

Disclaimer: Activities with children must always be risk assessed, including for allergies or choking. Children must always have adequate supervision. Resources and materials must always be appropriate for children's age and stage of development.

Activity: Brilliant balances

What are vestibular and proprioceptive senses and how can we develop them? The vestibular system monitors position and movement of the head while proprioception tells you where your body is in relation to the world.

Developing these senses help children to gain coordination and balance. This activity will support with developing balance.

Learning aims

- Gross motor skills – developing balance which supports tasks such as kicking a ball, riding a bike, climbing and writing

Resources

- Masking tape, chunky chalks
- Lengths of rope, such as skipping ropes
- Sturdy blocks, wood slices, stepping stones, or similar
- Balance beam (height according to children's skills).



Activity outline

1. As soon as children are confident walkers, they can be encouraged to develop their posture and balance skills. Begin by making a 'walkway' using masking tape or chalk, marking out a short, straight line. Model how to walk along the line and support children to do the same
2. Increase the difficulty by making corners or curves and extending the distance
3. Make long, short, straight and curved walkways using lengths of rope for the children to walk along. Encourage the children to put their arms out to help to balance them while walking
4. When their skills have developed, move onto using a low balance beam, or similar. Support children by holding their hand, then a finger, then just hold your hand nearby, until they are confident to walk along unaided. Encourage children to experiment with different ways of moving which will develop their balance further, such as walking on tiptoes, going sideways or even backwards

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5. Use a range of blocks, stepping stones or other resources which differ in height so that children step up and step down from one to the other. Try jumping from block to block. Try holding a balance on one leg while standing on a block.

Extension ideas

- Use songs with moves which encourage coordination and balance such as One finger, one thumb keep moving or following the moves on a video of the Cha-cha slide dance.

NDNA products to support you with this activity:

- [Physical activity in the early years](#) – online course
- [Child development birth to 5 years](#) – online course