



Humber Sensory Processing Service

Community Services for Children
aged 0-18 years



What is Interoception?

Interoception is our sense that helps us to understand what is going on inside our bodies such as feeling hungry, thirsty, or needing the toilet. For some people this sense might not work as well, making it hard to notice these feelings.

The interoceptive sense is something you can practice and get better at to help you understand your feelings. Some people need to "wake up" their interoceptive sense, and some need to learn to control it. Interoceptive strategies work best when they are used throughout your day.

Yoga

Yoga helps you listen to your body because it uses your whole body and brain. As Yoga is a slow activity, it gives you a chance to pay attention to the present moment and how your body feels. You can find some yoga videos to try at home on YouTube.

Tune in

It can be helpful to pay attention to how your body feels inside during the day. We often forget to "tune in" to our bodies, especially when we're busy with gaming, scrolling through social media, or doing schoolwork.

Have you ever been really focused on your phone or watching TV and when you step away, you suddenly realise you're hungry or need the toilet? Your interoceptive sense might have been telling you this all along, but you weren't listening!

Try setting timers on your phone or writing reminders in your notes app to help you to remember to reconnect with your body. These reminders might help you remember to have a drink, use the toilet, or even notice what emotions you're feeling.



However, "tuning in" to body signals can feel overwhelming when you're feeling emotionally dysregulated.

Body awareness and curiosity

It can be tricky to figure out how your whole body feels, so try focusing on specific body parts. Start with the ones you know best. For example, you might notice when you're hungry, so pay attention to how your tummy feels. Once you feel confident with one body part, you can try others that you're less sure about.

If you're not sure where to start, think about body parts that you can see and touch easily, like your hands or feet. Then, you can think about how parts inside your body, like your heart or tummy, might be feeling.

Body signals and clues

Pay attention to how your body feels when the signals are strong. Like after you've been to the gym or played sport, or after eating a big meal. These moments can help you understand your body signals better because they are so noticeable.

Remember the more you practice to "tune in" the more aware of your body you will become, because your interoceptive sense has developed. The key is to have fun and enjoy the activities – You can do these activities with other people, but remember, we all feel things differently!



Interoception activity cards

Here are some things you do every day that might make you feel something strong in different parts of your body. Paying attention to these feelings can help you understand your body better. These ideas come from Kelly Mahler who specialises in Interoception.

HANDS



Going outside in hot/ cold weather	Eating finger foods	Playing with clay, playdough	Clapping	Playing in snow, rain	Washing hands	Hanging on monkey bars	Climbing on playground equipment
Doing a cartwheel or handstand	Writing name on paper	Typing	Washing dishes	Holding a warm/cold drink	Catching a ball	Carrying a heavy load	Putting on hand lotion

FEET



In the bath/ shower	Walking/ resting feet on carpet	Walking/ resting feet in grass	Walking on a balance beam	Standing on one foot	Kicking a Ball	Jumping on a trampoline	Climbing on playground equipment
Going outside in hot/ cold weather	Relaxing on the couch or chair	Putting on socks/ shoes	Taking off sock/shoes	During a foot tickle	While running or active play	Carrying a heavy load	Putting lotion on feet

MOUTH



Brushing teeth	Taking a sip of ice water	Taking a sip of warm tea	Eating a mint	Gargling with mouthwash	Chewing gum	Blowing bubbles	Blowing up a balloon
Eating a crunchy snack	Eating soup	Eating a chewy snack	Putting on Chapstick	Eating a popsicle	Humming a song	Wiping with napkin	Sucking an ice cube



NOSE



In a movie theater	Making a funny face	While dinner is cooking	Taking deep breath	Watching TV	Breathing in cold air	In hot weather	After running
In a restaurant	Laughing	During an illness	Smelling perfume	Blowing nose	Hanging upside down	In cold weather	Swimming

