

Moving through the Lifespan: Using ExerGames to Keep Moving

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We all know that movement, activity, and exercise are essential to getting and staying strong and healthy when you have hypermobility-related disorders. But sometimes we need a bit of extra motivation to keep us moving. Exergames that integrate movement with gaming technology can be a good supplement to your more structured exercise. Only do movements that are safe for you, even if you get a lower game score!

Augmented Reality using your phone, tablet and/or TV

- **Motivating:**
 - Exergames can be both fun and good exercise. Some can be done with a friend.
 - Many exergames can be played on any smartphone/tablet, or cast to a wide screen TV without additional equipment needed.
- **Movement benefits:**
 - They can help develop body awareness, muscle control, balance, reaction time, core stability; some also provide aerobic exercise.
 - Being able to see yourself and the targets on the phone/TV provides visual feedback that can help improve body awareness. Some games have avatars if you prefer to not see yourself.
 - Augmented reality avoids the weight of a VR headset, which can aggravate neck instability.
- **Modifications and Safety:**
 - *These games are not intended specifically for people with hypermobility or any other impairment. Only do what is safe and comfortable for you. Don't try to move faster than you safely can. Modify or avoid any movement that is too difficult, such as squatting or jumping. If your balance is impaired, start by doing the games from sitting or place balance supports nearby.*
 - *Many games intended for standing can also be done sitting (or in wheelchairs) – get closer to your device and the game just thinks you are a (very) short person. In general, getting closer to the screen allows you to perform smaller movements, or avoid moving certain joints. For example, you can eliminate shoulder movement by just moving from your elbows. Move towards the screen after the game starts to minimize movement.*
 - *Always start Exergames in good sitting or standing posture (or athletic 'ready' position).*

1. **Active Arcade** (entirely free) Can be cast to a wide-screen TV. Demo: https://youtu.be/yvz_XBUkBLw



- a. **Whack A Mole** uses arm movement, some reaching/balance. Could be done sitting. 1 or 2-person game. (easy, small space)
- b. **Reaction:** Reach side to side to touch targets. Balance, reaction time, proprioception, motor control. Can be done sitting. **ReactionFlow** is similar, but the targets are numbered and you have to touch in order. (easy, small space)
- c. **SuperHits:** You can pick your favorite music, and touch or slash targets to the beat of the music. Especially fun if you like to move to music. Many music choices. Can be done sitting. (easy, small space, dynamic music) The tutorial is helpful if you are starting.



- d. **Space Pong:** Ping Pong with a laser ball. Uses only one arm, so good if you can only use one arm, and less complex than most games. Can be done sitting. (easy, small space)
- e. **High Kicks:** punch or kick targets. Need reasonably good balance on one foot, but the kicks are not very high. (intermediate, wide space)
- f. **Laser Dodge:** full body movement to escape laser beams. Requires squats, ducks full body movement. Aerobic. (advanced, wide space)
2. **Party Fowl:** Multi player party games. Best on full screen TV. A variety of silly games that involve movement, generally not fast or difficult. Fun interactive game. Uses silly avatars (like chickens).
 - a. 2 players together, recommend in front of bigger screen.
 - b. Each person is rated on how well they perform the task, such as crushing ice blocks, recreating poses, etc. Varied activities.
 - c. Can play the first few games for free, then would need to purchase additional games.
3. **Starri:** like SuperHits, with different levels of difficulty and music. You create an avatar so you don't see an image of yourself on the screen. Good if you jive to the music. \$2.99 one-time fee.

If games don't appeal to you, but you like the idea of using technology to stay active...

4. **The Zebra Club™** app or <https://www.thezebra.club> provides Pilates-based exercises designed specifically for people with hypermobility. There is a wide range of options to accommodate you from days when all you can do is breath, to days when you want relaxation or strengthening. You can also focus on specific body regions. There is an annual fee, but it is modest compared to typical medical co-payments.



5. These are not specific to hypermobility so avoid movements not appropriate for you.
 - a. **SilverSneakersGO:** A general exercise app for older individuals, so it accommodates a wider range of fitness levels. Medicare Advantage insurance may pay for it.
 - b. **Chair Yoga** with Sherry Zak Morris: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCcsQamTnd7SujVLelXywZ7g>. Lots of free options. Example of a gentle 5 minute routine: <https://youtu.be/mKkGoUYruEo?si=t9-pvS-XwPdQlnm2>
 - c. **Sitting qigong** (breathing-based movement): <https://youtu.be/ppM9FRRX-Uo>
 - d. **Sitting Tai Chi** (breathing-based movement): https://youtu.be/V29hE0_oBE



Before you start, “Pull Yourself Together!”



It is important to have good body alignment and ‘connection’ before you move or exercise. Actually, it is good to be connected all the time! Imagine the collapsing push-puppet shown here. Hypermobility people are like the floppy puppet, drooping loose (bottom picture). Before moving, imagine strings inside your body, pulling your joints gently together. “**Pull Yourself Together**” like the top picture, so you are better aligned and have some elasticity in the joints (not stiffness, just a bit of elastic tension, like the puppet).

Remember – only do movements that you feel are safe for your body! Don't feel like you have to go as fast as possible in the games – start at a comfortable pace and you will probably get faster as you get stronger and more stable. Modify any movements that might aggravate your body. The goal of the exercises listed here are that they might staying active more fun so you stick with it.