

## Tips for Supporting Your Child's Physical Well Being During Virtual Learning

You may find some suggestions to be helpful and others to not be a good fit for your child or family's needs, lifestyle, or physical space. If you want more specific suggestions please reach out to our School Psychologist, Heather Hill ([hhill@wcpss.net](mailto:hhill@wcpss.net)).

### Posture



#### HOW TO SIZE A DESK

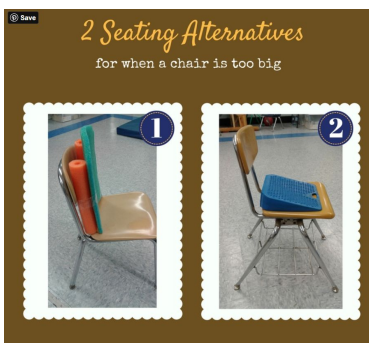
A CHEATSHEET FOR TEACHERS & THERAPISTS

##### CHECK DESK SIZE IF YOU SEE:

- slumped posture
- swinging feet
- sitting on legs
- standing at desk

CHILDREN MUST BE SEATED PROPERLY IN ORDER TO FOCUS!

POSITION IS THE KEY TO SUCCESS



#### TIP: Children should sit with their elbows, hips and knees all bent at a 90-degree angle.

- Adjust the chair to fit your child's body with items from home:
  - Put a stool, a box, a laundry basket, or a stack of books under their feet
  - Put a pillow behind their back if the seat is too long.
  - Put a cushion under them to raise the height of the seat

#### TIP: Avoid neck strain.

- Keep the device or reading material directly in front of your child at an arm's length away.
- Raise the computer to eye level:
  - Put a box or books under the computer.
  - Put the computer on a counter.
  - Do gentle neck rolls and stretches.

#### TIP: Mix up their positions.

- Possible alternative seating options:
  - Sitting on knees at a coffee table.
  - Lying on stomach on the floor.
  - Sitting on a yoga ball.
  - Sit in a lawn chair.
  - Standing at a high table or counter.
  - A binder resting on a thick pillow becomes an improvised lap desk.
  - Sitting on the floor and leaning against the wall with legs straight out in front

## Eye Care



### **TIP: Consider ways to sooth eyes tired from screen time.**

- Blinking motions:
  - Open and close the eyes gently 10 times every 30 minutes.
  - Close eyes for 10 seconds then open. Repeat 3 times.
- Use the 20-20-20 rule. Every 20 minutes look at something 20 feet away for 20 seconds.
- Rub palms of hands together and place palms over closed eyes.
- Create an “eye friendly schedule” including times for your child to do activities that do not include a screen.
- Set time limits for non school related screen time.
- Clean the computer screen at least once a week to clear away dust or smudges.

### **TIP: Eat foods that are good for eye health. Some of these are:**

- Carrots
- Cabbages
- Mangoes
- Apples
- Spinach, kale, and collards
- Salmon or tuna
- Eggs, nuts, beans,
- Oranges and other citrus fruits or juices
- Melons

### **TIP: Keep the room’s lighting dimmer than the computer screen.**

- Use natural lighting (i.e. sit near a window), when possible.
- Turn down the brightness and turn up the contrast of the screen settings.

### **TIP: Consider placement of the device:**

- Devices should be between 18 inches and 30 inches away.
- Adjust the screen so that there’s no tilt, and position it so the top is just below eye level.

### **TIP: Adjust screen settings for better eye care.**

- Set the computer screen at a high resolution.
- Download an app that adjusts the color settings if your student ever does any schoolwork or web browsing during the evening.
- Zoom in to make text larger when the text is small.

## Sensory



### **TIP: Tool Versus a Toy**

- A sensory or fidget tool is one that helps meet goals and promotes independence through use of the item.
- Something that looks like a toy can be a tool for the child with sensory needs, fine motor challenges, attention difficulties, or any other problem areas.
- If an item distracts from learning, it is more likely classified as a toy.

### **TIP: Use old t-shirts to make a chair fidget.**

- You know those bands that can go around the bottom of chairs? You can buy plastic ones, but they can be pretty expensive. Instead, try out this fidget by using old t-shirts. You'll find that t-shirts that still have a little bit of stretch in them work best. This is an inexpensive way to let your children move around a bit and fidget while still staying in their seats.
- Go to the link below for a video demonstration.  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ScZGN8bjsg4>



### **TIP: You can make sensory items out of pipe cleaners and beads.**

- Check out [Confident Counselors](#) to get ideas of how to use pipe cleaners and beads and tape as fidget items.

### **DIY SODA TAB FIDGET**



### **TIP: Combine soda tabs for a quick fidget.**

- You can use string, a keychain, or hair tie to create these fidget items with soda tabs. Check out [steamsational.com](http://steamsational.com) for how to make this fidget and make sure there are no sharp edges.
- This is one of the easiest ways to create a fidget. It's nearly free, since keyrings are the only things you might have to buy if you want an optimal fidget.



### **TIP: Squeeze out some stress using these items.**

- Balled up paper
- Homemade stress ball from a balloon:
  - Fill a deflated balloon with a small amount of flour, play dough, dry beans, rice, or slime. Tie a knot and squeeze.
- Pillow
- Stuffed animal



five motor  
fidget toy



- Balled up sock
- Pool noodle, cut into inch wide sections
- Puddy
  - [Here's a do it yourself recipe.](#)
- Glove filled with rice or beans and then sewn or glued shut

**TIP: How to squeeze out some stress:**

- Grab the stress ball/items with a full grip.
- Hold the **stress ball** in your palm and squeeze it as hard as you can.
- Hold for 3-5 seconds, then relax.
- Repeat 10 times, rest for 1 minute.
- Repeat with the other hand.

