



## Low Muscle Tone

Tone is the degree of tension or resistance in a muscle. In low muscle tone this is regarded as flaccid or floppy. Using the muscles regularly, increases the tone.

### Helpful Strategies

- Activities that develop strength and endurance will assist children with low muscle tone. Large movements and gross motor skill practise also assist the development of strength with fine motor activities.
- Fine motor activities (e.g. drawing) can be adjusted to assist development of muscle tone e.g. drawing up high on a blackboard strengthens shoulder muscles.
- Acknowledge when the child tires but aim to gradually and continuously increase strength and endurance.

### Gross Motor Activities

- Relay Races: bunny hops, bear / crab / parrot walks, jumping with a balloon/ ball squeezed between knees, space hopper
- Wheelbarrows - Hold the child's knees until they are strong enough to hold at ankles. Aim to increase the number of steps/distance.
- Tug-o-War
- Walk - with a piece of elastic around ankles. Children have to keep elastic tight (ie. feet wide apart when walking) and try not to allow the elastic to fall off.
- Monkey Bars, Arm Wrestles
- Sit Ups - with knees bent.



- Leapfrog
- Wrestling - In pairs, children or child and parent join hands and push against each other.
- Push Ups: push-up straightening arms, knees bent. Push offs - from wall and catch on bent arms. If really good, try in the handstand position with adult holding child's ankles, child bends elbows slowly until nose touches floor and then straightens elbows again.
- Carrying - heavy items e.g. Shopping bags.
- When Watching TV - Encourage child to lie on tummy on floor, with forearms flat on floor (rather than supporting chin) for as long as they can.
- Swimming - Including using a kickboard, or floaties, doggie paddle, treading water etc.

### Fine Motor Activities

- Newspaper Crush - Squeeze sheets of newspaper into balls as tightly as possible. Child can then throw ball into target (e.g. bucket).
- Wringing - Wring as much water as possible out of a sponge or cloth when in the bath.
- Spray Bottle - Use a squeezey water spray bottle. Child can water plants or "paint" on concrete/rocks.
- Popping Air Bubble Packaging - Using thumb and index finger.
- Flicking - Paper balls or marbles into a target, using thumb and index finger.

