



# Hopping

Hopping involves taking off on one foot and landing on the same foot, usually in a continuous and rhythmic movement. Hopping is a challenging skill for many children as it requires balancing on a small base of support (on one foot), and the ability to control the body for the continuous motion.

To hop efficiently, the non-hopping side of the body has to act as a counterbalance when the body is in flight. Leg strength is also needed when covering a distance (e.g. in hopscotch) or keeping the body up and down continuously, like in rope-skipping.

# Developmental Phases

## Hopping

### Initial



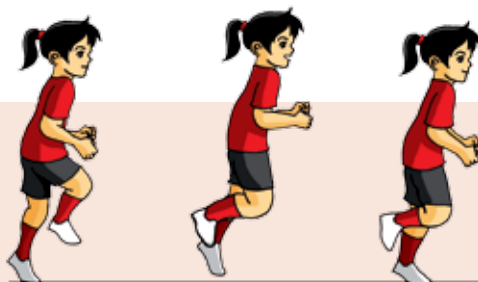
- Arms bend at elbows and are held slightly off the sides.
- Non-supporting leg lifted, with thigh roughly parallel to ground. Supporting leg pushes flat against ground.
- Not much height or distance is achieved in a single hop.
- Loses balance easily, managing only one or two hops at a time.

### Transition



- Arms move up and down vigorously.
- Non-supporting leg is bent at knee and held in front of body.
- Supporting leg pushes off more, on the ball of foot, with slight forward body lean.
- Poor balance with a limited number of consecutive hops each time.

### Mature



- Arms swing in opposition to pumping leg when supporting foot leaves the ground.
- Non-supporting leg bends and swings back and forth like a pendulum to help produce body lift. Supporting leg pushes off with the ball of the foot.
- Body leans forward. Greater distance is achieved with each hop.

### Approximate Age of Development (in years)

|            |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |    |
|------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|
| Initial    | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| Transition | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| Mature     | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |

# Teaching Strategies

## Hopping

### What to do if your child...

#### ... needs help to hop?

- Find a clear wall or a stable table or chair. Get your child to place his entire lower arm against wall or hold table or chair.
- Hold your child's non-hopping foot, bent at the knees. Get your child to bend knee of hopping leg and push off ground for one hop. Repeat.



#### ... needs support to hop continuously?

- Lend your arm as support to your child as he hops continuously.



#### ... needs cues to hop?

- Arrange footprints or flat markers as shown.
- Get your child to hop (two left or right foot hops, rest, followed by two hops on other foot) over a short distance.



#### ... needs to be challenged to hop far?

- Mark two lines or place two cones a distance apart. Get your child to count number of hops needed to hop from one line or cone to the other.
- Determine the lowest number of hops taken after a few tries. Or play hopscotch games.

# Variations

“Can your child hop...?”

|                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                          |                                                                                                                                                                            |                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
|-------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| How the body moves            | <b>Force/Effort</b>                                                                                                                                                                                      | <b>Time</b>                                                                                                                                                                | <b>Flow</b>                                                                                                                                                                                     |
|                               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• as if on thick muddy ground</li><li>• lightly as a grasshopper</li><li>• as if his shoes were fitted with springs</li></ul>                                      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• slowly like a heavy dinosaur</li><li>• to the beat of a drum</li><li>• three times on right foot and three times on left</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• like a robot</li><li>• with hands away from his body</li><li>• at random around the room</li></ul>                                                      |
| Where the body moves          | <b>Location</b>                                                                                                                                                                                          | <b>Direction/Pathways</b>                                                                                                                                                  | <b>Levels/Extensions</b>                                                                                                                                                                        |
|                               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• in and out of a hoop</li><li>• along the side of a wall</li><li>• following a line</li></ul>                                                                     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• and turn in the air</li><li>• following the hopscotch pattern</li><li>• in two different directions consecutively</li></ul>        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• over a 'log' (using a cone)</li><li>• without bending his lifted knees</li><li>• bending his knees and swinging his arms</li></ul>                      |
| With whom/What the body moves | <b>Self (body parts)/People</b>                                                                                                                                                                          |                                                                                                                                                                            | <b>Objects</b>                                                                                                                                                                                  |
|                               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• and alternate his hopping foot every three hops</li><li>• holding your shoulders</li><li>• by taking turns with you to reach opposite side of the room</li></ul> |                                                                                                                                                                            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• on the spot holding on to a chair/table</li><li>• over a low swinging rope</li><li>• onto different coloured markers (cut out anti-slip mats)</li></ul> |

## COMBINATIONS

- Lightly as a grasshopper to the beat of a drum, at random around the room
- In and out of the hoop following the hopscotch pattern as if his shoes were fitted with springs

# Activity 1

## Hopping

### LOCOMOTOR SKILLS



- The foam mats will help absorb the landing impact as your child hops around.

### WHAT YOU NEED

- Numbered foam mats
- Small objects found at home, such as bean bags, stuffed toys or erasers
- Tape



### HOW TO PLAY

- Construct the hopscotch pattern on the floor with the numbered foam mats and tape. Toss a small object onto one of the mats in the pattern.
- Have your child hop the pattern, in ascending numbers, until he reaches the mat with the object. He must then pick up the object and hop back to start, in descending numbers.
- At mats numbered 4 and 5, he must land on both feet with one foot on each mat. The same goes for mats numbered 7 and 8.



- Stick alphabets or words onto each foam mat. Have your child toss a small object onto a mat in the pattern. He must then call out the alphabet or read aloud the word on that mat before hopping onto it.

# Activity 2

## Hopping

### LOCOMOTOR SKILLS



- Ensure play area is free of obstacles to avoid collisions, especially when changing directions.



### HOW TO PLAY



- Dramatise a beach scene where the sand is very hot. Have your child hop on alternating foot while yelling “Ouch! Hot! Hot!”.
- Next, have your child imagine that he has ‘water’ in one ear after a swim. Ask your child to hop and shake his head simultaneously, to expel the ‘water’.
- Finally, get your child to role play as a grasshopper. He must hop around, in search of pretty flowers to land on.

### BE AWARE

- Prompt your child to avoid stepping on the hot sand, or to try hopping higher to get the ‘water’ out of his ear.
- He will have to try bending one knee and lifting the other high while hopping, to help him hop more forcefully and maintain his balance.

### PRACTICE MAKES PERFECT

- Do this activity to keep your child entertained while waiting at a bus-stop or clinic.
- Get your child to dramatise different scenerios, or even come up with more innovative ones.