**TIP: Massage it out.**

- You can give yourself a face or hand massage.
- Use a tennis ball or stress ball to roll on arms, legs, face, or shoulders to help release tension.
- Use a foam roller to release tension in your muscles.
- Weighted sock or glove.
  - The weight of a sock, glove, or bag full of beans can be soothing, improve focus, and release tension.

**TIP: Use a fidget item to allow for focus and release of energy.**



- Here are some fidget and sensory items that can be purchased.
- Link chains of paperclips or key chains together.
- Make a quiet fidget toy with small rubber bands and a shower curtain loop.
- Pony bead strung onto a jumbo paper clip, pipe cleaner, string, or key chain.
- Use things you may have around the house that do not take any prep work:
  - Twist ties from bread or other packaging
  - Rubber bands.
  - Bendy, flexible straws.
  - Bubble wrap

## Movement



### **TIP: Encourage movement breaks.**

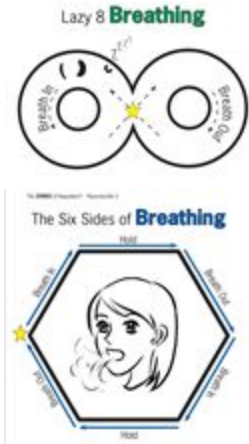
- Adults generally can sit for 30 minutes or more without getting restless, but children need to switch things up much more often.
- Remind them to switch up their positions every 10-15 minutes.
- Build lots of breaks for movement into the daily routine. Taking scheduled breaks helps children to self-regulate, gives them the physiologic benefits of movement and helps them avoid getting to the point of frustration.
- Movement breaks will help maintain focus and keep their body comfortable.
- Movement Resources:
  - Monopoly:  
<https://view.genial.ly/5ea98116a20cdf0d90e92a10/interactive-content-fitness-mathopoly-grades-k-2>
  - Chutes and Ladders:  
<https://view.genial.ly/5eb186b4d6341b0d87ccdbbe/interactive-content-chutes-and-ladders-fitness>
  - Yoga;  
[https://docs.google.com/document/d/1nicKvEqGGPN26fgbRT5KIHWD85y\\_f6W\\_qCBHCS6apdk/edit](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1nicKvEqGGPN26fgbRT5KIHWD85y_f6W_qCBHCS6apdk/edit)
  - OCTOBER Fit Calendar:  
<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1A8NmOv1yek09fVcjPoRQiuTJtGMDyoTL/view>

Item	How It Helps	Notes
 <p>The image shows a white ring with several colorful rubber bands (red, yellow, green, blue) attached to it. To the right of the ring is a standard 3x3 Rubik's cube with its characteristic colors (white, yellow, red, blue, green, orange).</p>	<p>Calms hands. Focuses brain.</p>	<p>These types of tools are helpful when your brain is thinking about many different things at once or your thoughts are distracting you from learning. If your brain needs help to focus, you can lay the rubber bands out on a flat surface and visually sort them by color as you put them on the ring. When your brain is focused on one task, getting the like colors on the ring in order, it is like a “workout” or practice for focusing on one thing. The rubrics cube can also be helpful to focus your brain in the same way!</p>
 <p>The image is split into two parts. The top part shows a yellow rubber glove, a bag of black beans, and some spilled beans on a brown surface. The bottom part shows several small, colorful stuffed animals, including a unicorn, a pig, a bear, a penguin, a pink piggy bank, and a shark.</p>	<p>Calms body. Focuses brain.</p>	<p>Bean bags, bean filled gloves or socks, or even stuffed animals can be used in a lot of different ways. These all require using up some energy in your body and some (the balance ones!) require your brain to really focus!</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Squeeze</li> <li>2. Toss from hand to hand gently</li> <li>3. Bunch it up and flatten it back out</li> <li>4. Put it on the back of your hand, hold your arm up directly in front of you and keep the bean bag balanced on your hand</li> <li>5. Sit with feet in front of you, balance bean bag on top of your foot, lift and lower</li> </ol>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Use things you may have around the house that do not take any prep work: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Twist ties from bread or other packaging</li> <li>○ Rubber bands.</li> <li>○ Bendy, flexible straws.</li> <li>○ Bubble wrap</li> <li>○ Paperclips chained together or with beads</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p>Calms hands. Calms brain.</p>	<p>This tool is helpful if your hands are feeling fidgety. It is soothing because it is repetitive and helps to get rid of some “nervous energy.” The repetitive nature of this tool helps to calm the brain down from thinking negative thoughts or having a lot of thoughts at one time.</p>



Uses up energy.  
 Calms body.  
 Calms brain.

If you have a lot of energy squeezing can use up some of the energy. Try squeezing the stress ball as tightly as you can for 10 seconds (or more if you have a lot of energy). Try to focus on squeezing it with the same amount of tightness as when you started the whole 10 seconds. If you are low on energy, try doing quick, repetitive squeezes. This can give you some energy by pumping the blood to your muscles and brain!



Calms body.  
 Calms brain.  
 Focuses brain.

Taking breathes that are the same length in and out helps to calm our brain and body. The tracing of the figure 8 allows us to cross our midline, which calms our brains down too. The six sides of breathing helps to calm heart rate, clear you mind, and regulate your breathing. If you are having trouble focusing, if you are upset or feeling a lot of emotions, this can be a helpful tool in calming your brain down.