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Interactive Metronome® Program

What is the Interactive Metronome®?

The Interactive Metronome® (IM) is a computer-based training program that provides a systematic method to improve an individual's timing and rhythmicity which are crucial components needed for planning and carrying out a variety of actions and sequences. IM uses sound to help an individual learn how to move with correct timing. During IM the individual listens to the steady metronome beat over headphones and performs arm and leg movement patterns at the same time as each metronome beat sound. Changing auditory guide sounds tell the individual exactly how accurate the rhythmic timing of his or her movements are as they are occurring. The sounds also help the individual recognize when his or her attention is wandering and learn how to get back on task. The individual learns to attend for longer and longer periods of time without interruption. The individual's improved ability to plan and sequence, and maintain focus without interruption makes learning new complex cognitive and physical tasks much easier. Performance of daily occupations such as play, completing schoolwork, and completing self-care tasks rely upon a foundation of organizing and sequencing within the correct context of timing.

Published Research Supports the Benefits of the Interactive Metronome®

A peer-reviewed research study was reported in the March/April 2001 issue of the *American Journal of Occupational Therapy*. In the study, boys with attentional problems who were diagnosed with ADHD and received Interactive Metronome® training showed statistically significant improvements over a group of boys with ADHD receiving a placebo computer based intervention and a control group of boys with ADHD receiving no intervention in the areas of attention, motor control, language processing, and reading, and in their ability to regulate aggression. Another study presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association showed significant improvements for the group who received Interactive Metronome® training in areas of visual motor control and coordination.

Who Might Benefit From the Interactive Metronome®?

IM is an intervention tool that may be considered when there are challenges in the areas of attention, learning, and motor capacities that are impacted by difficulties in timing, rhythmicity, motor planning, and sequencing. Participants need to be developmentally at least 6 years of age, be able to understand basic directions, be able to tolerate wearing headphones and a Velcro trigger on their hand, have fairly good posture, and be able to listen to beeps and respond to them with a simple motor act. Typically the program consists of a total of 15-20 one hour and fifteen minute sessions with sessions occurring three times a week over the course of 5-7 consecutive weeks. Each session has predetermined goals to reach and specific ways to perform the required movements. These goals are a means to an end, with the true goal being a change in the individual's ability to perform daily activities. If you would like to obtain more information about the Interactive Metronome® Program at DTA, please contact Karen Scofield, MS, OTR/L at DTA at 919-465-3966 or email: info@developmentaltherapy.com.