

Occupational Therapy and ADHD

Occupational Therapy
Integrated Team for Children with
Disabilities



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Setting the Scene for the Day

- Define Occupational Therapy (OT) and how Occupational Therapists work with children and young people
- Explore the three diagnostic elements of ADHD and how they impact on activities of daily living
- Explain how OT can help children and young people with ADHD
- Provide a practical workshop with strategies, tools and ideas to help support Children and Young People with ADHD

Occupational Therapy (OT) with children

- Occupational therapists aim to help children with a physical, sensory or cognitive disability to be as independent as possible and to enhance their self esteem and sense of achievement in daily activities



Occupational Therapy

A child's main job is playing and learning and OTs assess their **play skills**, **school performance** and **self care skills** and compare them with what is developmentally appropriate for that age group.



Occupational Therapy

- Focus on the FUNCTIONAL need of the child:

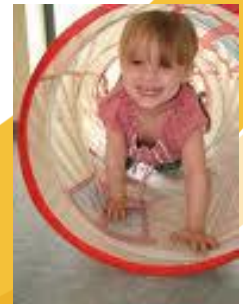
- Productivity –play, school tasks



- Self Care –dressing, eating, drinking, toileting



- Leisure –extra curricular activities, sports, games



How do we do that?

- Assess **gross motor skills** - balance, co-ordination, movement across different environments, including postural control.
- Assess **fine motor skills** - mark making and pencil skills, ability to manipulate and use toys and equipment.
- Assess **visual perceptual skills** - eye hand co-ordination skills, the ability to follow a ball with the eyes or look up and down a chalk board.



What is ADHD?

- The most common disorder in childhood
- Describes 3 main areas of difficulty which are significantly greater than in other children of the same age or ability;

– **Hyperactivity/Restlessness**

– **Inattention/Distractibility**

– **Impulsivity**

Impacts on Families and those working with children & YP with ADHD

- Stress on interpersonal relationships
- Financial consequences
- Sense of frustration, helplessness, anxiety
- Projections of blame
- Parents can feel isolated, exhausted, depressed
- Impact on siblings

Strengths of ADHD

- Popular with other children
- Easy to make friends
- Outgoing
- Interesting/Interested
- Hunger for knowledge
- Amazing memory
- Creative/Imaginative
- Sense of humour
- Resilience
- Spontaneity
- Willingness to take risks

Occupational Therapy and ADHD

- Occupational Therapists assess a child's functional skills and the barriers to them participating and achieving in daily activities
- OT's work in line with national and local guidance
- AfC OT Ethos – Giving parents and carers the strategies that they need to help the child and the young person with ADHD lead a successful life

Helpful Strategies

1. Understand
 - Learn about ADHD and how it impacts on the child/young person's life from their viewpoint
 - Consider the 'Why' behind their actions
 - Educate others and share what has worked well for you
2. Adapt the environment around the young person
 - Adjust your expectations and demands
 - Add routine and structure
 - Give short tasks with a definitive end point with frequent breaks
 - Reduce distractions
 - Consider the environmental set up and the equipment the young person is using
3. Teach skills
 - Help the child/young person to come up with strategies to improve their concentration and to identify and respond to stress
4. Make the child or young person an active partner
 - Work together and involve them in their own decision making, find out what strategies work for them
 - Discuss strengths and difficulties in a positive and open way

Strategies – Movement Breaks

- Evidence suggests that the average learner needs to move every 20-30 minutes and many other students learn most effectively with movement breaks every 15 minutes
- When a student needs a movement break, you might see them;
 - Rock in their chair or get up in class for no specific reason
 - Appear to be hyperactive. Their actions are led by their emotions
 - Difficulty in paying attention
 - Fidget constantly and seek movement in stationary objects (e.g. rolling or flicking a pencil or the pages in an exercise book)

Small Movement Breaks

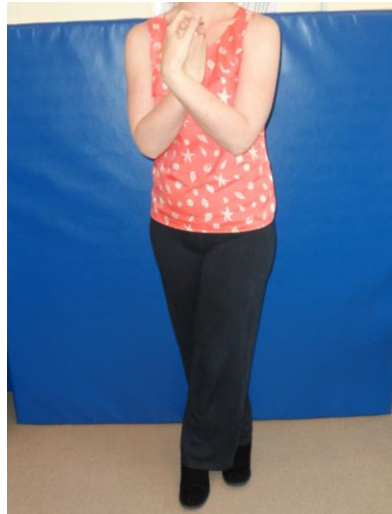
- Exercises that you can do from a sitting or standing position. They work really well and you can use them without disrupting what you were doing.

