



Basic Spaghetti Toes

for **younger** children

A relaxation exercise that uses the concept of uncooked and cooked spaghetti to teach the difference between tension and relaxation. Children learn to relax different parts of their bodies.

Get Ready!

Resources

Audio Track # 1
Cat Relaxation Worksheet
Building Block – Spaghetti Toes + Audio Track #17
Building Block – Spaghetti Toes: Kids in Color

Teaching Point

Present the concept of stress and relaxation by talking about uncooked and cooked spaghetti. When you feel stressed-out your muscles or body often get tense or hard, like stiff, uncooked spaghetti. When you feel relaxed your body feels more like warm, soft, cooked spaghetti.

Other Ideas

- ▶ If possible, distribute a piece of uncooked and cooked spaghetti for each child to explore. You can microwave already cooked spaghetti to make it feel warm.
- ▶ It's also fun to have children pretend to be like hard, uncooked spaghetti. Ask them to tense their muscles, their arms, legs and neck, and to keep holding their muscles tight for 10-20 seconds. Then instruct the children to "let go" – to let all their muscles go soft like cooked spaghetti. This is a great way to help children feel the difference between stress and relaxation and to appreciate how good it feels to be relaxed.

Get Going!

To Begin

Does anyone know what it feels like to be scared or tense or afraid or worried?

Do you know what it feels like to relax?

What's the difference between feeling worried and feeling relaxed?

Activity

- ✓ Before they listen to the audio, ask children to circle or color the cat that they feel like.
- ✓ Listen to the audio.
- ✓ After they've listened, ask children to circle or color the cat that they feel like.

Wrap-up

How did you feel doing Spaghetti Toes?

When could you use Spaghetti Toes?

Homework

Practice Spaghetti Toes on your own, in bed tonight or any time you want to relax. Try using Spaghetti Toes when you find that something is painful or stressful. The more you practice making your muscles go soft, the better you'll get at relaxing when you want to.

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Cat Relaxation Worksheet

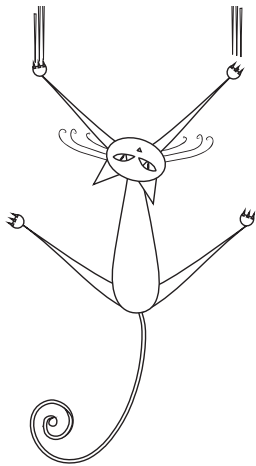
Circle or color the cat you felt like before relaxing and after relaxing.



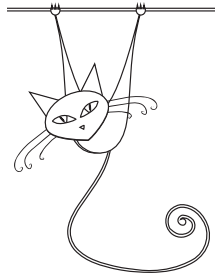
SCALE



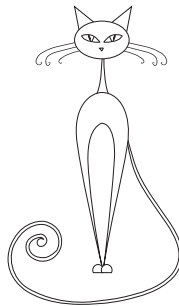
How did you feel **BEFORE** trying to relax?



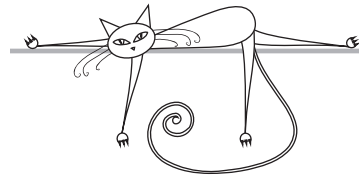
Very Stressed



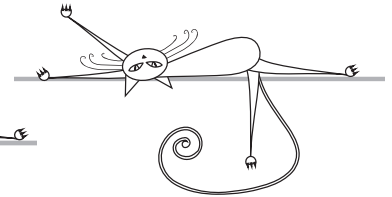
A Little Stressed



In Between

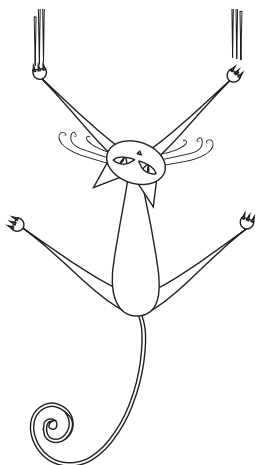


A Little Relaxed

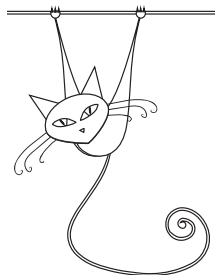


Very Relaxed

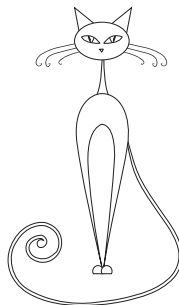
How did you feel **AFTER** trying to relax?



