

# Vestibulars

"MOVEMENT IS THE STARTING POINT FOR WIRING THE BRAIN FOR LEARNING" ~GILL CONNELL

**"Developing your child's vestibular system is the entryway into learning"**  
~thrive



## VESTIBULAR STIMULATION

The vestibular system consists of six semicircular canals in the inner ear, which are perpendicular to one another. Fluid swishes through each of these canals discreetly stimulating the vestibular system by moving fluid through each of these ear canals which incites the midbrain region of the central nervous system and boosts visual motor skills, assists balance and other motor function, and diminishes overflow. It also stimulates the cerebellum, which plays a role in short-term memory, attention, impulse control, emotion, higher cognition, and the ability to schedule and plan tasks. Children engage in dozens of vestibular activities in the course of normal play; however, as we age and typically become more sedentary, these activities decrease, and we need to be more systematic about them.



## SIMPLE RULES

1. It is important to stimulate all of the semicircular canals in the inner ears that make up the vestibular system, so moving rapidly through space at different angles is imperative. Strive for the greatest possible variety of head positions.
2. Each vestibular activity should last approximately fifteen seconds. If fifteen seconds is too long or makes the client nauseous or dizzy, scale back the amount of time to meet the client's tolerance. For instance, start with five seconds and then work up to ten and then fifteen. If the vestibular system is not stimulated regularly, it loses efficacy, but once stimulated, comes right back. Generally, it takes some clients about two weeks to reach fifteen seconds without discomfort.
3. To gain maximum benefit, wait five to ten minutes between each vestibular activity. When doing a vestibular activity, the brain fires at one hundred percent. If one continues the activity, the brain is already fired at one hundred percent, so no further benefit occurs beyond the initial firing. It takes approximately five to ten minutes for the neurons to settle, which is why we recommend doing one vestibular before crawling and one after crawling, etc.
4. Note: If spinning, ALWAYS spin in both directions.
5. SAFETY FIRST! Do activities only to the client's tolerance:

# *Examples of Vestibulars*

## **FUN WITH KIDS**

- Rocking a yoga ball
- Rocking in a hammock
- Riding a rocking horse
- Hanging upside down
- Rocking back and forth (row, row, row your boat)
- Riding a swing
- Spinning
- Spinning looking up
- Spinning looking down
- Spinning head tilted to the side
- Skipping
- Galloping
- Running
- Somersaults
- Cartwheels
- Jumping ropes
- Monkey bars
- Riding see-saw
- Standing up-side down with feet on wall
- Sliding down slides
- Log rolls
- Twisting side to side
- Rollerblading
- Riding a bike/scooter
- Touching toes
- Jumping on a trampoline
- Bounding on a yoga ball
- Rocking head tilted to the side
- Rocking head looking up
- Rocking head looking down
- Rough-housing
- Wheel barrow walking