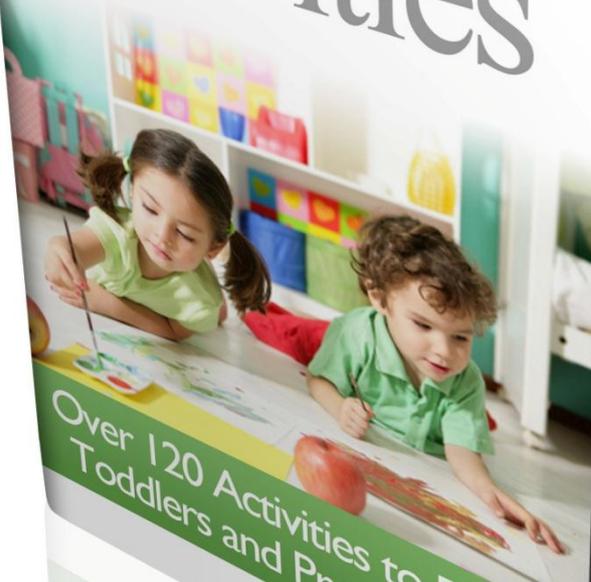


Indoor Toddler  
**Activities**



Over 120 Activities to Enrich  
Toddlers and Preschoolers

Over 120 Activities to Enrich  
Toddlers and Preschoolers

The best thing you can do to help your toddler learn is to spend time with them and encourage them to play in lots of different ways.

It is very important that your child actively plays every day so where possible, head outside and enjoy the fresh air. This is not always possible though for some people who live in city apartments or in times of poor weather. 'Indoor Toddler Activities' are designed to stimulate ideas for parents to encourage creative and brain developing play while indoors.

Many of these activities may appear to be parent directed. Where possible, try to follow your toddler's lead and use the activities to gently guide and inspire your toddler. Parents can begin an idea and stimulate a playful concept and then take a step back and watch their toddler's imagination go wild.

Please always ensure you supervise your toddler and be mindful of the play materials you choose to use. Keep a watchful eye on water activities and small parts to ensure they don't go in mouths or stuck anywhere they're not supposed to go!

'Indoor Toddler Activities' are suggestions only so feel free to adapt them to meet your needs, resources and circumstances.

## **How the 'Indoor Toddler Activities' by Brainy Bambino help**

### **your toddler:**

- Body coordination, posture, flexibility and balance;
- Fun and relaxation;
- Increased self esteem;
- Healthy heart and lungs;
- Learning to play with others and make friends.
- Fine motor coordination
- Encourages creativity
- Artistic techniques
- Language skills
- Rhythm and coordination
- Builds concepts such as texture, volume and size.
- Makes sense of surroundings.
- Helps relax and express feelings.
- Enhances imagination.
- Learns about how people act in different situations.

- Practices dressing themselves, doing up zips and buttons etc.
- Encourages expression of ideas, thoughts and feelings.
- Introduces letters, words and numbers.
- Encourages problem solving.
- Encourages cooperating, waiting turns and learning about rules.
- Develops spatial awareness.
- Encourages the use of social skills.
- Develops independence.
- Increases concentration.
- Increases visual memory.
- Encourages problem-solving skills.

# Active Play

## **Tips on getting started with active play:**

- Focus on activities that are fun;
- Be active yourself;
- Provide lots of opportunities for your child to be active each day;
- Provide a safe and non competitive environment to play;
- Limit TV exposure.

## **Resource suggestions:**

- Rope and chalk.
- Any indoor balancing materials you may have like a balance board, hopping ball, low beam.
- Rope and chalk
- Upbeat music
- Funnels, sieves, plastic water animals, toy watering can, set of measuring cups.

## **Activities for Indoor “Active Play”:**

- ♥ Dance to music with your child.
- ♥ Blow up balloons, chase and kick them around the house with your toddler.
- ♥ Allow your toddler to help around the house where safe.
- ♥ Play “How many different walks can you do?” eg backwards, giant steps, like an elephant.
- ♥ Join three or four large boxes together to create a tunnel for your toddler to crawl through.
- ♥ Play “Freeze” to music.
- ♥ Play musical chairs.
- ♥ Draw a line with chalk along the floor or lie a piece of rope along the floor. Ask your toddler to walk along the line, balancing to not fall off. Vary the type of lines to squiggly, zigzags and circles etc. May vary the walk from tip-toe to all fours, backwards etc.

