

Locomotor Skills



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Walking

Description

Walking is the transfer of weight from one foot to the other while moving forwards or backwards. One foot is always in contact with the ground, and the arms swing freely in opposite directions. Walking is an important travelling locomotor skill and is used in everyday activities like walking to school, in sports (e.g. athletics and marching) and in play and dance activities.

Applying movement principles

Balance: Walking is the continuous process of losing and recovering balance. The inner edges of the feet should move along a straight line to allow the centre of gravity to shift directly over the base of support.

Direction of force: Direction of force is initiated from the back leg and should be directed forwards and upward through the centre of the body. If the direction is strictly vertical, the walk will be too bouncy and inefficient. If the direction is too horizontal, the walk will be more like a shuffle action.

Absorption of force: Force should gradually be transferred from the heels through the ball of the foot towards the toes.

Learning cues

- hold body straight, with good posture (walk tall)
- keep head up, look straight ahead
- swing arms freely and naturally in opposition to feet
- point toes straight ahead
- use a heel-toe action
- take easy strides

Learning phases

Discovering phase

Learning about walking through exploring and discovering is the focus of the activities in this learning phase. Children exhibit the following characteristics of walking:

- the walking pattern is bouncy or jerky
- arms swing excessively away from sides
- feet are too close together
- feet are too far apart
- toes are turned in or turned out
- head is too far forward.

Developing phase

Children discover how to walk efficiently and practise walking at various speeds and levels, in different directions, individually, in pairs and in groups. Characteristics of walking at the developing phase of learning include:

- the walking pattern is less bouncy
- arms swing in opposition to legs, with some stiffness
- stride is inconsistent
- head is too far forward
- body is not straight.

Consolidating phase

The focus for this phase is on walking to a rhythm, sustaining an efficient walking style and walking in a variety of contexts. A mature walking pattern at this phase includes the following characteristics:

- the walking pattern is smooth and easy
- body is straight, with good posture
- arms swing freely in a relaxed manner and in opposition to legs
- toes point straight ahead and strides are easy.

Overview

Learning phase	Activity name	Movement skills/concept	Suggested group size	Suggested space	Page
Discovering	Can You Walk?	Exploring walking through space in different levels and directions, using different body parts and at different speeds and flow (e.g. softly/lightly).	1	Hard or grass area	14
	How Do We Walk?	Walking efficiently, discovering walking technique, body awareness (e.g. use of arms) and time and energy.	1	Hard or grass area	15
	Spirals	Walking in different pathways, relationships (with others), walking at different speeds and levels.	8+	Hard or grass area	16
Developing	Follow the Leader	Walking in groups (relationships), walking in different directions and at different levels, time and energy (e.g. softly/heavily) and using different body parts (body awareness).	4	Hard or grass area	17
	Speed Up – Slow Down	Walking with a change of speed, time and energy and general space.	2-4	Hard or grass area	18
	Point to Point	Sustained walking, and changing directions and levels (space awareness).	2	Large open area	19
	Memory Challenge	Walking, and space awareness.	1	Large open area	20
	Mood Walking	Creative walking, walking in different ways with expression (space and body awareness).	1	Hard or grass area	21
Consolidating	Rhythm Walking	Walking to a changing rhythm and walking at different speeds.	1	Hard or grass area	22
	Marching on the Spot	Walking to a changing rhythm, walking on the spot, stopping on the beat and walking in pairs.	1	Hard or grass area	23
	Line Walking	Walking to different rhythms, walking on the spot, along a line, changing direction and in pairs and small groups.	1-4	Hard or grass area	24
	Grand March	Walking to a rhythm and working with others (relationships).	2	Hard or grass area	25

Discovering Walking

Can You Walk?

Movement skills/concepts

Exploring walking through space in different levels and directions, using different body parts and at different speeds and flow (e.g. softly/lightly).

Set-up

Children are spread out in a defined grass or hard surface area.

Activity

Ask 'Can you walk ...?' (or Who can walk ...?)

- forward, backwards, sideways, diagonally
- slow/fast
- tall, small, middle-height
- on toes/heels
- with small/long steps
- in a circle, in a zigzag, on a line
- as if you are in the rain, a strong wind, in the dark
- fast over a short distance
- like a fashion model/soldier
- changing direction on signal
- in a straight line, curved line
- making shapes, letters, numbers, words
- with your elbow/head/seat leading
- in funny ways – who is the funniest?

Can you see ...?

