

Exercise advice for children with Developmental Coordination Disorder (DCD)

Information for parents and carers

Children with DCD often avoid physical activities due to fear of failing. Regular involvement in physical activity is important in improving muscle strength, cardiovascular health, and overall endurance.

Team games can be more difficult as a higher skill level of coordination, spatial awareness and eye hand coordination is required. Activities which do not involve competition with peers are usually more successful.

It is important that activities are introduced at the correct level for success or children will become frustrated and will not want to return to the activity. A child is more motivated to practise if the activity/sport is their own choice.

Flat feet and exercise

Children with DCD often present with flat feet. This is very common and does not usually affect their ability to exercise therefore intervention is not required. If a child is experiencing pain in their feet, ankles or knees, parents can self-refer to NHS podiatry.

The contact number to refer is **0131 536 1627** or google 'NHS podiatry' for an online referral form. Remember to state the referral is for a child. Some children may benefit from wearing insoles to help correct foot posture and reduce pain.

Exercise opportunities in Edinburgh

Gym sessions

Edinburgh Leisure offer gym sessions (NRG) at local centres for young people at high school stage up to the age of 15 years. From 16 years gym memberships are offered. Edinburgh Leisure are not insured for primary school children in the gym, even if they are old enough to be in high school. The NRG zone is a gym accreditation programme which focuses on cardiovascular exercises, weights, and functional exercise. Instructors teach safety and correct technique when using machines in the gym. This is an excellent introduction to using local gyms which can be an ongoing activity into adulthood. Various membership packages are available. Similar opportunities are available in East Lothian and Midlothian. Check the website below or scan the QR code for local centres:

www.edinburghleisure.co.uk/nrgzone



Swimming

Swimming is very beneficial for general strengthening. Sessions are available in local Edinburgh leisure centres. Gracemount has sessions for children who require the pool warmed up. Similar opportunities are available in East Lothian and Midlothian. Contact specific sites for swimming lessons information:

www.edinburghleisure.co.uk/activities/swim



Martial Arts

Martial Arts may seem a difficult for choice for children with motor challenges, but children can progress at their own pace and it is beneficial for balance and coordination. Similar opportunities are available in East Lothian and Midlothian.

www.edinburghleisure.co.uk/activities/coaching-courses/martialarts



Horse Riding

Horse riding has a beneficial effect on core stability, balance, and coordination. It is expensive. Check out Muirfield, The Drum and Rosewell. Google 'Riding Centres' for more details.

Learn to cycle

Cycling is beneficial for core stability, balance, coordination, and general strengthening. Cycling with friends is a good social activity. Learn to Cycle instruction leaflets are available to help parents teach their children:

<https://children.nhslothian.scot/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/4.32-Learning-to-ride-a-bike.pdf>



Younger children

Younger children benefit from soft play, play parks, gym groups and swimming.

