Today’s piece was prepared by Megan Prior MD, based on a story featured in the New York Times blog, “Well”, entitled “[Fidgeting May Benefit Children with ADHD](http://well.blogs.nytimes.com/2015/06/24/fidgeting-may-benefit-children-with-a-d-h-d/?ref=health&_r=0).”

In her New York Times article, author Gretchen Reynolds describes a newly released [scientific publication](http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/26059476) that associates fidgeting with improved concentration among children diagnosed with ADHD. Reynolds explains that ADHD is characterized by both hyperactivity and impaired attention. Yet, it is difficult to explain how these two symptoms are related. Perhaps hyperactivity is distracting and results in a lack of concentration, or conversely, perhaps hyperactivity is actually an unconscious effort to improve focus. In a study released in June of 2015, researchers at UC Davis tested the latter hypothesis. They monitored the leg movement of 26 children diagnosed with ADHD while they performed the simple yet tedious task of indicating what direction an arrow was pointing. The study revealed that when children with ADHD moved their legs more intensely, they were significantly more likely to indicate the correct arrow direction. Fidgeting did not improve the outcomes of a control group without the disorder. The researchers posit that fidgeting functions similarly to stimulant medications—it improves alertness and therefore attention.

The article ends with the recommendation that children should be allowed to move more freely in settings where they are expected to concentrate. The authors suggest non-disruptive ideas like sitting on exercise balls instead of chairs at school or playing with an elastic band underneath a desk.

Though the article does not mention the limitations of the study (a small sample size and constraint to a laboratory setting), it accurately summarizes the results. More importantly, the article brings to light the important point of reasonably accommodating children with ADHD in academic settings. Clinicians, parents, policy-makers and educators must embrace the multi-faceted approach to helping a child with ADHD and recognize that behavioral, medical and lifestyle interventions can work simultaneously to help a child succeed.

**RESOURCES FOR ADHD:**

[Additude Magazine](http://www.additudemag.com/) A site with many resources on improving the lifestyle of people with ADHD that includes medical information, parenting strategies, webinars and online support groups

[ADHD - A Guide for Families](http://www.aacap.org/AACAP/Families_and_Youth/Resource_Centers/ADHD_Resource_Center/ADHD_A_Guide_for_Families/Home.aspx) An American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry resource with a video that describes the diagnosis and comprehensive treatment of ADHD

[CHADD: South King County chapter](http://www.chadd.net/template.cfm?affid=149&p=about) A Seattle chapter of the national organization that organizes monthly parent support groups and education sessions

And that’s today’s Developmental & Behavioral Pediatrics: IN THE NEWS!