- ♥ Set up a simple obstacle course around the house where your child may have to crawl through tunnels, climb over small boxes, along a low beam (make sure this is safe!). Put music on and dance around the course too. Your toddler can take teddy and dolls for a lap around the course too.
- ♥ Scrunch up and tape a piece of newspaper into a ball, throw it to each other, catch it or hit it with a bat. Or you could use a soft ball that won't break any windows.
- ♥ Place a hoop on the ground, ask your toddler to jump inside and outside of it. Pretend to be a frog jumping in and out of the pond.
- ♥ Shake a skipping rope on the floor so it moves like a snake. Your toddler can try to jump over the rope without touching it.
- ♥ Demonstrate to your toddler how to imitate moving like an animal. Get them to try hopping like a rabbit, galloping like a horse, slithering like a snake, waving a trunk like an elephant.
- ♥ Play hopscotch, by drawing squares with chalk on the floor.

- ♥ Make up silly walks with your toddler, using different ways to move body parts such as jumping, hopping and skipping, wave your arms, legs and feet.
- ♥ Throw soft balls into a laundry basket.
- ♥ Set up boxes so your toddler can weave in and out of them in different ways.
- ♥ Lay down a mattress or doona for your toddler to roll across.
- ♥ Play hide and seek with your toddler.
- ♥ Have a treasure hunt indoors with your toddler.
- ♥ Play Ring-a-Ring-a-Rosy with your toddler.
- ♥ Play Follow-the-Leader around the house with your toddler or around your obstacle course. Change the type of walk you do.
- ♥ Sit some distance from your child with your legs apart. Roll a ball backwards and forwards to each other.
- ♥ Play tunnel ball with your toddler by rolling a ball through your legs to each other.
- ♥ Roll, kick and throw soft balls that are safe for indoors.

- ♥ Make a box with a target or paint a target on a large piece of paper on the wall. Throw the ball to hit the target.
- ♥ Keep indoor active play simple and in an area of the house where there is some space. Use rolled up newspaper with tape or soft balls to avoid breakages.
- ♥ Supervise your toddler in the bath, play with funnels, sieves, plastic water toys, watering can and measuring cups to transport and pour water. Also kick your legs in the bath to get ready for swimming.
- ♥ Use empty plastic bottles as skittles, show your toddler how to roll a soft ball to knock them over.
- ♥ Walk with a balloon tucked between your toddler's knees.
- ♥ See how high your toddler can jump to touch a balloon hanging from a doorway. Alter to height to keep it challenging.
- ♥ Hang a balloon from a doorway and let your toddler use a plastic bat to practice hitting it.
- ♥ Hit a balloon back and forwards to each other.

# **Words and Music Play**

## **Tips on getting started with words & music play:**

- Collect or make musical instruments eg bottle with rice in it.
- Have story books on hand.
- Have books with songs and rhymes on hand.

## **Resource suggestions:**

- Cd player with varying types of music.
- Nursery rhyme, alphabet and counting song cds
- Musical instruments
- Books – if resources are limited, try borrowing some from your local library.

### **Activities for Indoor “Words & Music Play”:**

- ♥ Read aloud books to your child every day, preferably read three books per day.
- ♥ Sing songs and nursery rhymes to your toddler often.
- ♥ Act out songs and nursery rhymes together, using facial and hand gestures.
- ♥ Dance together and bounce them on your hip.
- ♥ Play musical clapping, stamping and tapping games to music or chants.
- ♥ Find objects to make sounds when banged together eg wooden spoon, saucepans, spoons, household utensils etc.
- ♥ Make a cubby (see pretend play), have a cd player in the cubby and some musical instruments for your toddler to experiment with.
- ♥ Put some books and puzzles in the cubby so your toddler can do some quiet reading and play.

- ♥ Set up a comfortable area in your home where you can look at and read books together or alone.
- ♥ Introduce your toddler to a wide range of books as early as possible including board books, popup books, ones with flaps, ones that make noises, bath books, magazines, story books and word books. Make them fun, relaxing and pressure-free to foster a love of books. Make an effort to read three books a day.
- ♥ Tell your child stories in your own words and play audio books in the car to help your child imagine pictures in their mind.
- ♥ Play some nursery rhyme, alphabet or number cds while your child is playing independently. It can enhance their mood and keep them company if you're a little preoccupied.
- ♥ Use items from the kitchen to experiment with making sound. Your child could use pots, lids, bowls, spoons and boxes to make some music. Show them how beat can be slow, fast, volume can be loud and soft.

