

# Horsin' Around

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## **Purpose**

The intent of this game is for children with Sensory Processing Disorder (SPD) to have a fun and creative way to meet their sensory needs. Occupational therapists may decide, or have the children choose, a stick horse to ride throughout the activities that will best address their sensory needs. The horses have a variety of weights and textures to provide proprioceptive and tactile input. The main activity is a life-size game board that includes 16 interlocking tiles that work as game pieces, in addition to 10 “mini games” that can be adjusted to fit the child’s needs. These games stipulate sensory needs, as well as a variety of performance components listed below. Most games can be played individually or with multiple participants. Games can be set-up in a variety of settings dependent upon space including outpatient, inpatient, and home health. All activities can be played inside or outside and adapted to fit into available space.

## **Materials**

stick horses (varying weights and textures)	
colored paper for printing cards	wrist/ankle weights
laminator for cards	foam horse shoes
interlocking foam tiles	dice
cones	pool noodles



## Choosing a Horse

The stick horses included in this game set vary in weight, size, and texture. When picking one for a child to use, tactile and proprioceptive needs must be assessed. There are three different weights for the horses pictured below; the pink is the lightest, the black is a medium weight, and the wooden one is the heaviest. The more weight a child is given, the more proprioceptive input they will receive. The three horses also have varying textures; the pink is soft and furry, the black is a medium soft and covered with nylon\*\*\*material, and the wooden one is hard and smooth. Also pictured below are wrist/ankle weights. A child may prefer the texture of a lighter horse, but still needs to have proprioceptive input. The weights can be added to the child's wrists or ankles to increase proprioceptive input, and meet their tactile needs as well.





## Performance Components

There are a variety of performance components addressed in the activities listed below. While the games were designed to address sensory components including tactile, vestibular, and proprioception, various other areas of physical, psychosocial, and cognition are involved as well. This is not an exhaustive list of components as the games can be graded and adapted to address other areas of need.

Gait patterns	Sequencing
Level of arousal	Vision
Vestibular	Proprioception
Touch	Pressure discrimination
Spatial relations	Depth perception
Eye-foot coordination	In-hand manipulation
Gross motor movements	Joint mobility
Joint stability	Postural alignment
Coordination	Following directions
Eye-hand coordination	Attention
Social interaction	Role performance
Impulse control	Grip strength

## Instructions for Recreating

- Purchase stick horses of varying weights and textures for the child to hold while participating in activities. These can be found at Walmart, Toys R Us, Target, and online websites such as Amazon. Prices range from \$8-20 depending on the size, weight, and quality.
- The colored foam tiles can be purchased online from Walmart, Toys R Us, Amazon, etc. The average price is 4 tiles for \$15-25 or 8 tiles for \$35-50. I purchased 16 tiles from Amazon for \$40. These can also be purchased in bulk from online tile websites depending on need. The interlocking tiles can be arranged in various formats depending on number of players and desired function.
- Playing cards were typed on a word document, printed on color paper to match the tiles, and laminated for durability.
- The last component of the large game is dice. These can be purchased online for a few dollars or taken from old games. A wooden block could also be numbered for customization of numbers or colors.
- For the mini game “Barrel Racing” use sports cones to set up as “barrels” to race around. Cones can be purchased at sporting goods stores or Walmart for \$8-20 dollars depending on size and amount.
- The yoga mini game uses laminated cards of one color.
- Tape of varying colors and sizes can be used for the horse jumping mini game. Prices range from \$2-10 and can be purchased from grocery, hardware, and arts & crafts stores, or online.
- Use pool noodles or other soft, bendable items for the mini game of jousting. Pool noodles range in price from \$5-15 and can be purchased from Walmart, Target, Online, pool stores, etc.

- For the mini game of horseshoes, it is suggested to use foam horseshoes which can be purchased from Walmart or online for around \$15. Games such as ring toss could also be used.
- The obstacle course mini game can incorporate items found around the therapy gym, or combine items from the mini games including tape, cones, colored tiles, etc.
- Items for the treasure hunt can vary. Horse related items such as apples, hay, brush, reigns, etc. are one option, but everyday items can be used as well. A list is suggested to help the child remember what they are looking for.

