

KEY POINTS ABOUT GROSS MOTOR DEVELOPMENT

Gross motor skills are abilities that involve large muscles of the arms, legs and torso to complete whole-body movements. Kids rely on gross motor skills to have successful experiences in everyday activities at school, at home, on the playground and in the community. Kids who struggle with gross motor skills have trouble doing whole-body movements like climbing and jumping jacks.

What Are Gross Motor Skills?

We use gross motor skills to do everyday things that involve our large muscles, from exercising to raking leaves. Most people use these skills easily and automatically. But gross motor skills are more complex than you might think. These skills involve the coordination of the muscles and the neurological system. They impact balance and coordination. They also form the basis for [fine motor skills](#) that help us make small movements.

Gross motor skills are related to other abilities. These include:

- Balance
- Coordination
- Body awareness
- Physical strength
- Reaction time



All of these abilities help kids participate successfully in activities at school, at home and in the community. Imagine what gym class, recess or playdates are like for a child with weak gross motor skills. These challenges can impact a child's [self-esteem](#) and social life.

Gross Motor Difficulties

Kids achieve different [gross motor milestones](#) over time. For instance, at age 3 or 4, kids are typically able to jump with two feet. By 7 or 8, they can typically ride a bike without training wheels.

If your child regularly misses these milestones, or seems to struggle with motor activities for a long time, it might be a sign of a condition called Developmental Coordination Disorder (DCD) or Dyspraxia.

Parents should talk to their child's doctor if there are concerns about their child's motor skills. School Physiotherapy and Occupational therapy services can be consulted. There are also direct therapies available in the community to support motor development.

Building Gross Motor Skills at Home

The child might be able to get help at school to work on movement issues. But there are also things that can be done at home to improve a child's gross motor skills.

- Discover fun activities to [improve gross motor skills in younger kids](#) and [in older kids](#).
- Explore [video games that can help kids practice motor skills](#).
- Read about [different musical instruments and the motor skills they require](#).
- Try some [Yoga for kids](#) and [animal walks](#).

Adapted from <https://www.understood.org/en/learning-thinking-differences/child-learning-disabilities/movement-coordination-issues/all-about-gross-motor-skills>