



BALANCE SKILLS

Balance is the ability to maintain a controlled body position. It is needed during static (still) tasks e.g. sitting or standing and dynamic (moving) tasks e.g. running, jumping, riding a bike, stepping over an obstacle, pulling pants on when dressing etc. It's a complex task that builds on many skills such as body awareness, movement awareness, muscle strength & stability, postural control, sensory processing skills, attention...to name a few.

Some people will have difficulties with balance which may benefit from ongoing activities to improve skills. Adaptations to activities to help with safety and participation may also be required.



Activities to work on balance skills

Many netball drills and activities already have a balance component, however some other activities that focus more specifically on balance (to use in your warmup or an activity between netball drills) include:

- walking along a winding chalk or rope path
- Simon Say games e.g. '...stand on one leg', '...sway like a tree', '...stand on your tiptoes and reach up high'
- use footprints/flat markers and lay them on the ground at varying distances apart and varying directions (don't have them in a straight line). Step on the footprints/markers to get to the finish line
- standing and kicking a ball between people
- walking with a beanbag on head (as a relay)
- statues / freeze games (i.e. dance/move with music and then freeze when the music stops)
- obstacle courses with steps, hurdles, balance beams and walking along paths, going under, over and through obstacles (e.g. hoops)
- games involving the transfer of weight side to side, forwards and backwards e.g. reaching to catch a ball, keeping balloons off the ground, popping bubbles. Do this in various positions →

Adapting tasks involving balance

EASIER



HARDER

- Sitting cross-legged on the ground
- Kneeling
- Standing
- Sitting on a wobble cushion or gym ball
- Kneeling on a wobble cushion or balance cushion
- Standing & having to reach out; standing and having to shift weight between feet
- Stepping over low obstacles
- Reaching up going onto tip toes and holding for a couple of seconds
- Stepping over slightly higher obstacles
- Standing on a wobble cushion or balance board
- Jumping up (with two feet) and landing on same spot
- Jumping in a direction (forward → side to side → backwards)
- Balancing on one leg then the other (holding onto something, then not holding on...increasing number of seconds)
- Walking along a line heel to toe
- Standing feet apart with eyes closed
- Standing feet together with eyes closed
- Balance on one leg with eyes closed
- Running, and changing direction

With each of the 'static' positions (sitting, kneeling, standing – including when on the wobble or balance cushion), once balance is improving look to add in a further skills component such as passing a ball between each person, or reaching to catch a ball or hit a balloon or bubble - something to further challenge balance and motor planning as well.