

4 & 5 Body builders



Kick Ball

Find a ball that is big enough for your child to kick. Help her learn to kick a ball that is moving, by standing a distance away from her, and kicking the ball to her. See if she can kick the ball back to you without stopping it with her hands or feet before she kicks it back. Practice kicking the ball back and forth, back and forth. This is also fun when she plays with another child who has similar skills.

Challenge: Count how many times you can kick the ball back and forth without the ball rolling past one of the players. Start by seeing if you can kick it back and forth four times, five times, six times, and so on. Then, try to break your record!

Your preschooler is learning coordination and using her leg and foot muscles.



Body Charades

This is a game to play with a group of children or people. Pick a theme like “animals” or “sports.” Draw pictures of ten things from your theme on pieces of paper (or cut out pictures from magazines and glue them on paper), and put them in a bowl. Tell everyone what the theme is. Have the first person pick one of the pieces of paper. If he isn’t sure what the picture is, whisper it to him, and let him act it out without using words. For example, if he picked “bunny” he can hop around and wiggle his nose while the others guess what he is. If he picked “swimming” he can pretend to make strokes in water. Once the players have guessed the answer, another person picks a picture from the bowl and acts it out.

Challenge: Let your child come up with the theme and think of the ten items. Let him help draw or glue the pictures onto the pieces of paper.

Your child is building his muscles and learning coordination when he is acting out motions.



2

four and five year olds

Spin Jumping

Tie several old socks, dish towels, scarves or rags together to make a “rope” that is about four feet long. At the end, make a heavy knot or put a small ball in the sock at the end so that the end has a weight to it. Stand in the middle of a room or other space where you can spin around and around, keeping your feet in about the same place. Hold the rope in one hand and bend down as you spin so that the rope is swinging out from you either touching or very close to the ground. Let your child practice jumping over the “rope” as you spin around, and count each time she jumps over the rope. See how many times in a row she can jump over the rope and let her set a record that she tries to beat the next time.

Challenge: Let her spin the rope for you to jump over too!

Your child is learning to jump and learning about timing.



Little Chef

Your child has many skills that he can use to help prepare meals. When planning meals think about ways your child can help, such as:

- Cutting soft items (bread, tomatoes, fruits) with a dull knife
- Pulling (husking corn, plucking parsley or cilantro leaves)
- Washing vegetables and fruits
- Removing seeds from melons or green peppers
- Stirring mixes
- Kneading dough

Try and incorporate your child's skills into your next meal. You will find that he is a great help!

Challenge: As your child gets older, and has more experience helping you in the kitchen, think of new skills he can try.

Your child is getting a chance to strengthen his muscles and work on his coordination and skills with his hands.



Step on a Crack!

Have you ever tried to walk without stepping on any cracks in the sidewalk? How about trying to step only on the cracks? Try either of these activities the next time you take a walk with your child.

Challenge: Try hopping on the cracks, landing on only one foot when you see a crack in the sidewalk.

Your child is using his muscles to take large steps and jumps. He is learning to control his movements and keep his balance.



5

four and five year olds

Coupon Cutter

Remove the coupon section from the Sunday paper. If you don't get the paper, ask your friends or family to save it for you, or use the free coupon book or sale flyer from your grocery store. Tell your child that you have an important job for her. Explain that coupons help you buy food for less money and that if she cuts coupons that you need, you will be able to save money. Find a small pair of children's scissors (very dull) and show her how to hold them and cut the coupons out. If she hasn't used scissors very often, she can practice by cutting strips of newspaper first. She may need your help to position her fingers and to hold the paper as she cuts. Bring the coupons with you to the grocery store and let her help you pick out the food. Tell the checker that she cut out the coupons for you. This will make her feel very important!

Challenge: Talk to your child about the amount of money each coupon will save. If you shop at a store that doubles coupons, explain how that works. Use coins to show her what each amount looks like.

Your child is learning to cut with scissors. She is strengthening the muscles in her hands which will also help her writing skills.





Obstacle Course

For this activity you will have to be creative with the things inside and outside of your house. You are going to set up an obstacle course for your child to go through. There should be at least ten obstacles in your course, such as:

- A table to crawl under
- A tire to walk through
- Stairs to climb
- Pillows to crawl over
- A planter to balance on
- A fence to run a stick along
- A hallway or walkway to hop along

Every course will look a little different. When you have your course ready, have your child follow you through it one time slowly, explaining what you are doing. Then, try it again a little faster. The third time, see if your child can remember what to do without you!

Challenge: Have your child help you design the course. Have a friend or family member test it out!

Your child is practicing all sorts of skills like balancing, jumping, and walking backward. He is also learning words like "over," "under," and "through," and about following directions.



Silly Walk

Children love to move their bodies in different ways. Take your child on a walk and tell her that you would like to try walking in different ways. First try walking very slowly. Then try walking very fast. How about backwards? Try using a repetitive motion, like raising your arms in the air and then lowering them to your side (like a bird flapping its wings). Let your child come up with her own ideas and try those. You will look a little silly, but you will have a lot of fun. Add one or more children and it is even more fun as you follow in a line!

Challenge: Try running in different ways!

Your child is learning that exercise is something fun that you can do together.



Dance with Me!

This is a simple activity that requires only a radio or stereo, and some space to move and dance. Turn on some music with a good beat and encourage your child to dance with you! If she is shy at first, pick her up and dance with her in your arms. Show her some simple moves like clapping her hands or stomping her feet. Hold her hands and bounce to the beat. Dance until you both work up a sweat! Get the whole family in on the fun and dance together!

Challenge: Have your child teach you some of her dance moves!

Your child is getting exercise and learning to move her body to a beat.

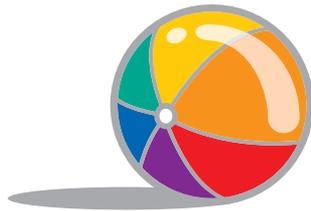


TV Off!

Try limiting (or eliminating) TV time, video and computer games for one week. Your child will find ways to entertain himself that are much more valuable. If he is having trouble, look through the activities in this book and find one that you can do together! If you are busy doing something else, think of an activity he can do on his own, such as coloring, playing with cars, or building with blocks.

Challenge: Have your child spend equal time watching TV and exercising with an adult.

Your child needs 30 to 60 minutes of active play time each day. To help keep his mind and body healthy, experts recommend limiting TV to one or two hours a day.



Notes