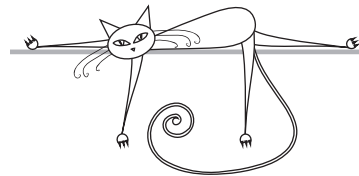
Very Stressed



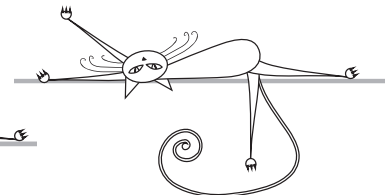
A Little Stressed



In Between



A Little Relaxed



Very Relaxed

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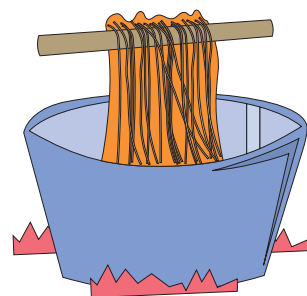
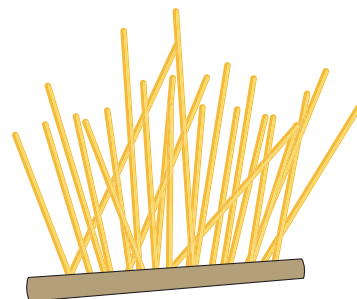


Building Block: Activities for Younger Children

Body Awareness, Relaxation and Stress Management Activities

Spaghetti Toes

There are several skills children require in order to successfully do Spaghetti Toes. Children need to learn the different parts of their body and how to move these body parts (use the Spaghetti Toes: Kids in Color Building Block). They also need to develop an awareness of different feelings. **The following Building Block Activities will help children learn these skills.**



Get Ready!

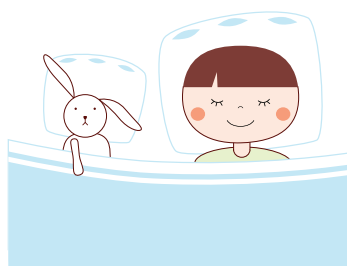
Audio Track # 17
Cooked and Uncooked Spaghetti

Get Set!

A relaxation exercise that uses the concept of uncooked and cooked spaghetti to teach the difference between tension and relaxation. Children learn to relax different parts of their bodies.

Get Going!

- Suggest that children try Spaghetti Toes on their own – when they are in bed and before they go to sleep tonight, if they are bored in the car, when something is making them feel stressed.
- A bowl of cooked and a bundle of raw spaghetti makes a great visual/tactile aid to help the children. Give children a chance to look at and touch raw and cooked spaghetti. Discuss the difference between them. Ask children how their bodies feel when they are stiff like raw spaghetti. Ask them if they can make their bodies (or body parts) stiff like raw spaghetti.
- Ask children to make their bodies soft like cooked spaghetti. When is your body like this? (when you're asleep, at naptime, floating in water, etc.)



Get Talking!

Ask children questions. How did you feel doing Spaghetti Toes?

Can you think of times when you might try to go soft and relax like you did during Spaghetti Toes?

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Building Block: Activities for Younger Children

Body Awareness, Relaxation and Stress Management Activities

Spaghetti Toes:

Kids in Color

Get Ready!

Craft Supplies – paper, chalk, crayons, etc.

Get Set!

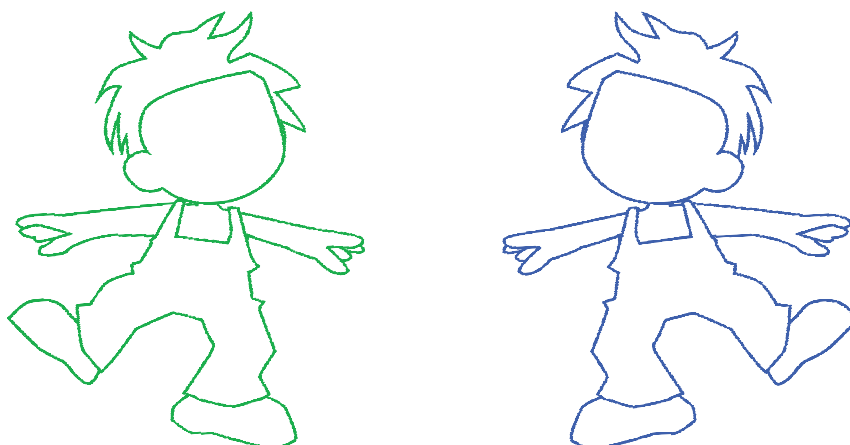
- ▶ Children partner up and trace one another onto a large piece of paper or with chalk onto the playground surface. Depending on the age group that you are working with the leader may wish to trace the children and have them color in or paint the shape.
- ▶ Sing “Head and Shoulders” and “Hokey Pokey” with the children, including the actions.

Get Going!

- ▶ Post everyone's finished product around the room.
- ▶ If doing the exercise on paper have the leader do one of themselves and label the main body part – the arm, the head, etc.
- ▶ Use the leaders outline to play the game “pin the arms on the teacher”. This would be similar to pin the tail on the donkey but the children have to try and pin the arms on the correct spots of the body outline while blindfolded.
- ▶ Ask the children to color or put sparkles and/or stickers on different body parts.

Get Talking!

Talk about the names for different parts of the body to help children become familiar with the words that will be used in the Spaghetti Toes and Jelly Belly activities on the audio.



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