



# Understanding our senses

## Proprioception

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"My husband and I used to have a soft bed that would bounce every time he rolled over or moved a leg. I couldn't stand it and would scream at him about an hour into the night. I would wake up every time he moved!"

Susan

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## Daily living and Proprioceptive input

Having a shower, brushing my teeth, getting dressed all involve me needing to understand where my body is and how I use my muscles and joints.

Some people may always seem to slam doors or stomp when they walk. Others may tire easily when using a knife and fork or writing. Other people may clap their hands, break things easily or seem to always be rough.

These are all ways we might be able to recognise someone who has difficulties in organising their Proprioceptive input.

Our Proprioceptive sense is arguably our most important sensory system for our development.

It's an internal sense which receives information from our joints and muscles to tell us where our body is in space.

We use this sense to position ourselves, move and know how much force and pressure we use. We are constantly using this sense - you can feel where your hands are right now without needing to see them. This is based on the understanding and information being received from this part of our body.

Our proprioceptive sense helps us to adjust our we use our muscles and joints - think of a childrens birthday party, there will be drinks in plastic cups on the table. There will probably be one or 2 children who pick up a drink and squeeze it a little too much so some of the drink overflows - this is our proprioceptive sense.

## Key to our development

As a developing child we use our body awareness to help develop.

Imitation - as a baby if I was holding you pulling faces at you, for you to pull those faces back you need to know how to use the joints and muscles on your face to be able to do this.

Construction - if we have a pile of blocks and are going to build a tower we need our proprioceptive input to help us know how to locate the blocks as well as how firmly to hold the block without dropping it or breaking it. I also need to be really aware of where my body is in the space around me so that I can build this tower without knocking it over.

Motor planning - being able to move and manoeuvre throughout a space without bumping into things. Walking through a door way without bumping into the frame - some people may trail their fingers along the wall to help them feel where they are when walking through a corridor.

We need our body awareness for all aspects of our daily living and many daily skills rely on us feeling where our body is.

This information is based on our online training 'Understanding our senses' you can find these online via our website shop.

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