

The 5 pound Weighted Ball!!

One of my favorite pieces of therapy equipment is a five-pound weighted ball. It seems simple, and it is! A simple weighted ball is a great tool to have on hand for heavy work, balance, and coordination activities. It's affordable, portable, and versatile. The following games are variations on everyday activities, but with additional intensity through incorporation of the weighted ball.

Keep in mind they are simply a sampler to get your creative juices flowing! The important thing to remember is that a little imagination goes a long way, and an activity is always more fun and engaging if there is a game involved. Using your imagination to turn common fitness/household items into inexpensive and accessible sensory equipment can add a lot of enjoyment to your home programs!

1. Weighted Ball Croquet – Put the weighted ball in a pillowcase. Show your child how to gently swing the pillowcase to hit tennis balls or other weighted balls toward a target. This activity incorporates proprioception, hand strength, crossing midline, and hand-eye coordination, and timing.
2. Catch and Balance – Have the child stand on a pillow or couch cushion (I use the dome in treatment). Play “catch” with the weighted ball. This activity incorporates proprioception, hand strength, arm strength, core strength, balance, timing, and using both hands together in a coordinated way.
3. Weighted Ball Bounce - Take turns bouncing the weighted ball on the trampoline to each other instead of traditional catch. Add intensity by combining with Catch and Balance. Your child can also bounce the weighted ball into a target (a hula hoop works nicely).
4. Weighted Ball Scooter Race – Your child lays stomach down on a scooter, throws the weighted ball, and attempts to catch up to it (propelling the scooter with arms only) before it stops rolling. This activity promotes extensor strength (back and neck muscles), arm/hand strength, proprioception, and timing.
5. Weighted Ball Animal Walks – Have your child throw the weighted ball and perform an animal walk of their choice or your choice to the ball. This activity incorporates vestibular input in varying head positions, core strength, arm/hand strength, proprioception, and balance.