

REFLEX EXERCISES

Primitive reflexes work on an arc....

Sensory input comes into the body from the environment (movement, sound, touch, sight, etc) this information goes to the brain where its processed and motor output comes out. (the active reflex movement).

This reflex arc repeats over and over to help myelinate pathways in the brain and make strong connections to help us understand our world. Primitive reflexes integrate with repetition and eventually develop into postural reflexes. At this point our frontal lobe is also in control and able to inhibit the primitive reflexes, which remain at our brainstem level. Once integrated, we now have more independent body control; we are able to filter out unnecessary sounds; we are able to determine safety vs. danger and respond accordingly; and we are able to learn easily.

When a child has unintegrated primitive reflexes - their frontal lobe is not in control and not able to inhibit the brain stem. This leads to the inability to control our body (poor body awareness); difficulty understand sounds (auditory processing, poor attention/focus, easily distracted, etc); living in a state of fight-or-flight (running from certain sounds, not liking touch, poor eye contact, unable to tolerate loud/busy environments, etc); and difficulty with learning (delayed reading, writing, math, organization, & memory).

In order to integrate reflexes we must do so with repetition -- just as the infant would have done. We can stimulate anywhere along the reflex arc to integrate. This means we can stimulate the reflex with the passive sensory input; the motor output; or both.

The most common reflex exercises are the active/motor output movements:

ATNR = Lizards

STNR = Cat

Moro = Starfish

TLR = Cannonball

Landau = Superman

Spinal Galant = Snow Angels

Rooting = Whiskers

Along with primitive reflex work its also important to include core/postural stability exercises, and when appropriate cognitive/frontal lobe activities to help the inhibition.

Questions??

Thank you!

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