

# Move and Express to De-stress

With stay at home orders in place across the globe, children and adults alike are finding a need to be intentional about moving their bodies. With no recess, walk to the bus stop, or soccer practice, it is easy to forget to get movement in your day. Research shows that getting some physical activity in our days can reduce stress and improve our mood. These activities provide a fun way for you and your family to get moving. Activity number two also provides an opportunity for healthy, active, emotional expression. Use activities such as these daily to integrate

movement into your new stay at home routine.



# Move Like an Animal

**Bear Walk** From the standing position, bend over and put both hands on the ground. Now, move forward both your right arm and your right leg at the same time, then your left arm and your left leg at the same time. Repeat. The straighter you keep your legs and arms, the more you look like a bear!

**Gorilla Walk** Squat down low, with your hands held at your chest. Walk while staying in the squatted position. To really look like a gorilla, beat your chest with your fist as you walk.

**Duck Waddle** Squat, tuck your hands into your armpits to make "duck wings," and flap your arms as you walk.

**Turtle Crawl** Kneel with your knees on the ground. Curling your back, place your elbows near your knees, laying your forearms and hands on the ground. Keeping your bottom on your heels, and your elbows and hands on the ground, pull yourself forward in a slow motion.

**Donkey Kicks** Make sure the room is clear around you. From the standing position, lean over and put both hands and both feet on the ground. Kick both your legs out and up behind you, leaving your hands on the ground.

**Penguin Waddle** Keep your arms tight against the side of your body and gently waddle from side to side as you walk. Try balancing a "penguin egg" (small ball or stuffed animal) on your feet and see if you can waddle without dropping it.

**Elephant Walk** From the standing position, bend over, keeping your back straight and parallel with the floor. Hang your arms under your shoulders and hold your hands together. Swing your arms back and forth as you walk with straight legs across the floor. Don't forget to stomp!

**Whale Swim** Lay on your stomach and stretch your arms out in front of you. Rock back and forth on your hips.

**Frog Jumps** Squat and place your hands on the floor in between your knees. Using your feet, jump forward and land with your hands and feet on the ground.

**Kangaroo Jumps** From the standing position, put both feet together and squat down. Jump as high as you can using only your feet, and no hands. Hold a stuffed animal in front of you as if they have a kangaroo pouch.

**Crab Walk** Squat down close to the ground and lean backwards placing your hands on the ground. Holding your bottom off the ground and your back straight, walk sideways.

**Seal Slide** Lay on your tummy, push your hands up until your arms are straight, and move across the floor while dragging your legs.

**Inchworm Crawl** Keep your legs straight, bend down, and place your hands on the ground, as close to in front of your feet as you can. Next, slowly walk your hands away from your feet, as far as you can, until you get into a pushup like position. Then, walk your feet back to your hands, always keeping your hands on the ground and keeping your arms and legs straight.

**Alligator Walk** Lay on your belly and push up into a plank with your hands and toes. Move forward, keeping your body as straight as possible.

**Snake Slither** Lay on your belly and put your hands to your sides. Wiggling your hips and shoulders side to side, try to move forward across the floor without using your hands.

# What's That Feeling?

If you did the “Move Like An Animal Activity” you’ve got some experience that will help you with this activity! In this activity combine animal movements with what you know about feelings to practice expressing big emotions.

- \* On several slips of paper, write down as many emotions as your family can think of. Examples include sadness, anger, fear, confused. Fold the papers and mix them in a bowl or hat.
- \* Starting with the oldest family member, draw an emotion from the bowl. Think of an animal who reminds you of this emotion. Act out the emotion as the animal.
- \* Family members guess what the feeling and animal is. Sometimes it is easier to get the feeling first, then think of animals who might remind you of that feeling. Guessers score one point for getting the correct feeling and another for guessing the correct animal.
- \* Each member takes turns acting out their feeling animal until all the feelings have been acted.
- \* The player with the most points at the end gets to choose the next active family activity!

# Shake It Out

Each family member should stand at least arms length away from one another. Turn on a song that makes you want to move!

- ◆ Start by shaking your right hand as fast as you can as you count to ten
- ◆ Next, shake your left hand as fast as you can as you count to ten
- ◆ Now, shake your right foot as fast as you can as you count to ten
- ◆ Next, shake your left foot as fast as you can as you count to ten
- ◆ Now, shake your right hand as fast as you can as you count to eight
- ◆ Then, shake your left hand as fast as you can as you count to eight
- ◆ This repeats with each hand and each foot counting down from 8 then to 6, to 4, then to 2, finishing at 1

Then, while taking deep belly breaths:

- ◆ Feel your feet in your socks
- ◆ Feel your socks in your shoes
- ◆ Feel your shoes on the floor
- ◆ See the floor meet the door
- ◆ Feel the beat of your heart
- ◆ Note the rhythm of your breath

Now re-enter your day. Return to this activity whenever you need to get your wiggles out!

# Go On A Bear Hunt

In most communities on stay at home orders, families are permitted to take walks in their neighborhood as long as they maintain social distancing. This activity requires taking a walk with your family. Consider taking a daily walk regardless of the weather. If the rain is coming down, dig out the rain boots and encourage puddle jumping as you stroll.

Many neighborhoods are collectively creating “bear hunts” for children to embark on. Households are placing a teddy bear in a window visible from the street for children to spot during a neighborhood walk. If your neighborhood hasn’t begun this, consider initiating it. Post a request in the social media neighborhood group or on NextDoor.com.

Along your walk see how many bears you and your family can spot. If you feel comfortable, chant the below chorus of “We’re Going on a Bear Hunt” as you stroll.

We're goin' on a bear hunt (echo back)

We're going to catch a big one (echo back)

I'm not scared (echo back)

What a beautiful day! (echo back)