



### Additional advice

When children exercise they should not be uncomfortable. Most young children are very good at limiting their activity and will stop if something hurts them. Continuing with some activity during periods of disease flare is very important. If your child has actively inflamed joints or has a history of neck arthritis, contact your Physiotherapist for advice regarding the most appropriate exercises to encourage. If you feel that your child is having difficulty with certain activities, we might be able to suggest an alternative or adaptation to make things easier.

### Department of Rheumatology

Occupational therapy 0121 333 8213  
Physiotherapy 0121 333 8221

### Data Protection

We collect information about our young people and families relevant to their diagnosis and treatment. We store it in written records and on computer. We may have to share some of your information with other people and organisations. If you have any questions and/or do not want us to share that information with others, please talk to the Adolescent Rheumatology team or contact PALS (Patient Advice and Liaison Service) on (0121) 333 8403/8611.



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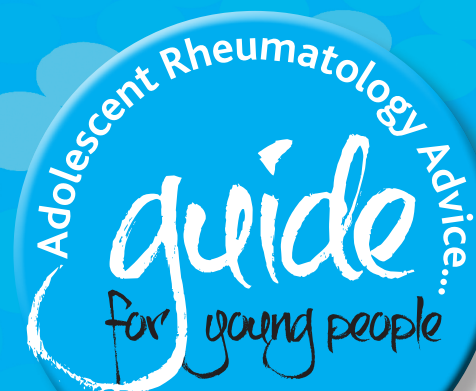
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## Exercise for young children



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When young children have joint problems it is often very difficult, if not impossible, to persuade them to carry out formal exercise programmes. Battles over exercises can lead to anxiety and unhappiness for both the child and parents.

### But...

We also know that it is very important for all children with joint problems to exercise in order to:

- Maintain range of movement of their joints.
- Maximise their muscle strength.
- Maintain their general fitness.
- Minimise the effects of their condition.

### Fortunately...

We now know that lots of fun activities carried out every day by young children can benefit them in much the same way. That means that by encouraging certain play activities children can do physiotherapy every day without even noticing!

## Useful play activities

- Any games on all fours are excellent for strengthening the leg and trunk muscles.
- Hands and feet position also gives a good muscle stretch.
- One good game is balancing on all fours. Try balancing lifting one arm, then one leg and perhaps both at the same time!
- Games involving crouching build leg muscles. Half crouching works muscles harder than full! e.g. ring-a-roses - "all fall down".
- Play using toes is great for foot muscles and joints! Try scrunching up paper or picking up objects.
- Bending and straightening ankles and drawing circles keeps them mobile. Tracing out shapes or words with the toes can be fun!
- Games straightening out the legs, or kicking a ball when sitting will build up thigh muscles. If possible this movement should be done slowly.
- Making bridges, lifting the bottom as high as possible is great for legs and trunk. Children can play with toys going under the bridge.
- Lying on the tummy is very good for hips. Kicking the legs e.g. pretending to swim builds up hip muscles.
- Finger exercises such as "Tommy t humb" or "Twinkle twinkle" are useful to keep fingers mobile and strong.
- Any activities which make children out of breath and a bit warm are also really good as they help keep their hearts and lungs in good shape! Shops such as Early Learning Centre have excellent music activity tapes which may be helpful. Other activities which are particularly good include:
- Swimming
- Riding a bike
- Skipping
- Tumble Tots
- Ball games
- Running



Aerobic exercise is important for your heart to keep it fit

Kids who are active will have stronger muscles and bones

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