseback riding, karate, climbing wall, Sun Hang Do