

## Walk Like a Crab (and some other animals too)



photo courtesy of University of Michigan C.S. Mott Children's Hospital

Check out the specimen of the month, a crab, and think about how it moves. Have you ever seen a crab scurry along the beach sand or ocean floor? There are plenty of animal walks to try out that are great for sensory input and practicing gross motor skills. Try walking like a crab and then try out some of these other fun animal walks too!

**Crab Walk** – Tell your child to sit down with their hands by their side and their fingers pointed towards their feet. Tell them to push up on their hands and feet so their body is like a table. Keep hips high to work on strengthening core muscles. If your child is ready for a balance challenge try touching right hand to left foot while in the crab walk position, then switch hands to work on balancing.

**Bear Walk** – Start with a classic! Have your child move around on their hands and feet with the front of their body facing the ground and their bottom up in the air. Engage in conversation as your child walks along. Ask if they are a black bear? A grizzly? Or maybe even a polar bear?

**Elephant Swing** – Get your child to put their arms together in front of their body and then swing from side to side as if their arms are an elephant's trunk.

**Penguin Walk** – Keep arms straight by their side and take short, quick steps. Encourage them to try walking on their heels to waddle like a penguin.

**Tiger Crawl** – Have your child crawl on their arms and knees. Tell them to try to stay as low to the ground as they can, just like a tiger would in the jungle.

**Flamingo Hop** – Ask your child to stand on one foot and do a small jump. When they hop have them switch off which leg is raised to practice balancing.

**Snake Slither** – Lie on stomach and move forward trying not to leave the floor as much as possible, like an army crawl.



**Horse Run** – Galloping is great for gross motor skills. Encourage your child to leap as high as they can with one foot forward. Leg movements need to be coordinated and timed correctly, and acting like horse is a fun way to practice.

**Seal Slide** – Have your child lie on their stomach then push up on hands until their arms are straight. Have them move across the room while dragging their legs.

**Duck Walk** – Squat down and walk around from there. Keep your arms out or bend them to look like wings.

**Turtle Crawl** – Get in a pushup position and move side to side. Don't let feet or hands cross.

**Inchworm Walk** – Tell your child to start standing up then bend to touch their toes. Then have them walk their hands forward as far as they can until they're in a push up position. Stand up and repeat. For an extra challenge, try walking hands back towards feet to stand back up.

**Kangaroo Jump** – Keep legs together and get as low as possible. Jump straight up as high as possible while keeping your legs together.

These activities are great ways to get fidgety kids moving. Have them move forwards, backwards, and side to side just like real life animals do! There are a lot of gross motor skills practiced here, but it is a great chance to work on many areas of development and can help them practice balance and movement.

Use this opportunity to also work on communication skills. Ask about certain sounds like during the snake slither, "What sound does a snake say?" You can also get your little one talking with questions about the animal they are pretending to be. Where do they live? What other animals live there? Do they like hot or cold weather? Do they like the water?



<https://pathways.org/help-your-childs-gross-motor-skills-with-these-animal-walks/>

