

Arrows Exercise – Instructions

The arrows exercise is a very valuable exercise which helps to develop a number of processing aspects, such as directionality, gross motor skills, visual discrimination and executive function (the brain's ability to control and direct the body and organise information).

It can be used individually or in groups with learners of all ages and also provides an opportunity for movement for those learners with ADHD! Use it at the beginning of a lesson to 'focus' the brain or in the middle of the lesson to give a break and opportunity to move.

Instructions:

First, print out the pdf on two different colours of card. Choose colours which are fairly bright so that the arrows stand out. Ideally, laminate the cards for durability. Consider laminating the cards with matt laminate if there is likely to be glare from a light or window.

Then blu-tack the cards to a handy wall or door surface at about eye level for the users you have in mind. They should be placed horizontally, one rotated by 180°. See photo.

Stand the child facing the cards and ensure that they are standing straight and upright with feet slightly apart. Demonstrate the starting position, which is with both hands on the shoulders, elbows stretched out to the sides.

Each movement then needs to be done with the left or right arm stretching out to the side, or both arms going upwards or downwards, but hands need to return to the shoulders between each movement. The child also needs to say the movement at the same time, i.e. "left, left, right, left...." Ensure that the arm is stretched out fully and that the child's body does not move when they do the 'up' or 'down' movements.

When the child has done one card, they can then do the second card. This activity will also develop trunk stability, which is essential for the ability to sit still at a desk!

The next stage of difficulty is to get the child to do the same movements in time with marching on the spot. Establish marching in a good rhythm and the child should then start the movements, doing movements in time with the left foot hitting the ground. They will find this much more difficult!

If they are really competent, they can try stage 3, which involves doing each movement in time with every footfall (not just the left foot). We have never achieved this yet, so good luck!

Have fun!