

# Prone Exercises: Doctor attributes Superman to Preventing Developmental Delays



Most children will start practicing this move without any help. It's a natural result of tummy time as a baby. The Superman, also known as prone extension, (swimming version shown above incorporating oppositional work) requires the child to lie on their tummy and lift their arms and legs just a few inches off the ground with everything extended out so they look like Superman in flight.

According to **Dr. A Jean Ayers, PhD**, "Prone (lying on the tummy) is the position in which normal infants develop many of the postural and motor responses that lead to standing, walking and other adult sensory-motor activities."

As we know, things don't always develop the way they're supposed to.

When things don't develop properly in the neck muscles and vestibular, or balance system, the Superman exercise becomes a diagnostic tool. Children who struggle in these two areas will be unable or unwilling to perform the Superman (they should be able to hold this position for as long as most adults).

If they can't hold and work in this position, you are likely to see developmental delays and issues with balance, sensory integration, behavioural inhibition, and coordination.

These kids spend a lot of time fidgeting, struggle to sit through a teacher's lecture, show signs of clumsiness, exhibit signs of a Sensory Process Disorder (SPD) and may fall behind in subjects such as reading and writing.

"In the process of motor development, the infant [or child] can be observed to produce specific movements thousands of times. This practice (i.e., repetition) enhances communication between the sensory and motor systems of the body. The more often a motion is produced the easier it becomes to produce and eventually to incorporate with more complex patterns of movement." (Sternat, 2005)