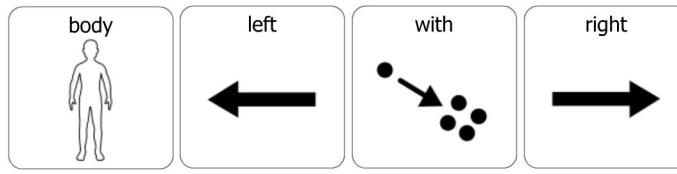


Bilateral Exercises



Bilateral coordination is needed for us to use both sides of our body (our left and right) in a controlled, organized and coordinated way. We use our bilateral coordination skills throughout our day at home and at school. When we are at home and we put toothpaste on our toothbrush, we use one hand to squeeze the toothpaste tube and the other hand holds our toothbrush nice and steady. This is an example of good bilateral coordination. When we are at school and we have to cut out a picture, our one hand holds and turns the paper, the other hand uses the scissors to cut. Bilateral exercises help us to warm up both sides of our brain to get ready to use both sides of our body.

Here are some short exercises that you can do at home to help get both sides of your body to get ready to work! Some of these exercises are harder than they look, so don't worry if you aren't able to do it right the first time!



Marching on the spot

Stand with your legs apart (see picture). Lift up your right leg and at the same time, lift up your left arm. Put them both down and swap sides! Lift up your left leg, and lift up your right arm.

Start this slowly and then see if you can pick up the pace and keep the pattern going!



Ball walk

If you have a round ball at home, use this to do this exercise! Get the ball and put it on your right knee. Use your left hand and roll the ball up your leg. See if you can roll it up to your chest or even your neck!

Once you've done that, try the other side. Place the ball on your left knee, holding it with your right hand. Roll it up your leg using your right hand. See if you can roll it up to your chest or even your neck!

This is a tricky activity, so don't worry if you find it really hard to do the first few times or if you can only do it on one side and not the other!



Bilateral stretching

Find a soft surface (this could be a carpet or a towel). Kneel down on your knees with the palms of your hands on the floor in front of you. Lift up your left arm and stretch it out in front of you (like superman). At the same time, lift up your right leg, try to keep your toes pointed down to the floor. Squeeze your tummy muscles so that you stay nice and steady. Hold this position for five seconds or for as many seconds as you can without losing your balance.

Bring your arm and leg down again and take three deep breaths to relax.

When you are ready, do the same but with the opposite side of your body. Lift up your right arm and stretch it in front of you at the same time, lift up your left leg and stretch it out behind you, making sure to try and point your toes to the ground. Hold this position for five seconds or for as long as you can without losing your balance!

This is a really good exercise to help strengthen your stomach muscles and your shoulders. When we have strong stomach muscles and shoulders it makes it easier for our bodies to stay sitting for longer.

This is also a good activity to help turn on both sides of our brain and help both the left and the right hand side of our body work well together.