**Deep Pressure Touch Activities**

Deep pressure touch activities provide tactile input that is calming and regulating for most people. It also offers additional input to the muscles and joints which can have a soothing affect, and help our bodies to feel calmer. Consider reading the Sensory Systems PBS Guides for more information.

The activities listed below can be used to provide additional deep pressure input for your child. Always observe your child closely for any signs of distress and do not force an activity your child does not enjoy. Complete an activity and then offer your child the options of ‘more’ or ‘finished’. You can also ask your child to guide how deep they would like the pressure.

**Practical Ideas/Strategies**

* Hand Hugs- Using the palms of your hands (not fingers) only, start at the end of a limb (leg or arm) and apply pressure on the limb surface working towards the core of the body. When working at the shoulders, apply pressure either side of the shoulder, and then work down the back. Deep pressure can also be applied around the head area.
* Gym Ball Squash- Ask the child to lie on their tummy. Begin by rolling the gym ball slowly and firmly over the child’s body. Apply even pressure when rolling and ensure the child is comfortable and relaxed. If the child wants to lie on their back roll the ball over limbs only and avoid chest and head area.
* Blanket Roll- Place your child on their back on the edge of a blanket, duvet or yoga mat with their head above the top of the blanket. Slowly roll your child into the blanket with their arms down by their side and their legs straight. Once your child is wrapped up, apply gentle firm pressure over his/her body. Either use flat hands and forearms or a large ball. Slowly unroll your child to the starting position.
* Sensory Sandwich- Ask the child to lie on their back on the floor or mat and explain that you are going to make a sandwich with them in it! Begin by placing a cushion or pillow on the child (avoiding their face) and pressing down on the cushion applying firm pressure. Add another cushion or blanket and press down on it. Finally add a third layer, again applying pressure. NB – each of the layers can be named ‘ham’ or ‘lettuce’ to pretend that you are making a sandwich or hot dog! Encourage the child to describe what they would like in their sandwich!
* Vibrating Pillows/ Snakes- Allow your child to apply pressure to their skin with the vibrating item. Try placing it on different areas of the body, for example, the bottoms of the feet or the head.

**Online Resources / Videos**

These are examples of suppliers of recommended or relevant equipment for your child. This is not a specific endorsement of any company but is for information purposes only. Please search using the term for the individual item to find alternative suppliers.

* [http://www.southpaw.co.uk](http://www.southpaw.co.uk/body-sox-613-p.asp)
* <https://www.spacekraft.co.uk/>
* <https://www.amazon.co.uk>
* <https://www.learningspaceuk.co.uk>
* <https://www.sensorydirect.com>

**References**

Bestbier L, Williams TI. The Immediate Effects of Deep Pressure on Young People with Autism and Severe Intellectual Difficulties: Demonstrating Individual Differences. *Occupational Therapy International*. 2017;2017:7534972. Published 2017 Jan 9. doi:10.1155/2017/7534972

[Krauss](https://ajot.aota.org/solr/searchresults.aspx?author=Kirsten+E.+Krauss) K. The Effects of Deep Pressure Touch on Anxiety *American Journal of Occupational* *Therapy*, June 1987, Vol. 41, 366-373. <https://doi.org/10.5014/ajot.41.6.366>