

Agility Exercise

Department: MFS

Priority: High for students who walk independently.

Overall purpose of class:

This class is designed to assist the high level independent walker. These are students who routinely ambulate in the community. They have good endurance but need help in sequencing and directionality. They usually have trouble with quick changes and unexpected events. Exercises help to improve balance, strength and flexibility, endurance, coordination, walking pattern, sequencing and general agility.

Number of classes held per week: 2

Optimum class time: Anytime. Fatigue is not a primary factor.

Instructor requirements: 1 PT and 1 Teaching Assistant

Number of students: 12

Student ability range and limitations:

Students in this class have good dynamic balance and good endurance. They can follow directions with cuing.

Space and Equipment requirements:

Room to accommodate 12 students, parallel bars and ladders with ample room on both sides of parallel bars for students to move easily on and off the ladders.

Student Needs to be met from the perspective of the instructor:

Students in this class need and want to have their motor processing and motor planning skills challenged. They also need practice in following up to 3 step directions.

Typical Student Goals that lead to placement in the class:

- May want to dance or participate in other activities requiring quick movements.
- Students may not recognize the need for this class because they are already independent in walking.
- May complain of being thrown off balance (literally and figuratively) by unexpected events.
- May express desire for general exercise and increased fitness.

Agility Exercise Sample Activities

Prerequisites:

A student in this class must be able to walk independently (assistive device ok if needed). He/she must be able to demonstrate good balance with both static and dynamic activities; and must have good standing balance for short periods without the use of cane or parallel bars.

Warm Ups:

Posture, breathing and stretches are done at the parallel bars.

Note:

- Agility ladders are placed on outsides of parallel bars, close enough to each bar to assist student, but far enough room to provide ample space for foot movements in and out of ladder.
- Students may be divided into teams.
- Start with simple movements and work up to more complex foot placements e.g. designating specific foot to lead etc.
- Make sure students don't crowd each other- keep one/half lap distance.

Techniques:

Start with students facing parallel bars in square of ladder with one space at least between students.

Exercises may include:

- stepping forwards, backwards, sideways and combinations.
- turning-quarter, half, three-quarter turns-varying directions.

Do laps down the ladders

- staying on same side, using same ladder down and back.
- use both ladders for two laps of same activity around set of parallel bars.

Suggested Activities:

1. Move forwards - one step in each square.
2. Move backwards - one step in each square.
3. Take sidesteps- to the left and right.
4. Move out- out, in- in--starting with both feet in square, take each foot out of square, bring both back in. Then, step forward both feet in next square.
5. Repeat backwards stepping.
6. Take three steps forward- one step back. Place right foot in square, left foot in next square, right foot next, then step back into square-both feet together.
Continue pattern.
7. Make diagonal patterns. Step into square with both feet, facing bars. Diagonally step forward outside next square. Step back into square. repeat pattern
8. Reverse diagonal sequence, moving straight out, diagonally in.
9. Change stepping out to back using above two patterns.
10. Combine diagonals out and in forward, then backwards or combination.

These are just some suggestions. Remember, safety first, challenge students with multiple tasks and variations, and have fun!