

## Condition:



# Dyspraxia

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## What is Dyspraxia?

- Dyspraxia is also known as Developmental Co-ordination Disorder (DCD).
- It is a condition that affects physical co-ordination in children and adults.
- It can make you appear to move around more clumsily.
- This condition often runs in families and is much more common in males than females.
- Although this condition is usually diagnosed in childhood, it can also lead to continued problems into adulthood.

## Working with Dyspraxia

By adulthood most individuals with Dyspraxia have developed strategies to work effectively in the work place.

- You may struggle with organisation, so having a job with set hours and the same routine each day could be beneficial.
- There are courses available to help with IT skills if needed to aid your work.
- Organising and prioritising workload may prove to be difficult, however this is something you and your employer could look at together to come up with some strategies to help with this.
- Memory and concentration may affect your working ability so consider using memory strategies.
- Use effective time management tools such as diaries, task tools and alarms.

## How to recognise if you have Dyspraxia

The following symptoms do not always apply to everyone. You do not need to be suffering from all of the below to have Dyspraxia:

### Symptoms in a baby

- Babies could show signs such as difficulty feeding and be unusually irritable
- They may be slow to reach milestones, such as crawling and walking

### Symptoms in a toddler

- Messy eater – wanting to use fingers to eat rather than a spoon or fork
- Struggles to play ball or ride a tricycle
- Delayed at becoming toilet trained
- Avoids playing with toys such as puzzles and construction toys
- Doesn't talk as well as other children their age

## Symptoms in pre-school children

- Bumping into things
- Has trouble learning to jump and skip
- Is slow to develop left/right hand dominance
- Often drops objects
- Struggles to grasp a pencil/pen and write
- Difficulties doing buttons up and zips etc.
- Speaks slowly
- Struggles to play and interact with other children

## Symptoms in Middle-school children

- Avoids sports
- Struggles with writing
- Has trouble moving items from one place to another
- Struggles to listen to, and follow instructions
- Struggles with hand eye co-ordination
- Finds it difficult to stand for a long period of time due to poor muscle tone

## Symptoms in high-school children

- Has trouble with sports
- Bumps into things
- May talk constantly and repeat things
- May forget or lose things

## Causes of Dyspraxia

Professionals are currently not aware of what causes Dyspraxia. However they believe that the following could be contributing factors:

- Genetics
- A problem with the nerve cells that send signals from the brain to the muscles.
- Being born prematurely or having a low birth weight.
- Being exposed to alcohol in the womb.

## Talking to your GP/health professional

Symptoms need to be present for at least 6 months for a diagnosis to occur and this is normally in childhood where therapies such occupational therapy will be deployed following this. For a diagnosis to be made, 4 things need to be identified:

- Motor skills lag behind what's expected based on the child's age
- These difficulties interfere with the child's daily life or academic achievements
- The weaknesses in motor skills aren't due to another neurological condition, such as cerebral palsy
- Symptoms were present early in life, even though the condition typically isn't diagnosed before age 5

## Treatments for Dyspraxia

There is no medication that will help this condition but therapy is useful to learn what exercises and skills will help you with day to day activities.

## Self-Management/Care

There are many things you can do if you have Dyspraxia. Some of them are



### Take Notice

Complete relaxation or mindfulness exercises.



### Bean bag / ball toss

This helps eye hand co-ordination.



### Learn

Learn as much as you can about the condition – find information to support you.



### Get pencil grips

This can make writing easier.



### Connect

Tell others about your condition so that they can understand and adjustments can be identified and supported.



### Practice keyboarding

Typing may be easier than writing.



### Do Jigsaw Puzzles

This helps with visual spatial perception.



### Memory Strategies

Use memory strategies as per above.

## Useful links

## Helplines

Dyspraxia  
Foundation  
**01462 454 986**