



DCD JOE

What it's really like to live with Developmental Coordination Disorder

I'm 14 years old, and I was diagnosed with Developmental Coordination Disorder (DCD) when I was 7. People often assume DCD is just about bad handwriting or not being able to kick a ball— I find lots of motor skills tricky and I do fall over a lot, but I'm actually pretty good at kicking a ball! Having a diagnosis and the right support has helped a lot, but living with DCD is still tough. I want to share why.

School

School is hard work. My teachers are supportive and I get some adjustments, but I still worry I'm not good enough. I struggle with planning and organisation and tests make me stressed. I prefer hands-on lessons but that's not always possible. I know I'm bright, but it's not always seen, and that's frustrating.

Using a laptop and extra time helps me because I have a lot of ideas but I can never write them down and my hand and brain get tired easily.

Home

I need a lot of help at home and want to be more independent, but daily life is exhausting. I'm always losing or breaking things, and managing my time is tough. After a busy day at school, I feel overwhelmed and need a lot of rest to cope. It's frustrating when it feels like everyone expects me to keep up.

Packing my school bag the night before, having a routine and having a place for everything really helps me to develop good habits.

Friends

I have some good friends, but being around others can be tiring. I often feel like I need to prove myself, especially in sports or computer games. Because my brain and body don't always match up, I make mistakes and get embarrassed. Explaining DCD is hard, and that just adds to my frustration.

Having a diagnosis helps me realise why I can't easily do all the things that my friends can, but I wish that others had a better understanding of DCD.

Wellbeing

I feel better when I'm active and stick to a good sleep routine, but living with DCD is honestly exhausting. Everything I do feels like a big effort, physically and mentally and I get frustrated when things go wrong. I also compare myself to others, which doesn't feel good.

I hate to admit it, but having an early bed time really helps me to cope better with daily life. I also feel better when I exercise regularly, even if I don't always feel like it.