- enjoyment
- creativity
- walking tall, walking relaxed
- opposite arm and leg action
- heel-toe action

You could ask ...

Which way of walking was the easiest?

Which way of walking was hard?

Which walk did you enjoy the most?

Variations

Use equipment: Walk bouncing a ball, catching a ball or in, on and under obstacles.

Include relationships: Walk with a partner, link arms, follow the leader.

How Do We Walk?

Movement skills/concepts

Walking efficiently, discovering walking technique, body awareness (e.g. use of arms), and time and energy.

Set-up

Children spread out in a defined grass or hard surface area.

Activity

Ask 'Can you walk ...?'

- leaning forward
- leaning backwards
- being tall
- with your toes pointed inwards like you are pigeon-toed
- with your toes pointed out (like Charlie Chaplin or a ballet dancer)
- with your toes pointed straight ahead
- with long strides
- bouncing up and down
- swinging your arms high
- with your arms by your sides
- with your best style

*Children learn
by exploring*

Can you see ...?

- fun for all
- confidence to experiment
- opposite arm and leg action

You could ask ...

Which walk felt the best? Why do you think this was?

Variations

Include relationships: Walk with a partner – one behind the other while keeping in time, or walk to music of various beats.

Vary time and energy: Walk fast/slow, heavy/light.

Spirals

Movement skills/concepts

Walking in different pathways, relationships (with others), walking at different speeds and levels.

Set-up

Hard or grass area.

Children and coach/teacher all in a circle, holding hands.



Activity

The coach/teacher:

- drops the hand of a child on one side and begins walking inwards so that the circle gets smaller and a spiral is formed
- on reaching the centre of the spiral, turns around and begins leading in the opposite direction out of the spiral between the lines of children
- keeps walking until everyone is out of the spiral.

Can you see ...?

- keeping hands joined and not pulling
- steady, relaxed walk

You could ask ...

What did you enjoy about walking in a spiral?

Did you change your way of walking when the circle got smaller?

Variations

Follow the leader: Spiral in and out without joining hands.

Add music: Spiral in and out while keeping in time with the rhythm.

Developing Walking

Follow the Leader

Movement skills/concepts

Walking in groups (relationships), walking in different directions and at different levels, time and energy (softly/heavily) and using different body parts (body awareness).

Set-up

Defined hard surface or grass area.

Groups of four, with one leader per group.

Activity

The leader takes their group around a defined area on a walking journey, which could include walking:

- to touch all four boundaries
- forwards, backwards, sideways
- along a line, in a curved/zigzag pathway
- low/tall on toes and then on heels, fast/slow for big steps and then small steps
- with knees lifted high in front
- with legs kicked out straight in front
- on the spot
- with arms pushed above head, out to sides, forwards

Switch leaders after a set period.

Can you see ...?

- relaxed, easy walking
- opposite arm and leg action

You could ask ...

What are some of the different ways you could walk as part of the walking journey?

Variations

Increase number: Work in pairs or larger groups.

Modify activity: Walk together as a loose group, still following the leader.

*Are all
children
involved?*

Speed Up – Slow Down

Movement skills/concepts

Walking at different speeds, time and energy.

Set-up

Grass or hard surface area, with a boundary line to move to and from.

Children in pairs or groups of three–four, with one pacesetter in each pair/group.



Activity

The pacesetter changes the pace from very slow to slow, to medium, to fast and back again. The other(s) in the pair/group walk along at the pace established by the pacesetter.

Change the pacesetter after one circuit of the course or one lap to the boundary and back, or according to the direction of the coach/teacher.

Can you see ...?

- walking tall
- arms swinging slightly
- toes pointed straight ahead
- heel–toe action
- maintaining walking action at speed

You could ask ...

'Good posture is important for walking.' Is this correct? Why? Why not?

How can you walk fast or walk slow? What happens to your arms and legs when you do this?

Variations

Change walk: As well as changing pace, leaders vary the kind of walk.

Vary locomotor skill: Alternate walking with some other activity (e.g. skipping, jumping).

Point to Point

Movement skills/concepts

Sustained walking, and changing directions and levels (space awareness).

Set-up

Outside area ideally with three points or landmarks visible from starting area and up to 50 metres apart (e.g. 1. a tree in the corner, 2. a lamp post by the corner of the hall/gym, 3. a rugby post).

Use marker cones if no convenient series of landmarks is available.

