

# WALKING WOMBATS

Home Exercise Program  
Book #4



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# INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the **WALKING WOMBATS** home exercise program! This booklet will help your child transition into the final stage of walking! Walking is an important milestone and requires your child to learn how to shift weight forwards and maintain balance.



This booklet will provide easy to follow exercises and advice about equipment or actions that may affect your child's development. Try to add these exercises into play time as much as you can! The more practice the better!

If you have any questions or concerns, please speak to your physiotherapist.

## AIMS OF PHYSIOTHERAPY

- Promote transition from cruising to walking.
- Further strengthening of trunk and lower body muscles
- Development of balance, coordination and confidence for baby.

## PREPARING FOR CRUISING: PULL TO STAND

- From a high kneel position, help your child step up with one leg into a half kneel position. Decrease this support over time.
- Place toys on a higher surface to encourage your child to lift their arms up and pull up to standing



## ENCOURAGING CRUISING

After pulling themselves up, infants begin to cruise by holding onto furniture and taking small side steps.

Encourage cruising by placing toys up on furniture and out of your child's grasp.



## PROGRESSION OF CRUISING

- Encourage cruising between objects by placing toys beside/ behind child.
- Try cruising along a wall and reaching for an object. Assist your baby to balance by helping them to lean into their arms against the wall.



## ENCOURAGING WALKING

- Use a trolley walker to help your child push themselves forward. Assist their balance by holding behind them. Decrease this guidance over time.
- Assist your child by holding their hands and leaning forward. Start with holding both hands and gradually transition to one hand hold.



## PROGRESSION OF WALKING

Continue to challenge your child's walking using creative and fun ways. Here are a few examples!

### STAIR TRAINING



### KICKING A BALL

### PULLING ON A STRING TOY

Pulling on a weighted object behind the infant challenges balance and coordination.

### WALKING OUTDOORS/ ON A FOAM MAT

Uneven surfaces help to challenge balance and strengthens muscles at the ankle.

# WHY ARE BABY WALKERS DISCOURAGED?

## IT MAY DISRUPT NORMAL DEVELOPMENT

- Children may develop a false sense of balance, and struggle to balance once the baby walker is removed
- Children may develop inappropriate movement patterns such as toe walking
- More time in a baby walker means less time practising skills!

(Australian Physiotherapy Australia)



## IT CAN CAUSE SERIOUS INJURIES

It can help infants reach dangerous objects such as heaters, electrical connections, Infants can move to dangerous areas such as stairs It has led to injuries such as concussions, burns, fractures and death

(Al-Nouri & Al-Isami, 2006; Sharov et al., 2018)



**WE RECOMMEND USING A TROLLEY OR SIMILAR ALTERNATIVE (E.G. UPSIDE-DOWN WASHING BASKET)**



Significant delay was found in rolling over, crawling, kneeling, sitting, standing and walking

(Talebian et al., 2008)

The delays of extended baby walkers use may last up to 15 months, as shown by lower cognitive scores.

(Garrett, McElroy & Saitnes, 2002)



Every day a baby spends in a baby walker will delay walking by 3.3. days

(Garrett, McElroy & Saitnes, 2002)

# CHOOSING THE RIGHT FOOTWEAR

- As your child grows, you may notice that their feet turn inwards and "pigeon-toed", outwards or may be flat
- In most cases, these are normal variations that change and resolve as the child grows.
- Special shoe modifications for flat feet or in-toeing are not necessary and do not improve walking.
- Often, correctly fitted shoes are enough to facilitate normal development

IN TOEING



OUT TOEING



(Munuera, Castillo, Dominguez & Lafuentem, 2010; Staheli, 1983; Uden & Kumar, 2012; Harris, 2013)

## GOOD SHOES SHOULD HAVE...



A COMFORTABLE FIT



PLENTY OF ROOM FOR THE TOES



A FLEXIBLE, FLAT SOLE



THE FRONT OF THE SHOE WIDER THAN THE HEEL TO MATCH THE SHAPE OF THE FOOT



LACES, STRAPS OR FASTENERS TO PREVENT TOO MUCH MOVEMENT INSIDE THE SHOE

(Better Health Channel)

Try to get your toddler to walk bare feet if the environment is safe or in soft soled, flexible shoes. This allows the child to feel through their feet to improve balance and strength!

(Hillstrom, H.J. et al., 2018)

**IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS OR PROBLEMS, PLEASE PHONE THE  
PHYSIOTHERAPY DEPARTMENT**



**(02) 4634 3580**

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