

# Mommie & Me

## Mix 'N Match Exercise Plan

Kids' attention spans are shorter than adults. Take a look at these exercises below. Pick 3 from each category and you'll have a 15 minute daily exercise routine both you and your child can stick with.

### WARM UP (3 - 5 minutes)

**Willow Bends:** Stand straight, legs shoulder width apart. Clasp hands above head. Stretch left 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8. Straighten up. Stretch right 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8. Repeat three times both sides.

**Giraffe Stretches:** Stand straight legs far apart. Clasp hands over head. Reach down and try to touch ground between legs 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8. Straighten up and reach for the sky on tippy-toes 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8. Stretch a little farther each time. Repeat 3 times.

**The Tennessee Walker :** Stand straight. Walk in place bringing knees way up to tummy level. Start with right leg. Do 12 big steps. Start with left leg. Do 12 big steps. Repeat 3 times.

**The Flamingo:** Stand straight. Balance on one foot while you bring your right foot up behind you and grasp it in your hand. You might have to hop around a bit to keep your balance. Pull on foot for a count of four. Continue with your left foot. Repeat three times stretching upper thigh muscle.

**Butterflies:** Sit on the ground with your legs out. Slowly bring your legs in until the bottom of both feet are touching. Grab your toes with your hands and keep bringing your legs as close to your body as possible. Now your legs should look like butterfly wings with your knees being off the ground. Bounce your knees up and down fluttering them like butterfly wings. Try getting your knees as close to the ground as possible. Flutter slowly stretching that inner thigh muscle.

**Rockers :** Putting your right foot right in front of your left foot with the heel touching the toes of the left foot like a tight rope walker. Now move that right foot straight ahead one big step. You are now in position. Keeping the heel of your left foot always on the ground, rock forward, bending your right knee. Feel the stretch. Now still keeping your heels on the ground, rock backwards straightening your right leg. Feel the stretch. Repeat three times. Now switch so that your left leg is in front. Rock forward and backwards keeping your heels on the ground at all times.

### AEROBIC (5 - 7 minutes)

**Jumping Jacks:** Feet apart, hands in the air, jump and bring feet together, hands at sides. Repeat 8 times. Do three sets alternating sets with the other exercises selected.

**Hot Foot:** Imagine a line drawn from the top to the bottom or North to South. Hop with both feet shoulder width apart to the left and right of this line 10 times quickly as if you were walking barefoot on hot sand. Yell "ouch" with each hop. Repeat--hopping only on your left foot. Repeat--hopping only on your right foot.

Now imagine a line drawn from side to side or East to West. Now hop above and below this line 10 times with both feet about shoulder width apart. Go quickly enough so that your feet don't "get burnt", but not so fast that you'll fall down. Stay in control. Repeat--hopping with your left foot. Repeat--hopping with your right foot.

**Frog Foot:** Do the Hot Foot exercise above pretending you're a frog and hopping so that your hands touch the ground at each hop. Yell "ribbit!" with each hop. Keep those knees bent. Repeat 8 times for both North/South and East/West hopping motor skills and aerobic exercise.

**Jump Rope:** Do for 30 seconds. Interject another exercise. Do for 30 seconds. Alternate in another exercise. Do for another 30 seconds.

**Big Step:** Use a step in your house or in your back yard or use a stair stepper bench if you have one. The height of the step should be about the same height as your child's leg from the ground to a few inches below the start of the knee cap. Starting with your right foot go up the step. Bring your left foot up and then go down the step, right foot first, followed by left foot. Repeat 8 times. Then switch and do it 8 times with your left foot ascending the step foot. Repeat three times for each foot. Consider alternating this exercise with jumping jacks or jump rope.

**Giant Footsteps:** Stand straight. Take a huge step with your right foot. Hold it. Slowly take your left knee almost to the ground. Come back up. Bring your left leg side by side with your right leg. Now take a huge giant step with your left leg, slowly taking your right knee almost to the ground. Come back up. Bring the right leg side by to your left leg. Then start again taking a huge giant step with your right foot. Do 8 of these Giant Footstep lunges. Repeat three times, alternating with an exercise above.

**Love Crunches:** Lie flat on back. Raise head off ground to see toes. Raise legs about 6" - 12" off the ground, toes pointed, legs together. Shout L! Keeping legs off the ground have them make a circle with their toes touching. Shout O! Spread legs, still keeping them above the ground, in a V position. Shout V. Keeping legs up and in the V position, have them cross one arm above their stomach pointed between their toes, shout E!

Put legs and head down. Breathing deeply and patting tummy softly, whisper "Love, Love, Love." Say it a little louder "Love, Love, Love." Say it really loud, "Love, Love, Love ." Lift head and legs and repeat. Work up to repeating 3 times.

## **STRENGTH (2 - 3 minutes-feel free to use one of these in place of an Aerobic exercise.)**

Use water bottles of various sizes: Fill used water bottles with water or sand. Cap tightly. Start with 6 ounce bottles. As strength increases, go to 8 ounce, 12 ounce and 16 ounce bottles. Or use larger water bottles with exercises involving the larger, stronger muscle groups (legs).

**Bicep Curl:** Hands at side holding bottles. Raise arms to waist turn wrist so that thumbs are on the outside. Raise and lower bottles 8 times.

**Triceps:** Hold one water bottle in both hands. Stand straight with feet shoulder width apart, raise the water bottle over the head. Keeping the arms through the elbows close to the head, raise and lower your hands behind your head. Do 8 times. Repeat 3 times. Alternate with the bicep curl to keep interest.

## **COOL DOWN (3 - 4 minutes) :**

**Back Roll:** Lie on your back. Lift your legs slowly up. Curling your back, continue lifting your legs over your head until your toes approach the floor.

**Neck Roll:** Sitting cross legged, roll head in a circular motion clockwise two times and then counter clock wise. Repeat twice.

**Shoulder Roll:** Standing straight, lift shoulders to ears. Roll in a circular motion forward several times and then backwards.

**Elephant Walk:** Walk in place slowly. Carefully picking up and putting down feet, lifting knees only slightly.

**Pterodactyl Flight:** Stretch your hands out on either side of your body shoulder width high, slowly bringing your arms in front of your chest, arms straight, bring your wrists together and then back out at shoulder level imitating the giant wing span of a pterodactyl in flight. Repeat 3 - 4 times.

Now stretch your hands up and over your head, outside wrists touching, and bring them down to your legs inside wrists touching. Repeat 3 - 4 times slowly, breathing deeply.

Good luck . Here's to happy, healthy kids.

*John Burstein*