

## What Does Balance Mean for Kids?

Kids need balance to control their bodies and participate in everyday activities such as getting dressed, going to the bathroom, and sitting at a table for meals. Balance is needed to walk across a room, go up and down the stairs, and ride a bike. Without good balance skills, kids may fall over when sitting at their desks in the classroom or trip and fall when running on the outdoor playground.

## 10 Simple Balance Activities for Kids to Practice Throughout the Day

Here are some easy ways to encourage balance practice in children:

- Walk up and down stairs or curbs – each time you take a step you are balancing on one foot.
- Ride a bicycle – this task requires postural control and balance.
- Ride a scooter – obviously three wheeled scooters are easier than two wheeled scooters
- Walk on uneven terrain – walk on grass, rocks, or dirt. Wet, thick, mud is a big challenge. Walk on uneven terrain with no shoes on for a bigger challenge ie sand.
- Play a game of kickball or soccer. You need to stand on one foot to kick the ball.
- Play follow the leader practicing walking fast, slow, backwards, and sideways.
- Pretend to be a tight rope walker – Walk heel to toe along any line, try on your toes or your heels.
- Try putting on your pants in standing – this is a real balance challenge to stand on one foot while putting the other leg in pants. Want to make it harder? Try putting socks on in standing without falling.
- Walk along curbs or balance beams at the park.
- Go on a hike searching out some logs or big rocks to climb.

### Static Balance Games

This is the type balance used when standing still.

- Yoga poses game – strike different yoga poses (i.e. tree pose, airplane pose)
- Freeze Dance – Freeze dance is a fun game that combines music and movement. As preschoolers dance to the music, they must “freeze” in place when the music stops, maintaining their balance in various positions. This game helps develop balance, coordination, and self-regulation skills.
- Bean Bag Balance – Have children place a bean bag on their heads and walk from one point to another without letting the bean bag fall. This activity promotes balance, posture, and focus.
- Stand on one-foot game – see how long they can stand on one foot without holding onto a wall

### Dynamic Balance Games

This is the type of balance used when the body is moving.

- Hopsotch – Hopsotch is a classic playground game that challenges preschoolers to jump and balance on one foot.
- Wheelbarrow Walking – This partner activity involves one child holding another child's legs while the latter walks on their hands. Wheelbarrow walking strengthens arm muscles, improves coordination, and enhances dynamic balance.
- Obstacle Course – Race under, over, and through barriers which can be made simple or challenging using cones, pillows, step stools, or any other objects that encourage children to jump, crawl, and balance.
- Ladder bridge game – prop a ladder with two pillows on each end and try to climb the ladder in the horizontal position from one end to the other
- Balloon volley game – stand on a pillow and try hitting a balloon without letting it fall to the ground while staying on the pillow
- Sidewalk twister game – draw colored circles with chalk on the ground outside to play the game
- Stepping stones game – use any type of larger foam cutout shapes in a path to walk, jump, or hop on

### Playground Exploration

Take advantage of your local playground to encourage balance activities. Children can practice balance by walking across balance beams, climbing ladders, or using swings to develop core strength and stability.

### Bike Riding

Bike riding is an excellent outdoor activity for promoting balance, endurance, and muscle strength. Start with a balance bike or a tricycle to help preschoolers develop the necessary skills before transitioning to a two-wheeler.