- ♥ Make some musical instruments out of empty materials eg construct a trumpet out of a cardboard roll. Blow through it. Make shakers by filling up containers with different materials such as rice, coins, pasta, leaves.
- ♥ Sing songs and use hand actions as often as possible. When you're cooking dinner, or when they're in the bath sing "This is the way we wash your hair, wash your hair, wash your hair. This is the way we wash your hair, on a cold and frosty morning".
- ♥ Line up some plastic animals and sing Old MacDonald Had A Farm. Show your toddler what sound each animal makes, encourage them to join in.

# **Manipulative (or Making) Play**

## **Tips on getting started with manipulative play:**

- Find an indoor area that is practical for “some” mess. If you have hard surfaces that can be mopped it is easier, however if not, lay down some plastic sheets or splat mats to protect your floorings. The bathroom is always a good area for water or messy activities or a veranda.
- Gather rice, water and sand.
- Put together some kits (see resource suggestions below) that you can quickly put your hands on to help you set up and pack up easily.
- Bubbles (a little detergent and water, plus a bubble wand).
- Some messy play smocks or old clothes.
- NEVER leave a toddler unattended with water.

## **Resource suggestions:**

- All sorts of empty packaging such as toilet rolls, cereal boxes and margarine tubs. Try to collect packaging of different shapes, sizes and materials.
- Masking tape and glue sticks
- Pipe cleaners, scraps of wrapping paper, wool, ribbons, paper plates, paper cups, crepe paper and cellophane.
- Hole punch, scissors, stapler and glue (an adult is needed to help with these).
- Textas and crayons
- Templates of creatures so you can quickly draw or cut around them to make desired shapes if time is limited.
- Beads, buttons, pasta and string for threading/weaving.
- Depending on your budget, an art easel is convenient for painting, drawing and for chalk drawing etc.
- Magazines, old greeting cards, old catalogues, photos, posters, foil, coloured paper.

- Foam, felt, feathers, bottle tops, fabric scraps.
- Paints, paint brushes, containers for water, sponges/rollers, smocks, print pads.
- Play-dough, cookie cutters, cling wrap (to keep it fresh), rolling pin.

## **Activities for Indoor “Manipulative Play”:**

***(Hint – Place a plastic sheet or splat mat on the floor to reduce mess and spills)***

- ♥ Put rice in a tray and practice writing letters, numbers and drawing shapes.
- ♥ Finger paint. Encourage your toddler to make different patterns with their fingers such as lines and dots.
- ♥ Give your toddler some different materials such as a comb, fork or sticks to make patterns in paint. Experiment with rollers, sponges, an old toothbrush or string.
- ♥ Make symmetrical butterfly patterns by folding a piece of paper in half. Ask your toddler to paint on one side. Close the paper and press together, open out to reveal the butterfly.
- ♥ Materials you can paint with for prints – cut fruit and vegetables so they have a flat surface to press on to paper, objects from around the house such as an old key, peg, buttons, pasta.

- ♥ Make a bubble solution with water and washing detergent.

Make a bubble wand out of pipe cleaners, a funnel or wire coat hanger. Show your toddler how to dip the wand into the solution and blow to create bubbles. Have fun popping the bubbles.

- ♥ You could add sand or salt to change the texture of paint.

- ♥ Make shapes, numbers, letters and creatures with play-dough.

- ♥ Prepare an open sandwich in the shape of a face. Use a round piece of bread with fillings for the eyes, mouth and nose.

- ♥ Make a house with salad ingredients. You could use bread for the house, a triangle of cheese for the roof, tomato circles for windows, a meat square for the door. You could use other fruits and vegetables to make a fence, tree, garden etc.

- ♥ Make a salad person, using ingredients such as hard boiled eggs, meat, cheese, grated carrot, celery etc. Be careful of choking hazards.

- ♥ Use pictures from catalogues or magazines or a collection of photos to create a poster. It could have a theme.

- ♥ Cut out an interesting picture from a magazine, talk about it and write a sentence underneath it to create an interesting story.
- ♥ Get your toddler a scrapbook where they can paste pictures that interest them. They might include pictures from magazines, newspapers, stickers, greeting cards, photos, pamphlets from interesting outings etc. Write descriptive words around the pictures.
- ♥ Have drawing and writing materials such as crayons in an area for easy access where they can sit and draw without interruption. Choose thick, non-toxic materials that are easy to grasp.
- ♥ Create a folder where your toddler can keep their work to admire.
- ♥ Supply different materials such as chalk, textas and crayons to experiment on different materials such as butcher's paper, notepads, cardboard and scrapbooks.