## How to Play

### Full Size Game:

<b>Description</b>	Colored tiles can be interlocked randomly or in a chosen pattern. Cards should be separated into colored stacks. Allow players to pick a horse to ride for the game. Start game by each player rolling the dice. Player with the highest roll goes first. Player 1 will roll the dice again and move the number of spaces rolled. Player will draw a card that corresponds with the color tile they are standing on and do what the card instructs. The player with the second highest roll will take their turn. The game will continue in the same order of players until one reaches the last tile, winning the game.
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<p><b>Materials</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 16 colored tiles</li> <li>• Colored cards to match tiles</li> <li>• Horses</li> <li>• Dice</li> </ul>
<p><b>Grading</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If numbers on the dice are too advanced, a dice with the four colors of tile could be used instead</li> <li>• If the player is unable to read the cards, pictures of the motion could be placed on the card instead of words</li> </ul>
<p><b>Performance Components</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Utilizes <b>vestibular</b> movements through actions on cards</li> <li>• Provides <b>proprioception</b> through actions on cards and weight from horses or wrist/ankle weights</li> <li>• Improves <b>following directions</b> by obeying one and two-step directions for playing game</li> <li>• Works on tactile <b>touch</b> provided by varying textures of horses</li> <li>• Improves <b>grip strength</b> through holding on to the horse throughout the game</li> <li>• <b>Coordination</b> improved by performing movements while holding horse</li> </ul>



**Full-size Game**



## Mini Games:

### Hop Scotch

<b>Description</b>	Colored tiles are interlocked to form a hopscotch pattern, such as the one pictured below. The number of tiles used and the hopscotch patterns can be adjusted. The player(s) can participate with or without a horse. Occupational therapist may lead player in singing “Ole McDonald” as they go through the board if desired.
<b>Materials</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Colored tiles</li><li>• Horses</li></ul>
<b>Grading</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Number of tiles</li><li>• Hopscotch patterns</li></ul>
<b>Performance Components</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Improves <b>coordination</b> by jumping through hopscotch pattern</li><li>• <b>Sequencing</b> is addressed through completing the pattern in the right order</li><li>• <b>Vision</b> is used to see the tiles in the hopscotch pattern</li><li>• <b>Joint mobility</b> is needed to jump through the pattern</li><li>• Addresses <b>eye-foot coordination</b> to correctly step on tiles</li><li>• <b>Proprioception</b> input through jumps on tiles</li></ul>

# Hopscotch



## Don't Touch the Lava

<p><b>Description</b></p>	<p>Colored tiles are spread out at random (not touching). Player may go through the game with or without a horse. Player will just from tile to tile without touching the “lava”, or space between tiles. Suggested to do “follow the leader” for multiple players. May select leader by rolling dice or taking turns.</p>
<p><b>Materials</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Colored tiles</li> <li>• Horses</li> <li>• Dice (optional)</li> </ul>
<p><b>Grading</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of tiles</li> <li>• Distance tiles are from one another</li> </ul>
<p><b>Performance Components</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Depth perception</b> needed to jump to tiles without touching the ground</li> <li>• <b>Vision</b> used to see tiles</li> <li>• <b>Postural alignment</b> needed to jump from tile to tile</li> <li>• <b>Proprioception</b> input from jumping on tiles</li> <li>• <b>Spatial relations</b> improved through seeing the tiles in space</li> <li>• <b>Impulse control</b> addressed by following the leader and planning jumps</li> <li>• <b>Gross motor movements</b> involved through jumping on tiles</li> </ul>

