

## Weighted Vest FAQs

[Weighted vests](#) are often recommended for children with autism. Usually weighted vests are recommended by a therapist to help a child focus in the classroom, calm down and sometimes to help with stereotypic behaviors, or "stimming".

### **How much weight should the vest have?**

While there are no studies on how much weight a vest should have, most therapists recommend anywhere from five to ten percent of a person's body weight.

This recommendation is based on studies on maximum weight allowances for backpacks. Too much weight can result in over-stimulation and/or injury.

### **How long should a child with autism wear a weighted vest?**

How much time a child should wear a weighted vest varies. Some therapists recommend as little as fifteen minutes while others encourage wearing them throughout the academic time in class.

The positive benefits of a weighted vest usually happen while the child is wearing the vest. However, in cases where it is calming, often the vest can be taken off and the child will remain calm.

### **Do all children with autism need a weighted vest?**

Not all children with autism need a weighted vest. You should only use a weighted vest with a child when you are attempting to help them focus or calm down. Also, weighted vests do not help all children they can be uncomfortable and distracting for some. Pay attention when introducing a weighted vest, especially if the child has significant communication challenges. Discontinue use if you see no benefit or it causes any distress.

### **Do weighted vests decrease "stimming" or stereotypic behaviors in children with autism?**

There is almost no research on whether or not weighted vests decrease stereotypic behaviors in autistic children. Therapists report observing some children decrease stimming behavior while wearing a vest.

Also, in these cases some therapists recommend alternatives to weighted vests such as weighted blankets, belts, or ankle or wrist weights.

### **What kind of therapy is a weighted vest?**

Weighted vests are a form of treatment generally included under the umbrella of Sensory Integration therapy. Sensory Integration therapy is usually performed by an Occupational Therapist trained in sensory integration. These therapists believe that inattentiveness and stereotypic behaviors are caused by over- or under-sensitivity to sensory input. Wearing a weighted vest provides deep pressure sensory input that helps sensory difficulties.

### **Can I make a weighted vest?**

For those who don't sew, start by shopping at a thrift store or sporting goods store for a small fishing vest. If you sew, you can modify a vest by adding pockets either inside or outside the vest for weights. Next add weight to the pockets with bean bags or modeling clay. Remember to remove the weights before washing. Please remember to consult with a therapist to make sure you add the appropriate amount of weight.

Source: [www.nationalautismresources.com](http://www.nationalautismresources.com)