



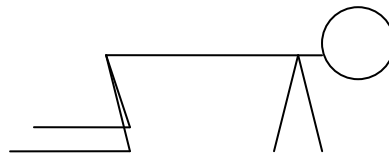
Balance

Some children have an under-developed sense of balance and have problems trying to find their position in space. To keep upright, we make unconscious, physical adaptations, called postural background adjustments. These subtle adjustments allow us to stabilise our bodies, to correct and maintain our balance, and to move easily. Balance is the body's ability to be in readiness to move, or to stay still for tasks requiring manual dexterity.

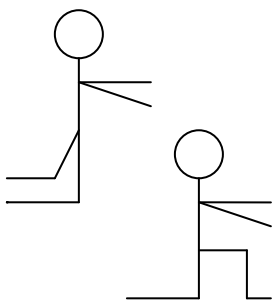
Having adequate muscle strength and joint stability around the hips and shoulder girdle is an important factor for balance skills and to maintain stability for accurate hand function. Difficulties with balance will show in everyday skills such as dressing and feeding, as well as in school, when writing, during PE and in the playground.

The following activities are recommended to develop balance and stability. In addition, look at the everyday activities requiring balance skills and encourage your child to participate in these tasks. Consider how to simplify an activity to ensure your child can achieve and also consider how to make the task a little more challenging.

- 4 Point Kneeling (kneeling on hands and knees) – you can play games in this position, do a jigsaw or read a book. Gradually increase the time as tolerated. To make it more dynamic you can play games such as throwing a bean bag/ball into a box or playing skittles. You can also practise balancing by lifting one arm out straight, or opposite leg and arm out straight.



- High kneeling or half kneeling

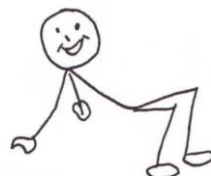


Play a game, jigsaw or read a book in high kneeling position at a low table. Directly face partner, palms together and push each other, trying to remain upright.

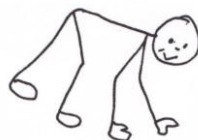
Play "Butterfingers." Throw a ball to each other. If you drop the ball, you have to go on 1 knee (half kneel). If you drop the ball again you have to go on 2 knees (high kneel). This is reversed if you catch the ball.

- Animal Walks

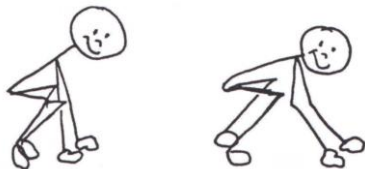
Crab In squatting position, reach backward with the arms and put both hands flat on the floor behind you. Raise up until the head, neck and body are in a straight line. Walk or run in this inverted position.



Monkey Run forward with both hands on the floor and the knees slightly bent.



Bunny Squat low on heels and place hands palm down on floor. Move the hands forward and bring the feet forward between the hands with a little jump.



Duck Bend your knees. Place your hands around your ankles. Walk forward one foot at a time, but remain in the knee-bent position.



- Walking along low brick walls or the curb on a quiet road (with supervision)
- Standing and walking on tip toes
- Yoga or dance lessons
- Riding a bike
- Play ground equipment e.g. climbing frames
- Trampoline
- Playing football
- Playing catch with one foot rested on a box (or a ball to make it harder)
- Time challenges. Time how long your child can balance on one leg without losing their balance
- Simon Says
- Musical Statues
- Gym ball exercises
- Twister
- Wii/console games involving balance and movement
- Hop Scotch
- Skipping
- Balance acts e.g walking with a beanbag on your head or carrying a ball on a spoon
- Jumping e.g star jumps, jumping jacks or scissor jumps

Day-to-day activities:

Many activities at home can challenge and develop balance. The key is to encourage the child to reach out of their base of support or take their weight on one leg. Examples of activities:

- Climbing stairs
- Reaching for objects on shelves, in cupboards
- Dressing (putting shoes/socks/trousers on in standing)