Body Twist

Give yourself a Hug

How to do it

- Cross arms in front of your body
- Touch palms
- Interlock fingers
- Bring arms up to chest
- Cross legs
- Hold for ten seconds



How to do it

- Cross your arms in front of you, far enough to bring your palms almost to your sides
- Squeeze your arms or sides firmly and hold for five to ten seconds



Arm Massage

How to do it

- Starting at the wrists or shoulder, squeeze firmly
- Do this movement going up or down the arm five to ten times
- Do the same motions to the other arm



Small Movement Breaks

Hand Massage

How to do it

- Starting at the thumb, push along the palm of the other hand five to ten times
- Repeat with the other palm



Finger Pull

How to do it

- Put one hand palm up, one hand palm down (both facing each other)
- Touch fingertips together (except thumbs) and pull them apart as hard as you can
- Hold for as long as your body needs to (five to ten seconds at least)



Palm Push

How to do it

- Face palms together
- Push them firmly together and hold this position for five to ten seconds



Small Movement Breaks

Seat Push Up



Make sure you don't lift your body too far off the floor/chair as you may hurt yourself.

How to do it

- Sit with feet crossed or in a chair with your feet flat on the floor
- Push your bottom up from either the floor or from the seat of the chair with flat palms
- Hold for five to ten seconds

Large Movement Breaks

These are exercises that involve big movements that you can do using your own body. You usually have to do them from a standing or lying down position.

Rules

- A large movement break should last for no more than 2-3 minutes
- A large movement break that separates the child or young person from the task that they are doing should not be an excuse to get out of doing it!
- To feel more energised make sure movements are quick but controlled
- To feel calm go slowly and use more strength in each movement

Wall Push Up

All you need for this exercise is a solid blank wall.

- With flat palms and feet flat on the floor push against the wall and hold this position for five to ten seconds.
- This exercise provides you with heavy muscle work to your hands, arms and legs so you can make yourself feel just right.



Large Movement Breaks

Army Crawl

For this exercise, you need enough free floor space to move around.

- Lie on your stomach with your palms flat on the floor. Push your body forward using only your palms.
- You can reach your right arm towards the left side of the floor crawling and then do the same on the other side, by doing this you are crossing the midline when one body part crosses to the other body part. This movement allows one side of the brain to talk to the other side which helps you focus when you need to.



Crab Walk

For this exercise you need enough free floor space to move around.

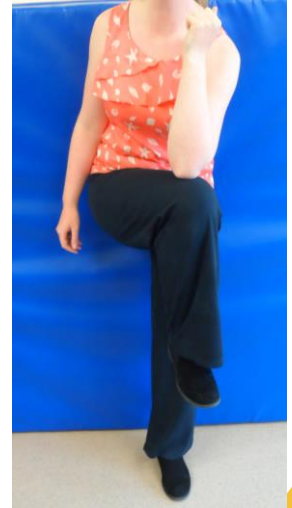
- Walk on your palms and feet with your tummy facing up towards the ceiling. Keep your back as straight as you can.
- It is better to do fewer movements well – keeping your back straight and holding up your body – than more movements without being able to hold your body up!



Large Movement Breaks

Cross-Crawl

- Stand with feet planted on the floor bring one elbow and its opposite knee together slowly.
- This movement allows one side of the brain to talk to the other side which helps you focus when you need to.
- It also provides your body with lots of heavy muscle work and is especially helpful when you are feeling tired and lethargic or over-excited and cannot concentrate



Other Ideas

- Bending over and touching your toes
- Standing up and stretching
- Marching on the spot
- Squats
- Jumping Jacks/Star Jumps
- Clapping loudly and quietly at given intervals
- Take 'shake breaks' or 'dance breaks' to music
- Yoga moves
- Pretend to hula hoop
- Jump backwards
- Stand on one leg
- Rub your tummy and pat your head
- Animal walks
- Wheelbarrow walks
- Getting up to get a glass or water or sharpen a pencil or handout worksheets/books when in school
- Sports e.g. swimming, rugby, football

Naturally occurring activities that can help with attention and concentration at home;

- Wearing a backpack when out and about
- Helping to put away the shopping
- Unloading the dishwasher
- Taking the dog for a walk
- Hanging the washing on the line
- Putting the washing in the washing machine
- Helping to rearrange furniture
- Wiping the table
- Pouring the family a glass of water at meal times
- Sweeping the floor
- Hoovering



Thank you!



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