**Don't Touch the Lava**



## Barrel Racing

<p><b>Description</b></p>	<p>Colored tiles are interlocked in either a straight or staggered pattern, such as the ones pictured below. A cone (barrel) is placed at the end of “race track”. Player(s) will stand in front of the first tile. When the OT says “GO”, the player will race down the track, go around the cone, and race back to the start. This game is played with the horse.</p>
<p><b>Materials</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Colored tiles</li> <li>• Horses</li> </ul>
<p><b>Grading</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of tiles</li> <li>• Race track pattern</li> <li>• Style of running- player can run, gallop, speed walk, skip, etc.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Performance Components</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Gait patterns</b> addressed by running with the horse</li> <li>• <b>Level of arousal</b> increased by running with horse and racing when played with others</li> <li>• <b>Following directions</b> by obeying one to two step commands for running around cone and back to start</li> <li>• <b>Social interaction</b> involved when racing against other players</li> <li>• <b>Grip strength</b> improved by holding onto horse while running</li> </ul>

**Barrel Racing**



## Yoga

<p><b>Description</b></p>	<p>Colored tiles are interlocked to form a game board. To begin, player will roll dice and move the number of spaces rolled. Once on the tile, player will draw from the yoga card stack and do the move on it. Player will hold the pose for 10 seconds. If there are multiplayers, the highest roll will go first and continue in that order until one player reaches the end of the game board.</p>
<p><b>Materials</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Colored tiles</li> <li>• Yoga cards</li> <li>• Dice</li> </ul>
<p><b>Grading</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of tiles</li> <li>• Number of seconds pose is held</li> <li>• Alternate form of dice (colored dice, lower numbers)</li> </ul>
<p><b>Performance Components</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Address <b>postural alignment</b> by positioning in yoga pose</li> <li>• <b>Joint stability</b> needed to maintain yoga pose</li> <li>• Improves <b>attention</b> by focusing on balance and position of body</li> <li>• <b>Impulse control</b> addressed through holding position when wanting to move</li> <li>• <b>Gross motor movements</b> used to perform yoga pose</li> <li>• <b>Pressure discrimination</b> addressed when determining and feeling where body pressure is distributed during pose</li> </ul>



Yoga



## Horse Jumps

<p><b>Description</b></p>	<p>Colored tiles can be interlocked or spread out. Obstacles such as noodles and extra horses can be placed on floor between tiles or directly on the tiles if interlocked. Player(s) will begin at the first tile and gallop until they reach an obstacle. At the obstacle they will leap over it and continue until they have reached the last tile.</p>
<p><b>Materials</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Colored tiles</li> <li>• Horses</li> <li>• Obstacles (noodles, tape, etc.)</li> </ul>
<p><b>Grading</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of tiles</li> <li>• Number of jumps</li> <li>• Width of objects</li> <li>• Height of objects</li> <li>• Style of running- player can run, gallop, speed walk, skip, etc.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Performance Components</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Proprioception</b> input from jumps over tape</li> <li>• <b>Role performance</b> addressed through pretending to be horse</li> <li>• Improves <b>level of arousal</b> by focusing on when to jump and when to keep galloping</li> <li>• Addresses <b>spatial relations</b> through identifying timing of when to jump</li> <li>• <b>Gait patterns</b> addressed with style of running for jumps</li> </ul>

# Horse Jumps



## Horseshoes

<p><b>Description</b></p>	<p>OT will set up distance for the player to stand to throw the horseshoes. To keep score and increase socialization OT or a second player can join. Standard horseshoe rules will be followed to play game. Horseshoe game can be substituted for similar games such as ring toss, corn hole, etc.</p>
<p><b>Materials</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tiles</li> <li>• Horses</li> <li>• Horseshoes</li> </ul>
<p><b>Grading</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Distance of horseshoes</li> <li>• Weight of horseshoes</li> <li>• Number of players</li> </ul>
<p><b>Performance Components</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>In-hand manipulation</b> addressed when preparing horseshoe in hand for throwing</li> <li>• Improved <b>depth perception</b> by trying to get horseshoe around stick</li> <li>• <b>Socialization</b> involved through competing and playing with another person</li> <li>• <b>Spatial relations</b> improved through determining where sticks are in space</li> <li>• <b>Eye-hand coordination</b> addressed through trying to throw horseshoe onto stick</li> </ul>

