

THE SIMPLEST CALMING SENSORY TRICK: DEEP PRESSURE

Deep pressure has been found to impact the autonomic nervous system (ANS), the part of the nervous system that regulates breathing, heart rate, and many other functions of the body.

There are two divisions of the ANS – the sympathetic and parasympathetic nervous systems (SNS and PSNS). The SNS is commonly characterized by the fight-or-flight response, and is the quick-responding part of the ANS. The PSNS is thought of as a dampening or inhibitory system.

Deep pressure is believed to provide tactile and proprioceptive input to the body that can modulate the activity of the PSNS and SNS, bringing the systems into more of a balanced response and state of arousal. Light touch is often perceived as alerting and even agitating to some people, while deep pressure touch is typically calming and organizing to the sensory systems.

25 Deep Pressure Tools and Activities

- 1 || Weighted blanket
- 2 || Weighted vest
- 3 || Weighted lap pad
- 4 || Compression vest
- 5 || Compression clothing – Socks, pants, shirts
- 6 || Bean bag chairs
- 7 || Cuddle Me Sensory Tunnel
- 8 || Body Sock
- 9 || Cuddle Swing
- 10 || Pressure Foam Roller
- 11 || Cozy Canoe
- 12 || Sensory Sack
- 13 || Weighted Suspenders
- 14 || Stretch-eze
- 15 || Snuggle Sheet
- 16 || Beddy's Bedding
- 17 || Double Squeezer
- 18 || Howdahug Seat
- 19 || Weighted stuffed animals
- 20 || Make "blanket burritos" – roll the child up in a blanket for deep pressure!
- 21 || Couch cushion squishes
- 22 || Massage
- 23 || Squeezes/bear hugs
- 24 || Rolling a therapy ball over the child's body
- 25 || Swimming and water play

Other Tactile and Proprioceptive Calming Ideas

- 1 || Rough and tumble play
- 2 || Squeezing putty
- 3 || Heavy work activities
- 4 || Crashing on a crash pad
- 5 || Rolling on a gym mat