Sensory Exercises

The following movement based exercises aim to improve mobility and coordination. These exercises have been designed for people with complex disabilities but can be enjoyed by anyone.

Squat Jumps
- Make it easier: only bend knees
- Make it harder: take a wider stance
- More sensory: try barefoot on different surfaces

Chair Squats
- Make it easier: use a taller touch-point
- Make it harder: remove the chair
- More sensory: place tactile targets on the chair

Seated Reach
- Make it easier: one arm at a time
- Make it harder: move the target each time
- More sensory: place tactile targets above

Arm Circles
- Make it easier: one arm at a time
- Make it harder: hold something heavy
- More sensory: hold tactile objects in hands

Side Bends
- Make it easier: don’t raise arms
- Make it harder: hold for 30 seconds
- More sensory: place a tactile target to reach such as a balloon

Head Swivels
- Make it easier: smaller range of movement
- Make it harder: touch shoulder with chin
- More sensory: add stimulation such as a fan blowing air

Standing Lunges
- Make it easier: take a smaller step
- Make it harder: take a longer lunge
- More sensory: try barefoot on different surfaces

Leg Raises
- Make it easier: smaller range of movement
- Make it harder: place multiple targets
- More sensory: try barefoot with tactile targets

Heel Raises
- Make it easier: smaller range of movement
- Make it harder: use both feet
- More sensory: place a tactile object under the feet

Tactile Objects: balls, ribbons, bells, woolly jumper, pillows, rice, tin foil, sponge, beads, buttons, cotton, seashells, shaving foam

Tactile Surfaces: grass, wood, bark, sand, shredded paper, carpet

Outcomes
These activities could support everyday tasks

Top Tips
- Support participants by gently guiding their body or ask them to feel and mirror your movements.
- Use household objects or surfaces to make exercises more sensory - see glossary in footer.
- Support someone individually or enjoy exercises as a group.

For more sport and physical activities, visit www.sense.org.uk/sport or email sense.active@sense.org.uk
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