- ♥ Use fabric markers to decorate a T-shirt, library bag or a placemat.
- ♥ Decorate a place-card for the dinner table.
- ♥ Create a birthday card, get well card or greeting card for a friend or relative.
- ♥ Help your toddler find and cut out pictures from magazines. Count how many red things you can find together.
- ♥ Make an alphabet book – cut out letters of the alphabet, let your toddler help glue them, each letter starting with a new page. Peel off and place stickers on the pages eg put a sticker of an elephant on the 'E' page.
- ♥ Punch some holes in a piece of cardboard. Show your toddler how to weave and thread some string through the holes. Can punch holes to create a simple picture or create shapes.
- ♥ Use macaroni and string to make jewellery – necklaces and bracelets. You can dye the macaroni beforehand by putting them into bowls with different coloured food dye.

- ♥ Use smaller beads for threading to promote fine motor skills once your toddler masters bigger items.
- ♥ Thread beads, shells and pasta to make hanging decorations for their room.
- ♥ Make a frame to create hanging mobiles – use materials such as two sticks crossed at the centre, a coat hanger, an old cake cooling rack or some wire made into the shape of a frame. Use some ideas below to make some mobiles:
  - ♥ Make a mobile using the cut-outs from the middle of an egg carton. Allow your toddler to decorate them by drawing on them, sticking materials on them or covering them with foil for sparkle. Thread through the parts to hang from the frame.
  - ♥ Make a family mobile. Cut out old photos, use a hole punch to hang pictures from the frame.
  - ♥ Make a theme mobile. Your toddler can draw pictures of different animals, people or things of interest. Cut them out and hang them on string from the mobile frame. You could also find pictures in magazines and hang them.

- ♥ Allow your child to paint on a large sheet of paper. When it is dry, cut out different shapes and sizes from the painting and hang the pieces from the frame. If you have a new baby in your home, your toddler could create a mobile for their room as a gift or surprise.
- ♥ Make a door hanger for their bedroom, allow them to trace over their name, colour and stick materials to the hanger. Display on their door handle.
- ♥ Make a dolls house or fire engine garage (whatever interests your child) with extra parts to add on like furniture.
- ♥ Make a crown for their head, colour and stick sequins, buttons and glitter over it (whatever your toddler desires).
- ♥ Make a puppet with a paper cup, a toilet roll, paper bag, icy pole stick, paper plate or foam cup.
- ♥ Make a mask from a paper plate.
- ♥ Make glasses out of pipe cleaners.
- ♥ Make a beard out of cotton balls stuck onto some cardboard. Use masking tape to attach it to your child's face.

- ♥ Allow your toddler to make collages with free choice of materials you put out. You may like to spread glue right over the paper so they can glue materials on. Talk to them about their creations, praise efforts.
- ♥ Collect some materials for your toddler to stick into the play dough eg: icy pole sticks, straws and pegs.

# Pretend Play

## **Tips on getting started with pretend play:**

- Put together a dress-up kit (see resource suggestions below) that you can quickly put your hands on to help you set up and pack up easily. Have blankets and sheets on hand.
- Aprons, wooden spoons, plastic tongs, plastic bowls.
- Plastic containers, egg cartons and cereal boxes.

## **Resource suggestions:**

- Dress up clothes such as hats, jewellery, bags, shoes
- Plastic or wooden household items to encourage dramatic play eg toy kitchen and kitchen equipment
- Dolls and soft toys and doll accessories such as cradles, pushers and bottles
- Child sized furniture
- Tea sets, building sets
- Plastic animals and farm sets

- Toys that enhance imagination such as cars, trucks, trains, cash register, handbag, wallet, play money, pretend goods for sale etc

## **Activities for Indoor “Pretend Play”:**

- ♥ Role play people of interest to your toddler.
- ♥ Build a cubby house out of sheets.
- ♥ Act out a story using sock puppets.
- ♥ Create a cubby with ropes and blankets (make sure it is secure so it doesn't fall down over them). Set up cushions, small boxes for tables, put teddies and dolls in there to help promote imaginative play in the cubby.
- ♥ Use a large box such as an empty fridge box. Cut out windows and a door to make a pretend cubby or shop.
- ♥ Prepare food in a picnic basket and set up a picnic with a blanket somewhere in the house, like in the cubby. Listen to some music and chat while having your picnic.
- ♥ Have a pretend teddy bear's picnic and pretend to feed the teddies and dolls.
- ♥ Your child may like to use play dough and implements to pretend to cook with.