Horseshoes



## Jousting

<p><b>Description</b></p>	<p>OT will interlock tiles in a straight line and determine the appropriate distance. OT or a second player will line up on the opposite end from player one. Each player will be holding a pool noodle and a horse. Players will “charge” at each other and try to touch the other with their pool noodle.</p>
<p><b>Materials</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Colored tiles</li> <li>• Horses</li> <li>• Pool noodles</li> <li>• 2 or more players</li> </ul>
<p><b>Grading</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of tiles (distance)</li> <li>• Style of running- players can run, gallop, speed walk, skip, etc.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Performance Components</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>In-hand manipulation</b> through holding horse and pool noodle while trying to joust at opponent</li> <li>• <b>Role performance</b> addressed by pretending to be jousting on a horse</li> <li>• <b>Socialization</b> increased through playing with an opponent</li> <li>• <b>Gait patterns</b> addressed by type of running used to joust</li> <li>• <b>Eye-hand coordination</b> improved through aiming at opponent with pool noodle</li> </ul>

Jousting



## Treasure Hunt

<p><b>Description</b></p>	<p>This game can be played with or without the tiles. If the OT would like to draw out a “treasure map” they could do so with the tiles being the path. OT will scatter the “treasure” around the room/gym. Player will ride on horse and search for the items. OT may provide written list, or verbalize the list. Once player finds all of the items the game is over.</p>
<p><b>Materials</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Colored tiles</li> <li>• Horses</li> <li>• “Treasure”</li> </ul>
<p><b>Grading</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• With or without tiles</li> <li>• Number of items to find</li> <li>• With or without list</li> <li>• With or without treasure map</li> <li>• Style of running to find treasure-players can run, gallop, speed walk, skip, etc.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Performance Components</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Attention</b> addressed by knowing what items have been found and are left to find</li> <li>• <b>Socialization</b> involved when working with others to find objects</li> <li>• <b>Following directions</b> by finding all items on the list</li> <li>• <b>Vision</b> used to find items</li> <li>• <b>Level of arousal</b> increased by searching for items, especially with time limit</li> </ul>



Treasure Hunt



## Obstacle Course

<p><b>Description</b></p>	<p>OT will set-up obstacle using items from other games (tape, cones, tiles, etc.) or items in their therapy gym (ball pit, swing, etc). OT will guide player(s) through obstacle course using the tiles to form a path. Player will begin at first tile and continue through obstacle course until it is complete. Obstacle course can be completed with or without horse depending on obstacles.</p>
<p><b>Materials</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Colored tiles</li> <li>• Horses</li> <li>• Obstacles</li> </ul>
<p><b>Grading</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of tiles</li> <li>• Number of obstacles</li> <li>• Difficulty of obstacles</li> </ul>
<p><b>Performance Components</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Sequencing</b> involved to complete obstacle course in the correct order</li> <li>• <b>Gross motor movement</b> needed to complete components of obstacle course</li> <li>• <b>Spatial relations</b> used to determine which obstacle is coming up next</li> <li>• <b>Social interaction</b> involved when completing course with others or playing follow the leader through the course</li> <li>• Improved <b>joint mobility</b> when moving through the obstacle course</li> </ul>

**Obstacle Course**



## Spin and Run

<p><b>Description</b></p>	<p>Colored tiles are interlocked in either a straight or staggered pattern. Player will spin on their horse the allotted amount of spins provided by the OT. When spins are completed, player will run the tiles, go around the cone, and back to the start. For socialization and competition OT can add players and make it a race.</p>
<p><b>Materials</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Colored tiles</li> <li>• Horses</li> <li>• Cones</li> </ul>
<p><b>Grading</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of tiles (distance)</li> <li>• Number of spins</li> <li>• Style of running- player can run, gallop, speed walk, skip, etc.</li> <li>• Number of players (racing)</li> </ul>
<p><b>Performance Components</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Vestibular</b> input provided by spinning in circles and running</li> <li>• <b>Depth perception</b> needed to run around cone and back to start</li> <li>• <b>Spatial relations</b> involved by knowing where cone is in space after spinning and running to it and back</li> <li>• <b>Following directions</b> by spinning the allotted number of times</li> </ul>

**Spin and Run**

