

## Balance

Balance is the ability to maintain the body in a controlled position initially when sitting and performing an activity and later when standing and moving. It is a foundation skill that a person needs in order to perform a more complex task such as football, skipping and dancing.

When introducing balancing activities, the following three points need to be kept in mind so that they are at the child's level (i.e. - not too easy or too hard)

- **BODY POSITION**- A child needs to be able to adjust their balance in many positions, so introduce activities that require the child to balance on all fours, then on their knees, then sitting and then standing. The closer the child is to the ground, the easier it is to balance.
- **WIDTH OF BASE** - The wider the base the easier it is to balance
- **STABILITY OF SURFACE** - a solid surface is easier to sit on than a wobbly surface. Begin an activity on solid ground then gradually begin to use moving surfaces like standing on a small pile of cushions or pillows or a tyre.

### Balance Activities

Any gross motor activities such as swimming, basketball, gymnastics, dance, a martial art, horse riding etc. will help to address balance.

- Follow complex footprint patterns and then when asked to stop; hold the position.
- Walking along a line or beam/raised surface for extra challenge.
- Animal Walks: Elephant walk - bending at waist and hanging arms. Also crab walk, bunny hops, frog jumps, caterpillar crawls, duck waddle, kangaroo jump.
- Musical statues: Players move around to music (i.e. hopping, skipping, jumping, walking on tiptoes, giant steps etc). When music stops players must freeze in whatever position they are in. If a player overbalances, it is his turn to assist adult with the music and spot next player to overbalance.
- Stand on one leg, staring at one static object; counting up to ten. When really good balance is achieved, try counting from ten to twenty with eyes closed and without waving arms and falling over.
- Jumping on the spot with or without support, then jump in and out of circles/hoops or. To make it harder see if your child can jump forward and backwards over a line. Progress to hopping on one foot.

