



A Family Guide to Common Terminology Associated With Physical Therapy & Occupational Therapy

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ABDUCTION: Movement of limb outwards away from body.

ACTIVE MOVEMENTS: Movements of a child does without help.

ADAPTIVE EQUIPMENT: Devices used to position or to teach special skills.

APPROPRIATE TRIPOD GRASP: Use the preferred pencil grasp of the thumb and index fingers pinching the pencil shaft while the pencil rests against the middle finger.

ASYMETRICAL: One side of the body different from the other-unequal or dissimilar.

ASSOCIATED REACTIONS: Increase of stiffness in spastic arms and legs resulting from effort.

ATAXIC: No balance, jerky.

ATHETOID: Uncontrolled and continuously unwanted movements.

ATROPHY: Wasting of the muscles.

AUTOMATIC MOVEMENTS: Necessary movements done without thought or effort.

BALANCE: Not falling over, ability to keep a steady position.

BILATERAL MOTOR: Skill and performance in purposeful movement that requires interaction between both sides of the body in a smooth manner.

CLONUS: Shaky movements of spastic muscle.

COMPENSATORY MOVEMENT: A form of movement that is atypical in relation to normal patterns of movement.

CONGENITAL: From birth.

COORDINATION: Combination of muscle in movement.

CONTRACTURE: Permanently tight muscle or joint.

CROSSING THE MIDLINE: Refers to skill and performance in crossing vertical midline of the body.

DEFORMITY: Body or limb fixed in abnormal position.

DIPLEGIA: Legs mostly affected.

DISTRACTABLE: Not able to concentrate.

EQUALIBRIUM: Balance

EQUILIBRIUM REACTIONS: Automatic patterns of body movements that enable restoration and maintenance of balance against gravity.

EQUINUS: Toe walks

EXTENSION: Straightening of the trunk and limbs.

EYE-HAND COORDINATION: Eye is used as a tool for directing the hand to perform efficiently.

FACILITATION: Making it possible for the child to move.

FIGURE-GROUND PERCEPTION: To be able to see foreground against background.

FINE INTRINSICS MUSCLES: The muscles within the hand that control the fine movements of the fingers.

FINE MOTOR: Small muscle movements, use of hands and fingers.

FLEXION: Bending of elbows, hips, knees, and so on.

FLUCTUATING TONE: Changing from one degree of tension to another, for example, from low to high tone.

FORM CONSTANCY: Ability to perceive an object as possessing invariant properties such as shape, size, color, and brightness.

FUNCTIONAL MID RANGE CONTROL: Able to control the movement of arms in between the end ranges of joint movements. (i.e., she is able to grade and control movements between full elbow extensions (elbow straight) and full elbow flexion (elbow bent).

GAIT PATTERN: Description of walking pattern.

GAIT SWING: Walking with crutches or walker by moving crutches forward and swing body up to crutches and beyond them.

GENU VALGUS: Knocked knee.

GENU VARUM: Bowlegged.

GROSS MOTOR: Coordinated movements of all parts of the body for performance.

GUARDING TECHNIQUES: When a student requires hand-on contact to maintain balance.

GUARDED SUPERVISION: When an individual is close to the student to provide physical support if balance is lost while sitting, standing, or walking.

HAND SKILLS: Various tasks and movements of the hands, (*e.g.*, pencil grasp, feeding, hygiene).

HEAD CONTROL: Ability to control the position of the head.

HEMIPLEGIA: One side of the body affected.

HYPERTONICITY: Increased muscle tone.

HYPOTONICITY: Decreased muscle tone.

INHIBITION: Positions and movements which stop muscle tightness.

INTENTION TREMORS: Mild tremors or involuntary shaking of the hands when performing activities.

INVOLUNTARY MOVEMENTS: Unintended movements.

KYPHOSIS: Increased rounding of the upper back.

LORDOSIS: Sway back or increased curve in the back.

MANUAL MUSCLE TEST: Test is isolated muscle strength.

MOBILITY: Movement of a body muscle, body part, or movement of the whole body from one place to another.

MOTIVATION: Making the student want to more or perform.

MOTOR PATTERNS: Ways in which the body and limbs work together to make movement, also known as praxis.

MUSCLE STRENGTH IS FUNCTIONAL: Strength of both arms is adequate to perform daily routine activities. Able to move arms against gravity and take resistance to those movements.

NYSTAGMUS: Series of automatic back-and-forth eye movements.

ORGANIZATION: A student's ability to organize himself/herself in approach to and performance of activities.

ORTHOSIS: Brace.

PARAPLEGIA: Paralysis of lower half of the body with involvement of both legs.

PASSIVE: Anything that is done to the student without his/her help or cooperation.

PATHOLOGICAL: Due to or involving abnormality.

PERSEVERATION: Unnecessary repetition of speech or movement.

POSITIONING: Ways of placing an individual that will help normalize postural tone and facilitate normal patterns of movement and that may involve the use of adaptive equipment.

POSITION IN SPACE: Child's ability to understand the relationship of an object to himself/herself.

POSTURAL BALANCE: Refers to skill and performance in developing and maintaining body posture while sitting, standing, or engaging in an activity.

PRAXIS: Ability to think through a new task which requires movement, also known as motor planning.

PRONATION: Turning of the hand with palm down.

PRONE: Lying on the stomach.

QUADRIPLEGIC: Whole body affected.

RANGE OF MOTION: The extent to which an individual is able to move joints and limbs.

REFLEX: Stereotypic posture and movement that occurs in relation to specific eliciting stimuli outside of conscious control.

RIGHTING REACTIONS: Ability to put head and body right when positions are abnormal or uncomfortable.

RIGHT/LEFT DISCRIMINATION: Skill and performance in differentiating right from left and vice versa.

RIGIDITY: Very stiff movements and postures.

ROTATION: Movement of the trunk, the shoulders move opposite to the hips.

SENSATION: Feeling.

SENSORY-MOTOR EXPERIENCE: The feeling of one's own movements.

SCOLIOSIS: C or S curvature of the spine.

SPASM: Sudden tightness of muscles.

STAIR CLIMBING: Methods of climbing including mark stepping, stairs (ascending or descending), one step at a time, or alternating steps (step over step).

STEREOGNOSIS: The identification of forms and nature of object through the sense of touch.

SUBLUXATION: A partial dislocation where joint surfaces remain in contact with one another.

SUPINATION: Turning of hand with palm up.

SYMMETRICAL: Both sides equal.

TACTILE: Pertaining to the sense of touch of the skin.

TANDEM WALKING: Walks in a forward progression placing heel to toe.

tone: Firmness of muscles.

UPPER EXTREMITY FUNCTION: Arm usage.

VISUAL MEMORY: Ability to recall visual stimuli, in terms of form, detail, position, and other significant features on both short and long term basis.

VISUAL MOTOR INTEGRATION: The ability to combine visual input with purposeful voluntary movements of body parts involved in the activity.

VOLUNTARY MOVEMENTS: Movements done with attention and with concentration.