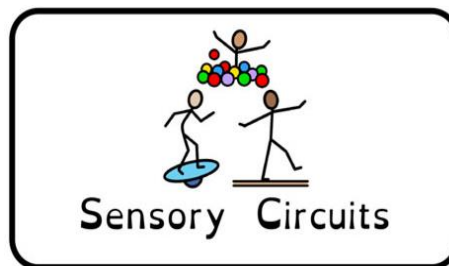
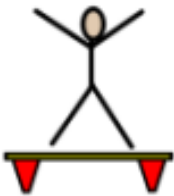


# Sensory Circuits

Information for patients, relatives, and carers

February 2025

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Sensory circuits have three elements: alerting activities, organising activities and calming activities. They should always be done in this order.

**Alerting section:** These activities prepare the brain for learning. They activate the vestibular system and provide proprioceptive stimulation. The vestibular system is our sense of balance and proprioception is our sense of where our body is in space.

**Organising section:** These activities use motor skills, balance and timing. The child will need to organise their body, plan their approach to the activity and do more than one thing at a time in a set order. This helps to increase focus and attention.

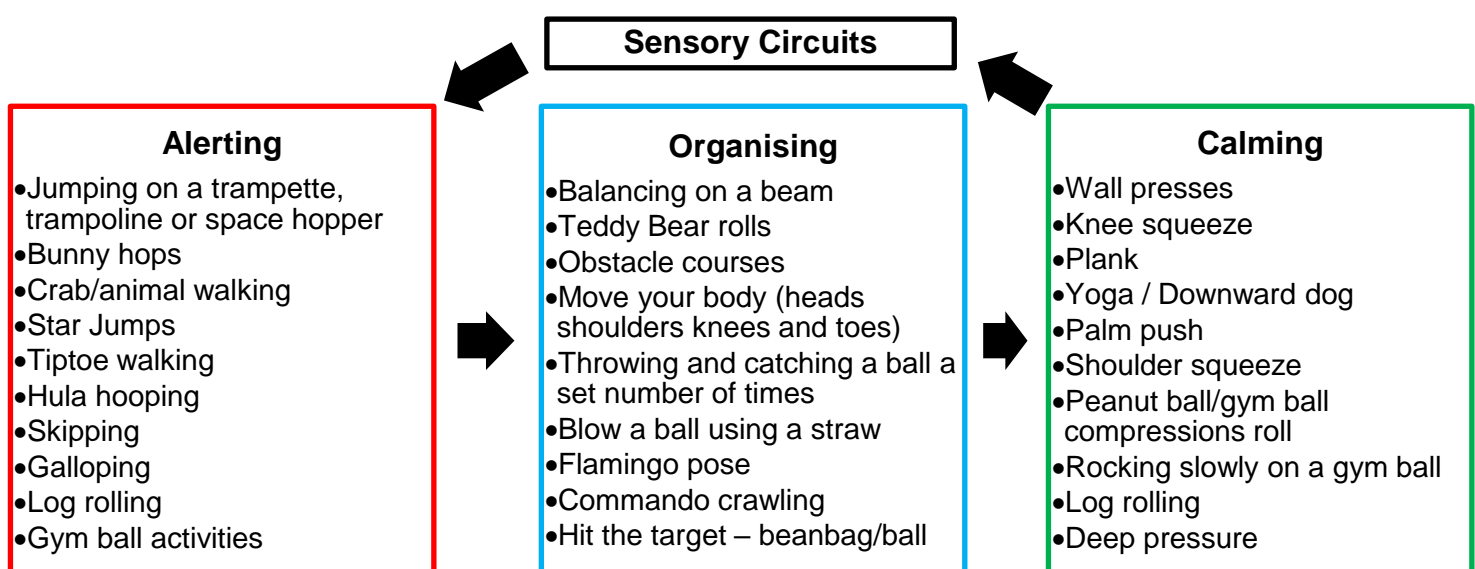
**Calming section:** It is important to finish the circuit with calming activities. These will focus on proprioception and deep pressure activities, so the child leaves the circuit feeling calm, focussed and ready to get the best out of their next activity. Deep pressure works by applying weight or pressure to provide proprioceptive input, which calms our central nervous system.

Sensory circuits can be used at the start of the school day or after lunch because they are a great way to get children settled and ready to engage in the classroom. They can also be used after school or at home.

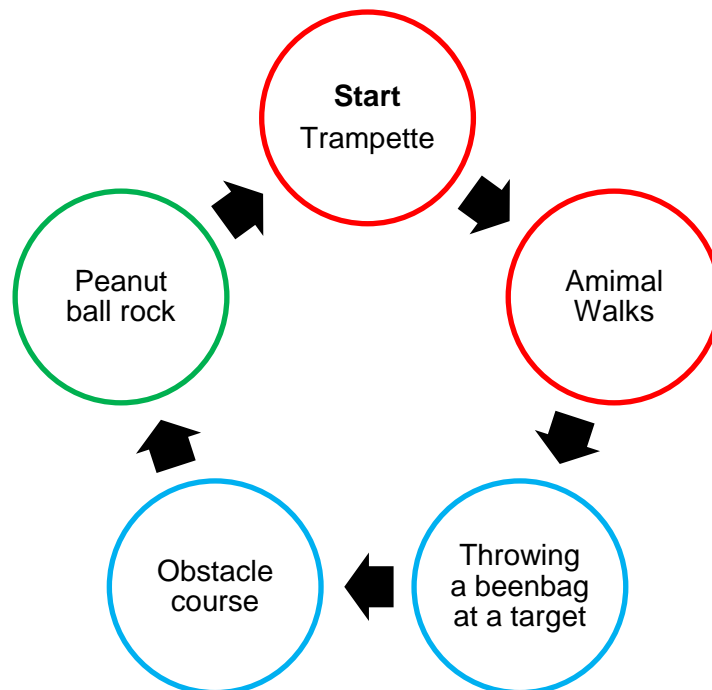
Sensory circuits should be done regularly, and the circuit should take around 15 - 20 minutes, with three to five minutes spent on each activity.