At each point or landmark, there are activities to do on the spot (e.g. knee lifts, star jumps, ski jumps).

Children in pairs.



Children
create their
own walking
journeys

Activity

All pairs start walking on the spot. On 'Go', Partner 1 in each pair walks to the first point (e.g. tree). On arrival, they raise one arm, which is the signal for Partner 2 to start walking towards the same point. Partner 1 then begins doing an activity on the spot.

When Partner 2 arrives, they start doing the on the spot activity while Partner 1 walks to the next point (e.g. lamp post), raises an arm to signal for Partner 2 to start walking, and then begins the next on-the-spot activity.

This sequence continues until both partners have been to each of specified points, done all the activities and returned to the starting point.

Switch roles.

Can you see ...?

- tall, relaxed walking
- heel-toe action
- opposite arm and leg action

You could ask ...

When walking for speed, what do you have to do with your legs or feet?

What about your arms?

Variations

Create different sequences and activities:

Children make up their own on-the-spot activities.

Children make up their own 'point-to-point' sequence.

Have different sequences prepared on cards or make up a walking orienteering course.

Memory Challenge

Movement skills/concepts

Walking, and space awareness.

Set-up

Large outdoor or indoor space.

Free formation.

Activity

Coach/teacher gives children two, three or four walking activities to do, either in a set order or in any order. Children repeat instructions to a partner.

Keep instructions simple for juniors (Example 1). Extend seniors with more complicated instructions (Example 2).

Example 1

Walk forward to touch the willow tree, walk sideways to the jungle gym, march around the jungle gym and back to the start.

Example 2

Walk like a robot to touch wall 1, walk like a soldier to touch wall 2, walk backwards doing the moon walk to touch wall 3, and walk like a fashion model back to the start.

Can you see ...?

- creativity, memory
- walking tall
- relaxed action
- heel-toe action

You could ask ...

What do you need to think about if you are walking like a robot or a model?

Which way of walking did you enjoy the most?

Variations

Add equipment: For example, balance a beanbag on your head or dribble a soccer ball.

Include relationships: Work in pairs or small groups, receiving extra instructions.

Mood Walking

Movement skills/concepts

Creative walking, walking in different ways with expression (space and body awareness).

Set-up

A variety of music (e.g. classical, pop, children's).

Children are spread out in a defined hard or grass area.

Activity

Ask children to walk to a variety of music, moving in the way it makes them feel, using arms and facial expressions to help.

Ask children to walk like they are:

- in a graveyard at night
- walking a dog
- wearing a tight miniskirt
- wearing gumboots
- in thick mud
- moving along a narrow ledge
- happy, sad, excited, angry
- a toddler with nappies on – whoops!
- a waiter carrying a tray of drinks
- a woman in high-heeled shoes
- someone who has won Lotto
- someone who has a hole in their pants!



in a graveyard
at night ...



walking a dog!

Are all
children
enjoying
the activity?

Can you see ...?

- enjoyment
- creativity
- walking to the feel of the music

You could ask ...

How can you show your feelings?

Which walk did you enjoy the best?

Variations

Vary equipment: Use ribbons, scarves, poi or ribbon balls.

Create a movement story: For example, base it on the storybook, *We're Going on a Bear Hunt*.

Consolidating Walking

Rhythm Walking

Movement skills/concepts

Walking to a changing rhythm and walking at different speeds.

Set-up

A drum, music with various rhythms, or keyboard with rhythms.

Children are spread out in a defined hard or grass area.

Activity

Beat a rhythmical pattern on a drum, or play music. Children walk in time to the beat.

Beat with a strong beat followed by softer beats, e.g. 1 2 3 4, 1234.

Add an emphasised arm action on the strong beat. Change speed on the soft beat.

Can you see ...?

- emphasis of arm action on the strong beat
- walking tall
- arms swinging freely
- heel-toe action

You could ask ...

Why is the heel-toe action important?

Keeping in time to the rhythm can be tricky. What strategies help you walk to a rhythm?

Variations

Follow the leader: In small groups, a leader claps or beats the rhythm for others to follow.

Create own sequence: Make a walking sequence of your own beat. Add claps or finger clicks.

Marching on the Spot

Movement skills/concepts

Walking to a changing rhythm, walking on the spot, stopping on the beat and relationships (with others).

Set-up

Rhythm instrument(s).

Children spread out in a hard or grass area.

