

Sensory Circuits

Sensory circuits are a series of structured activities designed to stimulate the senses and promote sensory integration. These circuits are especially beneficial for students who may have sensory processing difficulties or who simply benefit from extra sensory input to help them focus and regulate their emotions. Engaging in sensory activities helps students regulate their sensory systems, leading to better focus and attention in the classroom.

Order of Sensory Circuits

Sensory circuit activities must happen in the following order, so the nervous system is woken up, supported to integrate and then calm again ready for learning.

1

Alerting Activities

Movement Activities to alert the brain and provide information to where the body is and prepare the brain for learning.



2

Organising Activities

Activities that involve motor planning, balancing, and organising the body to support the brain integrating the senses.

3

Calming Activities

Proprioception, heavy work, and deep touch/pressure to regulate and get ready for learning.

Where can you do sensory circuits?

Sensory circuits can be designed to be completed anywhere. In a school gym, in a classroom, in the corridor or in the playground.



When should sensory circuits be completed and for how long?

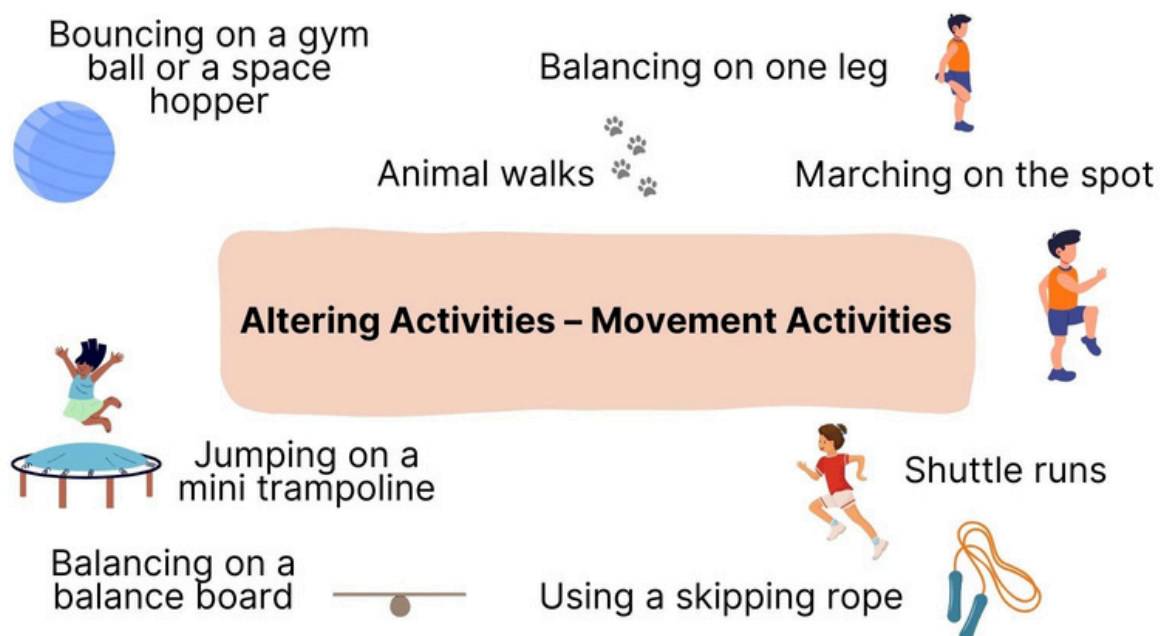
Sensory circuits should last between 10-15 minutes giving 5 minutes for each section. You need to watch your students and their levels of alertness, engagement and regulation as this may change from day to day.

Get it right at the start of the day – your student’s day does not start when they arrive at school. Many have been up for hours having to engage in activities which may challenge or stress their nervous system (getting dressed, washed, eating breakfast, traveling to school). We recommend that all student benefit from a sensory circuit at the start of the day to regulate and reset their sensory systems, so they are ready to learn.

Top up the sensory systems throughout the day to support the students transitions and timetable – you may want to include short sensory circuits following or preparing for transitions (transition from playtime, transition to a sensory challenging lesson or transition home) to support regulation.

If it works – do not stop!

Here are some examples:



Balancing along a bench

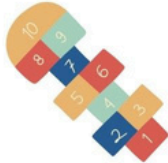


Throwing and catching a ball against the wall or with a friend

Basketball into a hoop



Hopscotch



Organising Activities – Motor planning, balance, body coordination



Jumping in and out of hoops on the floor



Going under and over objects

Target work – throwing bean bags into a bucket



Climbing



Stretching



An adult squashing with a gym ball (always with student on their tummy)

Deep breathing



Yoga



Cuddling and squeezing a pillow



**Calming Activities
Proprioception heavy work, deep touch pressure**

Sitting in bean bags



Weighted blankets



Wall push ups

Rolling up in a blanket



Blowing bubbles



Stretching and pulling TheraBan

Body sock



Examples of Sensory Circuits Activity Ideas for Specific Environments

These are some ideas for sensory circuits in different settings. You do not need to do all of the activities, just select a few.

Sensory Circuit in the Classroom	
Alerting	<p>Marching on the spot to a song on the interactive board.</p> <p>Balancing on one leg.</p> <p>Standing still and twisting body round to look behind you and back.</p> <p>Get out of your seat and jump on the spot.</p> <p>Sitting down and bounce on a gym ball.</p> <p>Jumping jacks</p>
Organising	<p>Use a soft ball to get students to throw and catch a ball with each other in pairs or in a circle.</p> <p>Head shoulders knees and toes song.</p> <p>Throw bean bags into a bucket.</p> <p>Balance along a line drawn on the classroom floor.</p> <p>Use a balance board.</p>
Calming	<p>Squeeze a pillow</p> <p>Stretching TheraBand</p> <p>Deep breathing</p> <p>Yoga poses</p>

We recommend the book *Sensory Circuits: A Sensory Motor Skills Programme for Children* by Jane Horwood.



Sensory Circuit in the Playground	
Alerting	<p>Marching on the spot to a song on the interactive board.</p> <p>Balancing on one leg.</p> <p>Standing still and twisting body round to look behind you and back.</p> <p>Shuttle running</p>
Organising	<p>Throwing and catching a ball with a friend</p> <p>Dripping a ball or throwing and catching against a wall</p> <p>Skipping ropes</p> <p>Walking with stilts</p> <p>Hopscotch on the floor</p> <p>Jumping in and out of hoops on the floor</p> <p>Climbing on climbing equipment</p> <p>Riding a bike</p>
Calming	<p>Squeeze a pillow</p> <p>Stretching TheraBand</p> <p>Deep breathing</p> <p>Yoga poses</p>



Sensory Circuit in the School Gym	
Alerting	Marching on the spot to a song on the interactive board. Balancing on one leg. Standing still and twisting body round to look behind you and back. Shuttle running
Organising	Use of PE equipment to set up activities where students have to climb and balance – walking over benches, jumping off of surfaces. Balance board.
Calming	Squashed by a gym ball. Sit in a big bean bag. Body soc

Support with designing your Sensory Circuit

Sensory circuits are not a “one size fits all” and we are here to support you design, implement and review your sensory circuits.

Please watch our on demand sensory circuit training video as part of the Sensory Inclusive School core training. This will provide with video examples of more sensory activities and sensory circuits.

Come and discuss your sensory circuits in our online forum – our sensory inclusive team will be able to offer you some more ideas.

Come and discuss your sensory circuits with a sensory trained practitioner in one of our weekly zoom drop-in sessions.