

# Home Tests

## Developed by Dr's. Keith Keen & Susan Walker

[www.retainedneonatalreflexes.com.au/reflexes-explained/](http://www.retainedneonatalreflexes.com.au/reflexes-explained/)

Here is a collection of tests for you to do at home on your children. They are designed to indicate the likelihood of retained neonatal reflexes.

If these reflexes have been retained then the child may be trying to give you warning signs in their everyday activities, these symptoms are listed under each of the specific reflexes.

Look with eyes that see. Keep your eyes open and you'll see so many additional signs of difficulty. And with this understanding you can repeat the task at home so they too can observe the difficulty displayed while performing a seemingly simple task. It can open their eyes to see that the child is not failing to perform due to lack of trying, but due to a lack of communication between brain and body.

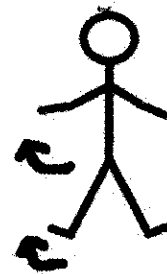
Some *at home* tests can help to discover if the child has retained the impulsive muscle pattern of the reflexes -

### Testing for the Moro Reflex:

(An innate reflex to grasp ... Associated with hypersensitivity reactivity)

- A. Ask the child to walk forwards and backwards with their feet turned outwards (aka duck walk). If you notice any of the following then there is a high chance your child has retained the Moro Reflex:

- they can't turn their feet outward
- bending forward
- arms / hands turning outwards
- an inability to walk smoothly

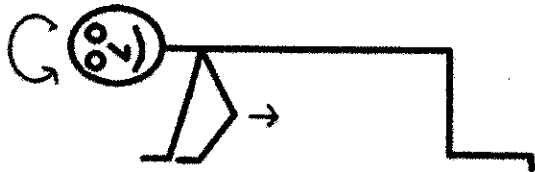


- B. Ask your child to walk forward and backward with their toes pointing in (aka pigeon walk). If you notice any of the following there is high chance your child has retained the Moro reflex.

- they can't turn their feet inward
- bending forward
- arms / hands turning inward
- an inability to walk smoothly



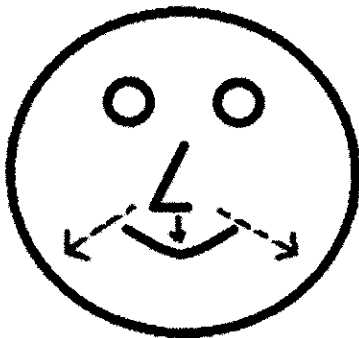
**Testing for the ATNR** (Asymmetrical Tonic Neck Righting Reflex ... Associated with opposing flexion and extension movements when head is rotated)



A. Ask the child to get on all fours with the arms straight, fingers pointing forward and the head in neutral. With their weight over their hands, the parent rotates the child's head left or right. If their elbow bends on the opposite side of head rotation (as would in the infant) OR the weight shifts posteriorly (i.e. off the hands) then the reflex is probably present.

B. Alternatively, have the child standing with arms straight out in front of them at shoulder height. Ask the child to turn their head fully to the left or fully to the right while maintaining the position of the arms out front. If the torso and arms turn in the direction of the head or if the arms drop this reflex is likely present. This signifies that the child has not yet disassociated neck movement from shoulder movement.

**Testing for the Mouth Reflexes**



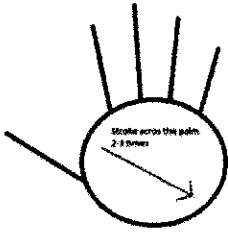
These are the Rooting, Babkin and Juvenile Suck reflexes

Lightly stroke (with a brush or fingertip) from the outer corner of the nose downward beyond the corner of the mouth.

1. Movement of the mouth or turning of the head indicates the rooting reflex.
2. If either hand moves then this indicates the Babkin reflex.
3. If stimulation above the central area above the top lip results in pursing the lips this indicates the suck reflex.

## Testing for Palmar Reflex

(grasping reflex ... Associated with ability to move fingers in fine motor skills)



A. Standing with the feet together, elbows bent and away from body with palms facing upward. Gently stroke along the creases of the palm from between the thumb and index finger toward the heel of the hand. Repeat 2-3 times. If the thumb, fingers or elbows move inward then this reflex is probably present.

B. Keeping the arms straight out in front, ask the child to wriggle all 10 fingers as though they were playing a piano. Watch for excessive wrist flapping being used instead of the smaller muscles of the hand or movement of the tongue and mouth. This reflex, if retained, can contribute to difficulty in writing and increased energy expenditure while writing or performing manual tasks.

## Testing for the Sagittal Tonic Labyrinthine Reflex

(Associated with balance and coordination of extremities)

A. Lying face down on the ground with palms facing down ask the person to hold the head off the ground and raise the legs simultaneously keeping the legs straight (aka the superman).

If they are unable to keep their legs straight then the Sagittal TLR is probably present.

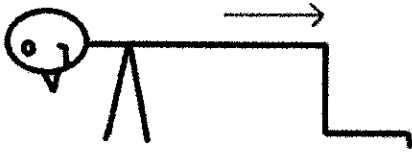


B. This one is great performed with music. Place a like-colored sticker on the right hand and left knee and a different like-colored sticker on the left hand and right knee. Ask the child to march on the spot as they tap their hand to their opposite knee as to match up the stickers. If they turn on the spot, their rhythm is off, or if they begin to tap the same-sided leg, this reflex is likely to be retained. This is a great way to detect gross motor control issues and if the child displays more difficulty when moving to the beat of the music it may signify auditory processing issues.

## Testing for the Galant Reflex

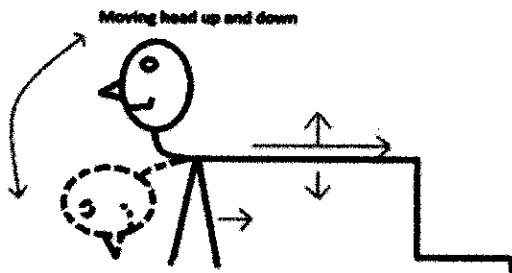
(Associated with movements of the pelvis)

With the person on all fours, lightly stroke down one side of the lumbar spine towards the sacrum (from occiput to sacrum tests for the Perez reflex). If they move their back (typically arching or away from the stroke) then the reflex is probably present.



## Testing for the Tonic Neck Reflex

(TNR ... Associated with motor skills head raising and body movements, essentially for crawling & walking)



With the person on all fours with the weight forward over their hands, the parent flexes the neck fully (looking down) and hold for 5 seconds, then slowly extend the neck (looking up) and hold for 5 seconds. Repeat 3 times. If the child alters their body position in any way then the reflex is probably present.

Look for:

- shifting of weight backward
- arching back
- bending arms

***During ALL these tests it is ok to ask the child to try and hold the desired posture.***

*These tests were modified from 'Attention, Balance and Coordination: the ABC's of learning success' by Sally Goddard Blythe (2009) and 'Primitive Reflex Training; Visual Dynamix' by Lori Moybray (2010) – a great source for corrective exercises targeting the primitive reflexes.*