Activity

Children practise the following activities:

- coach/teacher beats out a set number of beats, with children marching on the spot to a rhythmical pattern and starting and stopping in time with the beat, e.g.
 - 1 2 3 4 5 6
 - Start L, R, L, R, L, R Stop. Repeat.
- intersperse walking on the spot with moving
- continue as above, changing direction each time
- work in pairs, with one partner as the leader, change when walking on the spot, clap own rhythms
- 'lift and clap' – lift one knee up and clap underneath, repeat with the next leg
- try 'lift and under' (clap under bent knee), 'lift and over' (clap over bent knee)
- try walking while gently slapping hands on the top of knees
- click fingers beside lifted knee, to the call of 'lift and click left; lift and click right'
- combine various hand actions (e.g. one clap under left knee and one clap over right knee).



Are all the children succeeding?

Can you see ...?

- emphasis on arm swing at waist height
- a good knee lift
- a relaxed natural head position
- keeping as upright as possible
- a steady rhythm

You could ask ...

You are now marching! What makes a walk into a march?

What happens to your arms, legs and body?

Variations

Introduce group work: In pairs or small groups, create and march to own beat/rhythms.

Line Walking

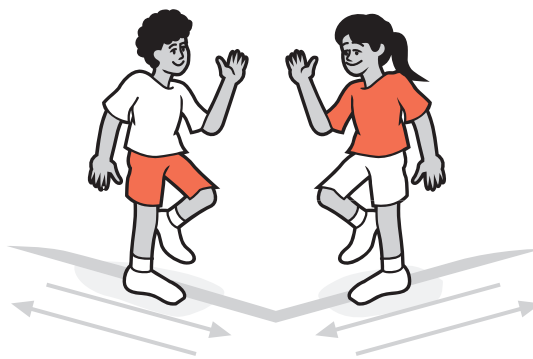
Movement skills/concepts

Walking to different rhythms, walking on the spot, along a line, changing direction, and relationships (with others).

Set-up

Hard or grass area with lines or markings, rhythm instrument(s).

Children stand scattered along a line.



Activity

Children walk on a line and change direction when they come to an intersection.

When walking on a line they may meet up with someone coming towards them on the same line. If so, children walk on the spot and give partner a 'high five', turn and go back the way they came.

Have different beats or rhythms to walk to.

Can you see ...?

- pivoting on ball of foot when turning
- head up
- walking tall
- swinging arms waist high

You could ask ...

To walk on a straight line, what do you need to do?

How can you change direction smoothly?

Variations

Follow the leader: In pairs, one person (the leader) calls out commands, e.g. 'Quick march' (step out), 'Mark time' (march on spot), 'About turn' (turn 180 degrees).

Leaders are switched on 'About turn'.

Grand March

Movement skills/concepts

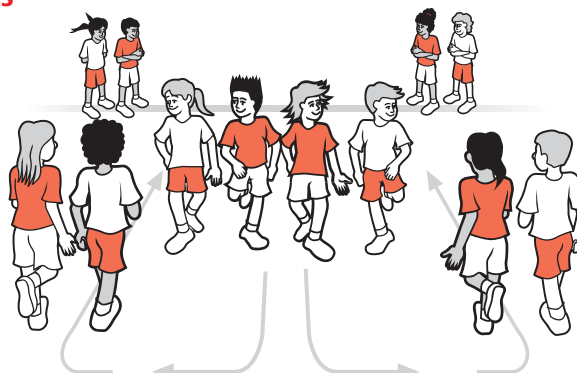
Walking to a rhythm and working with others (relationships).

Set-up

Marching music.

A defined hard or grass area with an end line and a baseline.

Children in pairs: partners stand at opposite sides of the area, facing the end line. A caller stands on the baseline.



Are children working together?

Activity

Caller: Come down the centre in twos.

Each child marches to meet their partner at the end line. As a pair meets, they turn and march down the centre of the area to the baseline.

Caller: Two right and two left.

The first pair turns to the right, the second to the left, and so on.

Caller: Come down the centre in fours.

When the two lead pairs meet at the end line, they walk four abreast down the centre.

Caller: Four right and four left.

Children divide again, with four children to the right and four to the left.

Caller: Come down the centre in eights.

When lines of four meet again at the end line, they join together to form a line of eight abreast.

Can you see ...?

- walking tall
- head up
- swinging arms at waist height
- walking in time with partner/group

You could ask ...

How can you keep in time with each other?

Variations

Work in fours: Come down the centre in fours, separate into pairs, form arches or go 'over and under'.