- ♥ A pretend kitchen provides opportunities to stimulate play in the kitchen.
- ♥ Child sized clothesline can be lots of fun, pegging small clothes on the line can help develop fine motor skills.
- ♥ Your toddler may enjoy role playing looking after a baby. Give your child a doll or teddy to look after with some equipment such as a bottle, blankets, pusher, bath, rocker.
- ♥ Pretend tools such as drills, lawn mowers and tool stands provide opportunities to role play.
- ♥ Put together a dress up box – you will probably need to help your toddler get dressed. Find clothes where they can choose what to wear plus add bags, belts, hats, jewellery, shoes, scarves etc.
- ♥ You and your toddler can make some props to dress up eg stuff a stocking with newspaper to make a tail, make animal ears with cardboard stuck onto a headband, make a pirate's eye patch using cardboard and elastic etc. The internet provides many free templates for hats and masks.

- ♥ Create a corner in the house for a pretend shop. Make a cash register out of an egg carton. Your toddler can sort the toy money into different compartments. You and your toddler can role play being the customer or the shop keeper, choosing items and paying for them. If you lack time to be a customer, set up the teddies and dolls to play this game with your toddler, they can be the customers.
  
- ♥ Other fun pretend situations you could set up with your toddler and help them create are:
  - Going to hospital – use a cardboard box as an ambulance, dress up as doctors and nurses, use bandages, bandaids and handkerchiefs as slings.
  - A visit to the doctor – resting in the waiting room, taking the temperature and checking ears.
  - Being a hairdresser – use hair ties, brushes, a phone, water spray bottle and towel as a cape.
  - Being a fire fighter – make a fireman’s hat, and box for the fire truck and cardboard pipe as the hose.

- Eating out at a restaurant – have pretend food, waiters and waitresses, customers, tables and chairs, a cash register, a chef.
- Going on a train ride – have boxes as pretend chairs in the train, make tickets for the passengers. Role play the station master and the trains.
- A day at the zoo – use soft toys to pretend to be animals. Make a toy camera and take lots of photos.
- ♥ Help your child set up a farm with blocks as fences and plastic animals. Sing Old MacDonald Had A Farm.

# **Thinking Play**

## **Tips on getting started with thinking play:**

- Blocks and parts that connect together.
- Basic puzzles.
- Card sets such as matching pair sets.

## **Activities for Indoor “Thinking Play”:**

- ♥ Play sorting games with your toddler such as sorting blocks into the same colours or connecting blocks together of the same colour.
- ♥ Play ‘What’s Missing?’ Choose some objects, cover them up with a cloth, take one away. Child has to guess which object is missing.
- ♥ Complete some basic peg puzzles together and move onto some three or four piece puzzles.
- ♥ Sort socks and find matching pairs together.

- ♥ Try to buy or borrow some good quality puzzles. It is best to start with easy ones to build your toddler's confidence and progress to harder ones together.
- ♥ Make your own puzzles. Cut out a picture from a magazine or cut an old photo or a picture your child has drawn. Cut the pieces into 3 or more parts depending on the difficulty you desire.
- ♥ Draw the members of your family together and write the names of each person underneath. Cut out the names and match the name to the correct picture together. Let them glue or sticky tape the name underneath each person or pet.
- ♥ Cut out a range of pictures from catalogues and sort them into different groups eg people, animals, plants food and transport. Talk with your toddler about the different groups and why you have put things into which groups. Ask what else could go in each group, draw pictures of extra pictures.
- ♥ Have a set of blocks available for your toddler to play with regularly. Encourage them to plan something to construct, like

a building or road, or house etc. Ask questions that will help stretch their imagination such as “How will people get into this house?” “How many insects live in this tree you made?”

♥ Along with blocks, introduce some other props to enhance imaginative play eg teddies, farm animals, plastic toys.

♥ Shape sorters encourage problem-solving and spatial awareness. Let your toddler have a go and name the shapes as they put them in.