EYES



Reading a book	Stepping into sunshine	At bedtime/naptime	Wearing sunglasses	Watching a movie	In a crowded place	Underwater swimming	Watching bubbles float
Catching fireflies	Eating soup	When waking up	Looking for cloud animals	Looking at favorite item	In a dark room	In a bright room	Catching a ball

EARS



In a movie theater	During a thunder storm	After a loud sound	Wearing headphones	Watching TV	In a crowded place	Underwater	In the Shower
Someone whispering to me	Listening to rain	Listening to birds	Playing name that sound	Listening to favorite song	In a quiet room	In cold/hot weather	After listening to directions

VOICE



Answering a question	In a movie theater	Singing favorite song	During tickle time	Copying a character's voice	Saying hi to someone far away	Repeating favorite lines from movies	After running
Saying something into a pillow or blanket	In a library	Telling a secret	Right before bed	Saying hi to someone nearby	During mealtime	Singing a favorite song	Playing on playground



SKIN



Hugging a loved one	Taking a shower/bath	After active play/exercise	Going outside in hot/ cold weather	Standing near a fire, heater or fan	Standing in sunshine	Playing in a sensory bin	In freezer section of store
During tickle time	Standing in front of a fan	During/ after Water play	After a cut, scrape, bruise	Putting on lotion	In a warm car	Reaching in refrigerator	Laying under lots of blankets

CHEEKS



Blowing bubbles	Taking a shower/bath	After active play/exercise	Going outside in hot/ cold weather	Standing near a fire or heater	Shaving face	Smiling really big	Sucking on a straw
Holding breath	Standing in front of a fan	Blowing a whistle/instrument	Making silly faces	Putting on face lotion	In a warm car	Chewing or eating	Washing face

HEART



Hugging a loved one	Driving in the car	After active play/exercise	Watching a scary movie	During silly time	Playing on playground	Carrying a heavy load	Climbing steps
During tickle time	Getting a massage	Watching TV	At bedtime	Reading a book	When waking up	During bath time	Laying under lots of blankets



MUSCLES



Hugging a loved one	Taking a shower/bath	After active play/exercise	Going outside in the cold	Stretching	Playing on playground	Carrying a heavy load	Running around
During tickle time	Getting a massage	Watching TV	At bedtime	Reading a book	In a warm car	In the freezer section at store	Laying under lots of blankets

LUNGS



Hugging a loved one	Driving in the car	After active play/exercise	Going outside in the cold	After coughing	Playing on playground	Carrying a heavy load	Breathing with favorite toy on belly
During tickle time	Getting a massage	Watching TV	At bedtime	Reading a book	Blowing a whistle or instrument	Blowing Bubbles	Laying under lots of blankets

BRAIN



Hugging a loved one	Doing homework	After active play/exercise	When swinging/spinning/hanging at playground	During silly time	In a crowded place	In a noisy room	In a quiet place
During favorite activity	During a head massage	Watching TV	At bedtime/wakeup	Reading a book	Doing a handstand/cartwheel	During bath time	Laying under lots of blankets

STOMACH



Laying on stomach	After a meal	At wake up	Swinging at playground	During silly time	During tickle time	Watching a suspenseful video	After running
Before a meal	Going somewhere new	Going down a slide	Wearing a seatbelt	During hiccups	After drinking a few big sips of water	Doing crunches or sit-ups	Going over bumps in the car



BLADDER



Laying on stomach	Before going to the bathroom	At wake up	During a long car ride	While peeing (please respect privacy)	Wearing a seatbelt		
After going to the bathroom	Watching TV	At bedtime	Doing crunches or sit-ups	5 minutes after drinking a few big sips of water	20 minutes after drinking a few big sips of water		

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More activities are available on Kelly Mahler website - <https://www.kelly-mahler.com>

Or on social media:

Search Kelly_Mahler on Instagram, or Facebook.



For more advice and strategies like this, you can visit our website:
sensoryprocessinghub.humber.nhs.uk

Or you can contact us with a question on the email address below:
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