

Joint Laxity

What is joint laxity?

Joint laxity, also known as hyper-mobility (which refers to an increased range of movement), is a condition that results in joints being looser or less stable than usual. This trait can be inherited and affects approximately 5–15% of the general population without being linked to any pathological condition. It is part of who we are!

Joint laxity can present challenges similar to those associated with low muscle tone. For some professions, hypermobility without accompanying pain or difficulties can actually be beneficial, provided the muscles surrounding the joints are strong. Focusing on enhancing muscle strength can improve overall function and help reduce pain or complications later in life.

How can joint laxity impact function?

You may notice the following in students with joint laxity:

- Students may have difficulty with handwriting, including pain, awkward pencil grasp, and struggling to keep up with written work.
- Students may have issues with other fine motor skills development, such as self-care skills.
- Students may experience more incoordination than their peers and fall over more often.
- Students may feel tired after fine and gross motor work.
- Students may experience pain in their muscles and joints.
- Students may experience delayed development of motor skills.
- Students may experience sensory processing issues, such as fear of movement, balance issues, or a reduced sense of body in space



Can joint laxity be changed?

Joint laxity is a static condition. If there is no pain or decreased function, no intervention is needed. If there are concerns try some of the ideas below.

- Watch for hyper extended finger and thumb joints and consider alternative ways to hold school tools
- Strengthen muscles through exercise to protect joints.
- Improve posture, balance, and muscle strength. They can also teach you rehabilitation programs and strengthening exercises.
- Adaptations for school and home and everyday life to reduce prolonged strain joints.
- Pacing: Balance periods of activity with periods of rest.

Info sheets created with ❤️ by occupational therapists for parents and teachers.