

## **HealthPoint**

Rehabilitation Services • Health and Wellness

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### ANIMAL KINGDOM

Kids have the greatest imaginations! Imaginative play is important for your child's development by working on their language skills, social/emotional skills and motor skills. One thing that we love to do during our physical therapy sessions is to pretend to be animals. There are so many different animals and positions that engage a child's interest and make them enjoy "working out". Below are examples of a few of the positions that we like to use during our therapy sessions to work on strength, balance, and motor planning. You can have your children do a relay race through the jungle or just go through the different animal poses together! Add in sound effects to make it more fun for your kids. It is also fun to have them think of their favorite animal and see what kind of movements they do with it. Remember that all movement matters so if they do a silly animal, it is okay!

### FLAMINGO STAND



Have your child stand on one foot and pretend to be a flamingo! You can challenge their dynamic balance more by having them flap their wings while holding this position. Single leg stances work on strength and stability in the foot, ankle, knee and hip of the weight bearing side. Create an unstable surface by having your child stand on a pillow and pretend they are standing in mud or water.

## BEAR CRAWL



Bear crawl is a good way to work core, glute, quad and shoulder strength and stability. It also helps kids to work on oppositional limb movements patterns and motor planning. Bear crawl is a fun movement for kids and most of them do well with it! You could have a race with your child to see who can bear crawl the fastest or who can make the loudest “rawr”. Challenge them by having them be “silly bears” crawling sideways and backwards.

## FROG HOP



Frog hops are a good way to work on jumping skills. You start in a low squat position and then try to explode up through your legs, just like a frog. This movement works many muscles in the legs that are needed for hopping and for going up and down the steps. You can even have your child be a “resting frog” and play in a low-squat position for a few minutes to work quad strength. Create visual targets as “lily pads” and pretend to hop from pad to pad without falling off!

## DUCK WALK



Duck walks are very challenging for kids! Duck walks work on the quad and glute strength. This type of control is needed to go down steps and to jump. To complete a duck walk, have your child go down into a frog squat position. While maintaining this position, have them attempt to walk. See how far they can go or you could try it with them! Make sure that you add in some “quacking” for more fun.

## PENGUIN WALK



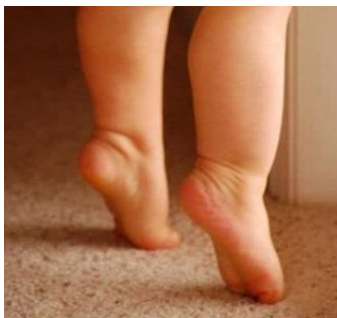
Penguin walks help to work the muscles in the front of the leg. For kids that are toe walkers, this is a good animal movement to promote heel striking with walking. Have your child go back onto their heels and then try to maintain that position and walk forward. Don't forget to put your hands out by your side to waddle like a penguin!

## CRAB WALK



Crab walking is another movement that is difficult! This movement pattern is great for working on strength, oppositional limb movement and motor planning. Have your child sit on their bottoms and place their feet and hands on the ground. Try to have them lift their bottoms up off of the ground into a “bridge” position. While in this position, try to have them move forward and backwards like a crab!

## GIRAFFE WALKING



Have your child go up onto their tippy toes and reach their arms above their head to be super tall like a giraffe. While maintaining this position try to have your child walk forward. You can place objects around the house for them to avoid stepping on while they are up on their toes. You can also place “leaves” up high on the table and have them reach up to eat the leaves. This exercise is a good way to work calf strength which is needed for jumping!

## DONKEY KICKS



Donkey kicks work your child's core, glute and shoulder strength and stability. Have your child go onto their hands and feet, keeping their buttocks in the air. While in this position, have them try to kick one foot up off of the ground and then place it back on the ground. Then have them try to kick the other foot up off the ground. Once this gets easy for them, have them try to kick both legs up, pushing off of one foot and then the other. Make sure you add sound effects with it too 😊

- ★ These are just a few animal walks that we like to do with the kids when we work with them! Get creative and try to make up your own animal walks or have your child come up with some too. You can also look online for more ideas. Have fun pretending to be in the animal kingdom this week!