

## B3 - Calming activities

Activity	Equipment	Duration	Notes
Play slow, rhythmic or classical <b>music</b>	Quieter music with one beat per second, of simple nature sounds or a single instrumental is calming	As tolerated in background	Other activities can be used during this – but allow additional time and breaks to listen as required
<b>Finding objects</b>	Puzzle pieces, counting bears in a rice or bean tray or play dough therapy use	5 to 10 minutes	Less suitable for children who constantly mouth explore
<b>Hand and foot massage</b>	Hypoallergenic hand cream Try using a foot spa with warm water Spiky rollers (small or larger size) to roll over the feet	As tolerated	Use at regulated sessions across the day
<b>Slow, regular movement</b> in a straight line	See saw, exercise ball	As tolerated	Use hips and shoulders or base of spine support as key points of control to SLOW movement down
<b>Rolling</b> on a mat or up and down a wedge	Exercise mat, wedge	10 minutes	Slow rolling not quickly or children can become over stimulated
<b>Vestibular movement</b>	Rocking in a hammock or swinging, rolling or gentle bounce action	10 minute sessions	
<b>Deep pressure</b> when seated	Weighted snake, wheat or lavender pack, compression or weighted vest, hands on shoulders	10 minutes - or as tolerated	Use firm touch (strong, short pushes on the shoulders) rather light touch
<b>Sandwich</b> being rolled in a mat or duvet or <b>squashed</b> between two big pillows	Large blanket, large cushions	10 minutes - or as tolerated	Good to do after transitions - ie when children come in from break never leave the child unattended due to risk of suffocation
<b>Heavy weights</b>	Walking weights, shopping bags with canned goods, backpacks with books in	5 minutes	Good for transitions – going to hall for assembly, home, etc
Push-ups on floor, desk, or chair, <b>pushing action</b> against wall		5 minutes - as tolerated	Will be difficult for children with low muscle tone – so short bursts
<b>Push-pull activities</b> such as ‘rowing’ with a partner Push self or another person around on a scooter board	Scooter board (playground or therapy room) or PE activities Try using a rope attached to pull self on scooter board hand over hand style	5-10 minutes – take turns	
<b>Calm breathing</b> for increased sitting attention	Whistles, blow toys	5 minutes	In sitting to establish good posture
<b>Yes/No nodding games</b>	Slow rhythmic music	5 minutes	Good before tabletop work for attention
<b>Sucking</b> through a water bottle with a straw	Sports bottle or straw with drink	2-5 minutes	Make sure they don’t ‘open’ the top by pulling with their teeth!
<b>Chew</b> on Theratubing	Chewy tubes	As required	Sustained heavy work at the mouth is calming, achieved by rhythmic sucking or chewing

<b>Resistance materials</b>	Squeeze, pull or push lycra, rubber squish balls, elastic bands, bicycle tubing or Theraband etc	5 minutes	
<b>Heavy work</b>	Brooms to sweep floor, Furniture positioning, boxes with heavy items in or loaded wash basket	5-10 minutes	Pushing heavy items, not pulling – check for correct manual handling techniques – to action task appropriately
<b>Weight bearing activities</b> -wheelbarrow walking or animal walks	Exercise mat Slow rhythmic music Sufficient space for safety	5-10 minutes	Propping positions on the floor to attend to favoured activity (book or puzzle)
Lying over <b>peanut ball</b> taking weight through extended arms	Peanut or exercise ball with exercise mat	5 minutes	Try to encourage children to look up (neck extension) while on ball.
<b>Pushing large ball</b>	Large red exercise ball – in gym	5 minutes	If you push back from the other side to give resistance
<b>Squashing</b> with exercise ball	Exercise ball and mat	5 minutes	Roll ball over children when they are lying on their fronts using graded pressure Pat the ball on them in a slow rhythmic manner
<b>Lycra body</b> sock (similar to a large body envelope)	Available from OT advice or wear sports garments	10 minutes use of suit or all day wear for clothing	Encourage the children to fully stretch their arms and legs against the material so they look like a starfish
Crawling or rolling over objects in soft play or obstacle course	Large overstuffed cushions or large beanbags or therapy rolls	10 minutes	

Movements that are slow, rhythmic and linear are **calming** in nature.

Deep pressure to the palms or trunk is calming.

Quieter music with one beat per second, of simple nature sounds or a single instrumental is calming.  
Sustained heavy work at the mouth is calming, achieved by rhythmic sucking or chewing.

Soft indirect lighting is calming.

Quiet spaces offer breaks from auditory and visual overload.

Swaddling in a blanket brings warmth and quiet.

The most important part of a child's sensory diet is the strategies that are **organising**.

Daily routines bring comfort.

Weighted backpacks, clothing, blankets, wrist or ankle weights give a child an anchor to the ground.  
It tells them where they are in space.

Sipping through a long straw promotes binocular vision, jaw stability and rhythmic breathing.

Any heavy work activity offers proprioceptive input (pulling a rope, pushing resistively, hanging from a trapeze), to enhance the release of serotonin. This important neurotransmitter enhances the function of all others. Other therapy approaches can be used in conjunction with these ideas ie brushing or compression or listening with the whole body programmes.