

Hypermobility in children – Over 5's

This leaflet is for children who have hypermobility in their joints. It covers exercises for strengthening your child's legs, arms and core muscles to help support their hypermobile joints.

This leaflet is intended to be used in conjunction with the ACPD symptomatic hypermobility leaflet which can be accessed via the link below. Your paediatrician, GP or occupational therapist may have already given this leaflet to you. The leaflet gives information on what symptomatic hypermobility is and advice on what you can do to help your child.

<http://apcp.csp.org.uk/documents/parent-leaflet-symptomatic-hypermobility-2012>

General exercise

General exercise is very important to strengthen and maintain strength in muscles. If your child is experiencing pain, they may not wish to do any exercise, or exercise may bring on their pain. Non-weight bearing exercise can help children exercise without pain e.g. swimming, cycling. If your child is experiencing pain you may need to limit high impact exercise such as jumping and running on hard surfaces.

How often should my child do the exercises?

It is important to do the exercises daily in order to strengthen muscles. Find a time of day that suits your routine best. You may wish to use a tick sheet or reward chart in order to keep track and reward your child for doing their exercises every day. It is important to build up the number of repetitions that they can do as they get stronger. Start with 3-5 repetitions and build up to 10-20.

Single leg stand

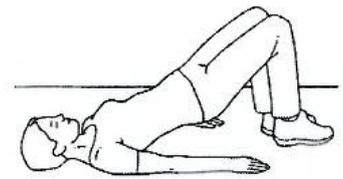
Ask your child to stand on one leg for as long as they can. Get them to count how long they can maintain their balance so that they can see how they are progressing. If they can't manage to balance, they can use a finger tip on a table to gain their balance. Do this on each leg. Once they are managing this well, they can try to maintain balance on a cushion on a carpeted floor or whilst throwing and catching a ball at the same time.



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Bridging

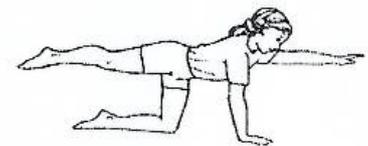
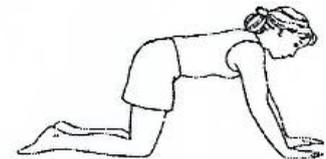
With your child lying on their back with their knees bent, and their feet and knees hip width apart, encourage them to lift their bottom up. If it is age appropriate you can make it into a game, and get a toy to go under their bottom. Hold for a few seconds and then they slowly lower their bottom back to the ground.



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Superman

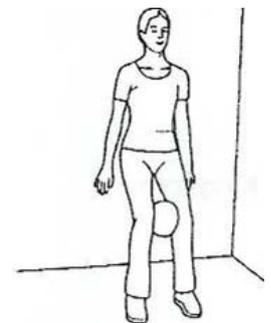
Start with your child on their hands and knees. Ask them to slowly take one arm out in front of them. Ask them to lower their arm back to the floor and then take their leg out behind them. If they can hold both of these for a few seconds without losing their balance, they can try taking their arm out in front and their opposite leg out behind them at the same time. Encourage them to hold this position for as long as they can.



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Squat with a ball

Standing with their back against the wall, and their feet away from the wall with a ball between their knees, ask them to slowly squat down squeezing the ball between their knees and then stand up tall again.



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Exercises for arms

If your child struggles with handwriting or activities involving their hands, arms or shoulders, these exercises will help to strengthen and make your child more aware of where their arms are.

Press-ups against the wall

With your child standing in front of a wall, with their arms straight and hands on the wall, ask them to bend their elbows slowly to touch their nose to the wall and then push back up again slowly.

Still standing close to the wall with one foot forward, ask your child to hold a ball against the wall with a straight arm. Ask them to lean onto the ball. If they can control this they can start moving the ball in small circles. Make sure that they are controlling their shoulder position.



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