

# Gross Motor Skills - Activities to Promote Balance

## Resources:

Bean bags, carpet squares, hoop, large building blocks, mat, skipping ropes, stepping-stones, tape, wallpaper.

## What to do:

Make a 'corridor' or work space using parallel skipping ropes or tape. Place 2 green cones at the beginning of the corridor. Place 2 red cones at the end. This will give the children a visible clue as to the start and end of the activity.

Demonstrate walking along the floor, through the corridor. At the end, turn around and walk back alongside the corridor. Ask the child to copy your actions.

Wallpaper - roll out a length of wallpaper, as before walk through the corridor. At the end turn around and walk on the floor, back to the start.

Carpet squares - place carpet squares in a line to make a corridor. The squares will provide a corridor slightly higher than the paper.

Beanbags - will provide a different surface and texture.

Progress to making the corridor / walking space using different resources, an increase in height will increase the degree of difficulty. Try using large plastic building blocks, stepping stones or gym mats.

## Extension Activities:

Curved line or 'S' shaped line - can be made using a rope or tape

Walking pattern – from walking forwards progress to walking sideways or backwards.

Stepping stones - could be used in the outdoor learning environment.

Low bench - will provide a higher work space. Initially an adult could hold the child's hand and walk alongside him/her until the child gains confidence.

A *single leg balance* is the foundation towards running, hopping, skipping and jumping.

Free standing then raising a leg to balance can be tricky. Try standing near a wall. Stand 90° to the wall. Stretch out an arm; reach out with one hand spread the fingers against the wall. Now practice lifting a leg. This will help improve muscle strength.

Try placing the raised foot on a small box or tray for a few seconds.



**Ball skills:**

Stand with one leg raised off the floor; use the free foot to move a ball to the left then to the right.

Pass a ball to a partner without moving out of position.

Play a game of throw and catch with a partner.

Touch named body parts with the ball, e.g. head, around the body to the back, under the lifted leg.

Beanbag - place 2 hoops in front of the child. Stand on one leg, pick up a beanbag with the other foot and transfer it from one hoop to another.

Surfaces - can provide a new challenge. Make a corridor using bubble wrap, cushions, material or mats. Try walking with arms folded or arms out.

**Top Tips:**

Children may benefit from watching an adult then copying their actions.

Gestures could compliment verbal instructions.

Start with very low items e.g. floor, wallpaper then progress to higher surfaces, e.g. carpet squares, plastic blocks or bricks, stepping stones.