# **Speech and Language Development**

I have chosen to sneak this section into 'Indoor Toddler Activities' because I feel it goes hand in hand with interaction with your toddler and because it is so crucial to infant brain development. Speech and language development plays a critical role in the future of a child's learning, particularly when learning to read.

## **How to enhance speech and language development:**

### **TALK to your child:**

- Tell them what you're doing while you're doing it.
- Ask your child open ended questions to encourage self expression, such as "Why do you like.....? How come.....? Why do you think.....?"
- Speak to your child how you would like them to talk.
- Show your child that you value what they have done at play time, ask questions such as What have you made? Can you tell me about this?

- Talk about what they are doing during play time, such as “You made the bridge higher so the cars can go underneath, well done! Wow, the blue bridge is so long!”

**LISTEN to your child:**

- Show your child you are interested in what they have to say by maintaining eye contact.
- Allow time for your child to get out what they’re trying to say. Don’t interrupt or attempt to finish what you think they are saying.
- If your child says something incorrectly, wait for them to finish their sentence, then repeat back the sentence using the correct words.

**READ to your child:**

- Possibly one of the most important of ALL activities to do with your child. Reading to your child introduces them to new and more rare words than any every day conversation ever will.

- Let your child often choose books, even if you end up reading the same one five times in one day.
- Play games with picture books and talk about the pictures. Ask, where's the yellow balloon? Get them to point to it, say "Yes, there it is". As they point to objects, say what they are. Discuss characters and parts of the story.
- Have fun while reading together and never attempt to teach your child to read too early. For now, make books a wonderful, relaxing and bonding time for you to enjoy together.
- Although it can be tiring, try to answer all of the "Why" questions as it is how they learn.

At the end of the day, enjoy your children and know that you're doing your very best to help them. Thank you for using this ebook, I hope it helps you have on-hand ideas and activities to stimulate their growing brains.

## **DISCLAIMER AND TERMS OF USE AGREEMENT**

The author and publisher have used their best efforts in preparing this report. The author and publisher make no representation or warranties with respect to the accuracy, applicability, fitness, or completeness of the contents of this report. The information contained in this report is strictly for educational purposes. Therefore, if you wish to apply ideas contained in this report, you are taking full responsibility for your actions.

EVERY EFFORT HAS BEEN MADE TO ACCURATELY REPRESENT THIS PRODUCT AND IT'S POTENTIAL. HOWEVER, THERE IS NO GUARANTEE THAT YOU WILL IMPROVE IN ANY WAY USING THE TECHNIQUES AND IDEAS IN THESE MATERIALS. EXAMPLES IN THESE MATERIALS ARE NOT TO BE INTERPRETED AS A PROMISE OR GUARANTEE OF ANYTHING. SELF-HELP AND IMPROVEMENT POTENTIAL IS ENTIRELY DEPENDENT ON THE PERSON USING OUR PRODUCT, IDEAS AND TECHNIQUES. YOUR LEVEL OF IMPROVEMENT IN ATTAINING THE RESULTS CLAIMED IN OUR MATERIALS DEPENDS ON THE TIME YOU DEVOTE TO THE PROGRAM, IDEAS AND TECHNIQUES MENTIONED, KNOWLEDGE AND VARIOUS SKILLS. SINCE THESE FACTORS DIFFER ACCORDING TO INDIVIDUALS, WE CANNOT GUARANTEE YOUR SUCCESS OR IMPROVEMENT LEVEL. NOR ARE WE RESPONSIBLE FOR ANY OF YOUR ACTIONS.

MANY FACTORS WILL BE IMPORTANT IN DETERMINING YOUR ACTUAL RESULTS AND NO GUARANTEES ARE MADE THAT YOU WILL ACHIEVE RESULTS SIMILAR TO OURS OR ANYBODY ELSE'S, IN FACT NO GUARANTEES ARE MADE THAT YOU WILL ACHIEVE ANY RESULTS FROM OUR IDEAS AND TECHNIQUES IN OUR MATERIAL.

The author and publisher disclaim any warranties (express or implied), merchantability, or fitness for any particular purpose. The author and publisher shall in no event be held liable to any party for any direct, indirect, punitive, special, incidental or other consequential damages arising directly or indirectly from any use of this material, which is provided "as is", and without warranties. As always, the advice of a competent professional should be sought. The author and publisher do not warrant the performance, effectiveness or applicability of any sites listed or linked to in this report. All links are for information purposes only and are not warranted for content, accuracy or any other implied or explicit purpose.