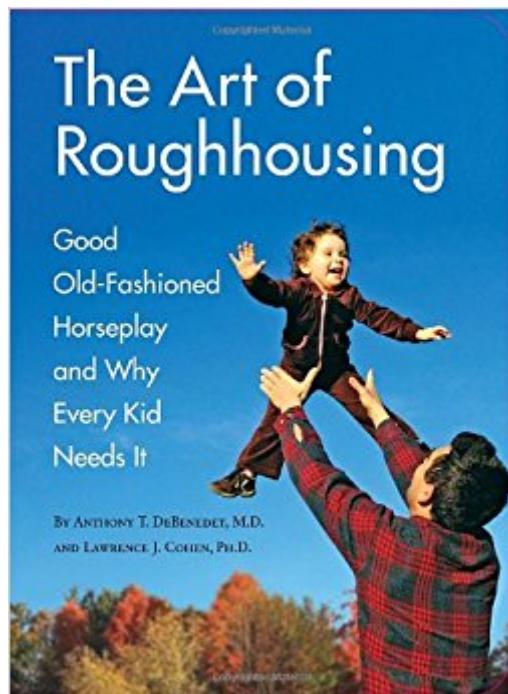


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# The Art Of Roughhousing



## Synopsis

Everywhere you look, physical play—what some might call “roughhousing”—is being marginalized. Gym classes are getting shorter. Recess periods are being eliminated. Some new schools don’t even have playgrounds. Is it any wonder children retreat to “virtual horseplay” via video games? But Drs. Anthony T. DeBenedet and Lawrence J. Cohen are here to shake things up literally! With *The Art of Roughhousing*, they show how rough-and-tumble play can nurture close connections, solve behavior problems, boost confidence, and more. Drawing inspiration from gymnastics, martial arts, ballet, traditional sports, and even animal behavior, the authors present dozens of illustrated activities for children and parents to enjoy together—everything from the “Sumo Dead Lift” to the “Rogue Dumbo.” These delightful games are fun, free, and contain many surprising health benefits for parents. So put down those electronic games and get ready to rumble!

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"Enthusiastically recommended." Starred review --Library Journal "An inspired defense of roughhousing! I guarantee that if you read just a few pages of this book, you'll be down on the floor wrestling and laughing with your children." Michael Thompson, co-author of the national best seller *Raising Cain: Protecting the Emotional Life of Boys* "Two dads offer the perfect antidote to helicopter parenting." Washington Post

Unlike my co-author, Anthony DeBenedet, who grew up in a rough and tumble household, I am a recent convert to roughhousing. My dad was not a wrestler, and neither were my three sisters (or my mom). For me, as a kid, "wrestling" meant getting the crud beaten out of me by bigger, stronger, and meaner boys. So I avoided it when my daughter Emma was little. But parental love is a powerful force, and when I saw how much Emma loved roughhousing, I forced myself to dive in. Soon I was a zealous believer in active physical play, and I started spreading the word. When I became a step-father to Jake, I learned a whole new dimension in roughhousing. So when Anthony contacted me, after he read the chapter on roughhousing in my book *Playful Parenting*, I was eager to write this book with him. Anthony specialized in cool moves and game ideas; I was the "yee-hah, let's have a wild pillow fight" guy. As we researched the book, we were excited, but not surprised, to find so much science backing up our claims for the value of roughhousing. And we were delighted by how much fun we had writing it, especially coming up with names for the moves and games. Happy roughhousing!--Larry Cohen

My 5 year old has benefited already from this book and I only started regularly doing this 2 weeks ago. Just 30mins-hour a day of fun rough play with his Mom has improved his impulse control, taught him that losing is OK, and most importantly has shown him how to hold back in playing so that now he wont hurt his peers in the playground. This has also been the source of many giggles for both of us and is above all a wonderful bonding experience and tension release after a long day at school and work!

Starts out with a well-supported thesis in defense of physical play and then has specific activities for all ages, from toddler through teenager. "Playful Parenting" is a great companion book with its emphasis on building connection through physical and emotional contact.

I bought this for father's day a few months ago, along with "50 Dangerous Things You Should Let Your Kids Do". Our children are twin 5 year olds. My husband loved the book, I think he wanted to be more physical with the kids, but since he took his cues from wimpy little me, he never did. The book empowered him and now he and the kids play these things every day and use the names from the book. Now my kids ask for Daddy as often as they ask for Mommy.

Playing with kids should be easy. I mean, how hard can it be to figure out how to play with your own child right? As a first time parent that hadn't spent much time with little kids this book was AMAZING! We lived in a tiny home and this book gave me so many great ideas for helping my toddler burn off energy on those cold, snowy days. There were enough ideas to let me keep mixing it up. I appreciated the age guidelines so I didn't try something my little boy wasn't ready for. I also helped my old bones out by buying a gymnastics mat for the floor where we played. This is one of my favorite parenting books! My boys love when we roughhouse with them.

I concur with Sandie and Sanjoy. Every father (and perhaps mothers too) need to read this little book, and take its lessons to heart. Put in practice, physical play between parent and child is key to nurturing healthy kids with high emotional intelligence, great social skills, and durable self-esteem. There is an amazing story in the book about a sled dog meeting a polar bear in the Arctic. The dog should have been killed immediately, but he escapes immediate death by assuming a posture that signals "let's play" to the very dangerous bear. Members of the same superfamily (Canoidea), the bear understood the posturing of the sled dog, and played with him for two days (and killed the dog on the third encounter). This suggests that the drive of animals to engage in physical fun (playfulness) runs deep in the genes, deeply innate, deeply inwired. In our age of over-protecting parents (and schools run by lawyers), we suppress this powerful urge that distinguishes old-school "recess" from formal gym time (and structured sports). Has American society so suppressed spontaneous playful social interaction (the authors term "roughhousing") that our nation is socially retarded? I think so. Read DeBenedet and Cohen and see if you agree. If you disagree, write your own book and explain why! I was lucky that I grew up roughhousing with my mates and enjoyed it so much, I naturally did the same with my kids long before I read this book! It was not my dad (a couch potato) but my mom (a jock since she was a teenager) that roughhoused with us three boys, taking us to every beach and cave and hiking path imaginable. So this book should be read by active moms, too. I remember my son's babysitter throwing him up really high in the air like the cover photo on the book, and him laughing and laughing and laughing. I wouldn't call it the "art" of roughhousing. Don't regard it an art, for the cognoscenti--anybody can do it, even a polar bear and a sled dog!

This is a fun book. My husband watches MMA fights & roughhouses with our 2 year old son. While I love that, I kept having this fear of him going to preschool and playing "slap" with an unsuspecting kid. I went searching online for ways to establish boundaries in rough play. That lead me to an an

article on the Art of Manliness with referenced this book. In addition to a very educational & intellectual viewpoint of a primal aspect of us, there are actually diagrams of plays to do with your kids. It's like a playbook! I bought this as a stocking-stuffer for my husband. He loves it

I am an educator and a parent and I appreciate the information on the benefits of brain development, clear comments on how to be responsive to your child and inspiring ideas on how to engage in this play as a parent. Also, my young children (and I) have loved doing more roughhouse play. It has brought us together in a stronger way and has proven to be a pleasant release for my children and myself.

On one hand I'm kind of embarrassed that I own this book - who needs a book that tell you HOW to play with your child? On the other hand I really like having a reference when I'm feeling less than hands-on. In the same way that a few well-placed party questions can keep guests conversing for hours, The Art of Roughhousing give parents tips that will motivate hours of engaging playtime.

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