




## Gym Ball Activities

A child size gym ball is a perfect tool for engaging children in active play with a sensory motor basis. Gym ball play engages multiple senses with a strong focus on vestibular and proprioceptive input. Your child might use a gym ball to assist in developing core strength and coordination as well as calming the nervous system through forward and backwards rocking motions to lower their energy levels. They may also bounce around to lift their levels of alertness...or simply just have fun.

### Calming activities on a gym ball:

- Rolling back and forth
  - Lie on stomach over the gym ball and roll backwards and forth - using hands and feet to push off ground
- Steam Roller
  - Child lies on the ground while and adult or peer rolls the ball over them, applying pressure as you go (avoid the head)

### Alerting activities on a gym ball:

- Bouncing
  - Use a child sized hi hopper with handles to bounce up and down
  - Sit on the gym ball and gently bounce up and down on the spot / move feet around to bounce around in a circle while keeping bottom on the ball
- Passing with partner
  - Stand back to back with partner and pass ball over head and under legs – repeatedly...then change direction
- Upside down reach
  -  Lie on back over the gym ball and reach backwards to the ground (reach for a toy) Adult rolls the ball slightly back and helps child to sit up (throw toy at a target)

### Postural control activities on a gym ball:

- Sitting
  - Use the gym ball as an alternate to a chair when sitting at a desk, or when sitting to watch television. Being a slightly unstable surface, it encourages the engagement of muscles of postural control
  - Test your balance by lifting one leg off the ground – how long can you hold it? Try the other leg
- Strength
  - Lie on stomach over gym ball and walk hands forwards, keeping control in legs and back before walking hands back towards the ball again.  
Try to walk out further each time – keeping control.  
Pick up toys / puzzle pieces as a target when you reach out with hands
  - Tug of war – face a partner with the ball held between you – how long can you battle before someone steals the ball? Try in standing or in high kneeling
  - Rainbow pass – lie on back with ball in hands and stretched above head – lift the ball at the same time you lift your legs - place the ball between feet and lower feet to the ground – repeat in the opposite direction as you make a rainbow arc with the ball