Decide how many repetitions you will do and how much time you will allocate to each movement, based on what you think your child will achieve. You can use a stopwatch or phone timer.

Remember that every child is different, therefore their sensory needs and tolerance for each activity will be different. Some children may benefit from spending more time on activities within a specific section (such as alerting) to set them up for the next part of their day. Some children may also need more circuits during the day. It's important that the activities reflect each child's sensory preferences and that you avoid any sensory stimulation that they do not like. Please also ensure that the children are supervised at all times.



## Further Example



Note: Remember the aim is to achieve lots a heavy work input to the joints and muscles, so decide on the number of repetitions accordingly.

- It may be useful to play music during the circuit. It can clearly mark the beginning and end. Choose music that is fast at the start and at the end select music that is calm and turn the volume down.
- Ideally circuits should be completed first thing in the morning and after lunch if possible. Some children may require more circuits throughout the day.
- When completing a sensory circuit as a rough guide choose **2 alerting activities**, **2 organising activities** and **1 calming activity**.
- Activities included in the circuit also aim to develop the child's balance, co-ordination and spatial awareness.

## Activity Ideas

**\*Pick 2 activities that are alerting, 2 activities that are organising, and 1 activity that is calming\***

Alerting	Organising	Calming
Bouncing on a therapy ball, support at hips or hold hands.	Balancing along a beam or a line on the floor.	Deep pressure rolls over a gym ball, either with hands walking out in front or tucked underneath the ball.
Jumping on a trampette.	Standing on a wobble cushion or balance board and throw beanbags at a target or throw and catch to a partner.	Pressing a vibrating massager over body including arms, hands, chest, back, legs and feet.
Star jumps.	Jumping onto spots on the floor.	Lay on back and have an adult roll a therapy ball, applying deep pressure to arms, lightly over tummy, and legs. Lay on back and repeat applying deep pressure over back too.
Rolling on back over therapy ball.	Commando crawling.	
Roll along on a scooter board either sitting or laid on tummy.	Balancing a long a line stepping over blocks or obstacles.	
Bunny hops/crab walks/frog walks.	Use scooter board to navigate around obstacles.	
Skipping.	One foot on scooter board, roll out to knock over blocks. Swap feet and complete on other side.	Massage- you can massage the back, arms, hands, legs, feet and head.
Jumping in a zigzag line.	Blowing bubbles at a target or small balls of paper.	Using therapy-putty Being wrapped tightly in a blanket and squeezed by an adult. This could also be done with Lycra.
Spinning a hula hoop around waist.	Teddy bear roll.	
Reach for the sky. Stretch your arms up high and then down to touch your toes.	Move your body. Touch your head, shoulders, knees and toes with both hands for a set number of times.	
Animal walking.	Blow a ball.	Using a Lycra body sock to push out body parts.
Gallop like a horse for a set time.	Hit the target. Throw bean bags or small balls at a target.	
Tiptoe walking. Try fast and then slow.		
Hopping. Hop for a set time then switch legs.		
Marching. Touching your opposite hand or elbow with your knee, march around a set number of counts or for a set amount of time.		

## How do I make a comment about my visit?

We aim to provide the best possible service and staff will be happy to answer any of the questions you may have.

The Patient Advice and Liaison Service will listen to your concerns, suggestions or queries and is often able to help solve problems on your behalf.

If you have any suggestions or comments about your visit, please either speak to a member of staff or contact the PALS team on **0191 445 6129** (09.00 – 17.00, Monday to Friday).

You can also email PALS at **ghnt.pals.service@nhs.net**

Alternatively, you may wish to complain by contacting our complaints department:

Chief Executive,  
Gateshead Health NHS Foundation Trust,  
Trust Headquarters,  
Queen Elizabeth Hospital,  
Sheriff Hill,  
Gateshead,  
NE9 6SX

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Any personal information is kept confidential. There may be occasions where your information needs to be shared with other care professionals to ensure you receive the best care possible.

In order to assist us to improve the services available, your information may be used for clinical audit, research, teaching and anonymised for National NHS Reviews and Statistics.

Further information is available via Gateshead Health NHS Foundation Trust website ([Privacy - QE Gateshead](#)) or by contacting the Data Protection Officer by telephone on 0191 445 8418 or by email [ghnt.ig.team@nhs.net](mailto:ghnt.ig.team@nhs.net).

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