

First, “Don’t Flop, POP!”

It is important to have good body alignment and ‘connection’ before you move or exercise. Imagine the collapsing push-puppets, as shown here. Hypermobile people are like the floppy puppet, drooping loose (bottom picture). Before moving, imagine strings inside your body, pulling your joints gently together. “Don’t Flop, POP!” like the top picture, here, so you are aligned and have a bit of soft tension in the joints (not stiffness, just a bit of elastic tension, like the puppet).



Animal Actions

Today’s Junior Zebras session will focus on Animal Actions. Only do what is safe and comfortable for you. Don’t move faster than you can safely. Modify or avoid any movement that is too difficult for you, such as squatting or jumping. Use your imagination!



People with EDS tend to be loose and floppy. In part, that is because the joints are loose. But it is also because muscles sometimes don’t hold the joints together properly, and control movement. Learning to become aware of how you move can help you move better, and be less floppy.

“Animal Actions” has you think about how different animals move, and how you can copy that movement. You might need to adapt the movement so that it is safe for you. For example, bunnies hop, but you might just bounce a little, if hopping isn’t good. A snake might slither on the ground, but you could slither in your chair. Use your imagination!



Augmented Reality Movement Games

Additional movement games you might like. Only do what is safe and comfortable for you. Don’t move faster than you can safely. Modify or avoid any movement that is too difficult, such as squatting or jumping. These games can be played on any phone/tablet, but a wide screen TV is best.

1. **Active Arcade** (entirely free) Can be played on wide-screen TV. Demo at:



https://youtu.be/yyz_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. (easy, small space)
- c. **SuperHits:** 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)
- d. **Pose:** A character on the screen takes a fashion pose, and you try to recreate it. (easy, though some poses involve standing on one leg, wide space)

- e. Space Pong: Ping Pong with a laser ball. Uses only one arm, so good if you can only use one arm, but less challenging than other games. Can be done sitting. (easy, small space)
- f. Reaction Flow: touching targets in numerical order. Adds thinking challenge.
- g. **High Kicks:** punch or kick targets. Need reasonably good balance on one foot, but the kicks are not very high. (intermediate, wide space)
- h. Laser Dodge: full body movement to escape laser beams. Requires squats, ducks and full body movement. (advanced, wide space)
- i. Games that require mostly jumping/bouncing. Simpler concepts, so, better for younger kids who can jump.
 - i. Bunny Hop: Collect treats by jumping to higher platforms. Different levels of difficulty.
 - ii. Galaxy Jumpers: Jump to control spaceship. Need to be able to hop or at least bounce.
 - iii. Fit Pals: jump/bounce a certain number of times to 'unlock' animal friends.

- 2. **Party Fowl:** multi player party games. Best on full screen TV. A variety of games that involve movement, generally not fast or difficult. Fun interactive game.
 - 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. **Plaicise:** A set of games where you avoid, punch, kick, or slice moving targets. Several games are free for individuals; several require 3+ people to sign in to play them. Other games are available for purchase. Compete against yourself or head-to-head against others.
 - a. UFO: side step to avoid UFO landing on you, squat to shoot them down. (intermediate, wide space)
 - b. Boxer: punch or kick random targets. Can be done sitting.
 - c. Ninja: duck or reach to slice moving targets. More dynamic.
 - d. KneeShooter: Lift your knee to hip level to shoot a ball to pop bubbles.



How These Activities Can be Helpful

- 1. **“Don’t Flop, POP!”** helps improve body awareness by having you imagine your body floppy and then imagine it pulled together. This helps you stay ‘pulled together’ more often, which protects your body. It can improve joint alignment by imagining the spine and limbs held together by strings creating a gentle compression without being stiff. **“POP”** before activities and exercise.
- 2. **Animal Actions:** Any safe movement is healthy, and it is important for kids to feel like movement can be fun. Animal actions encourage creative and thoughtful movement. You also get to think about how to change a movement to be safe for your body. Animal actions can provide balance, stability, arm or leg motor control. For example, ‘Stand like a flamingo’ provides balance training. ‘Waddle like a penguin’ provides dynamic stabilization for core, hip, and shoulder muscles.
- 3. **Augmented Reality:** These technology games can be both fun and healthy. They help develop body awareness, muscle control, balance, reaction time, core stability; some also provide aerobic exercise. Several of the games (Whack-A-Mole and Reaction) can be done sitting - adjust the distance and the game just thinks you are a short person.

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. Playing these games with friends and family can make ‘exercise’ more social.