

**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: balancing act

**Balance is the ability to regulate and manage the movements of our bodies. Children gradually gain confidence and mastery over their bodies through exploration, guided practice, and reflection.**

Here are some activity suggestions to help you support the development of children's balancing skills in a fun and active way.

### Learning aims

- Enhance balance, coordination and spatial awareness
- Follow verbal instructions and communicate with others
- Promote confidence and independence as children attempt new challenges and interact with others.



### Resources

- Various objects for balancing such as bean bags, soft balls, cushions, mats, small blocks, logs etc. Include some small items, for example, pebbles, to pick up with toes
- Music (optional).

### Activity outline

- Gather the children and explain the activity in simple terms, emphasising the importance of balance and coordination, such as how these skills help us to put on shoes without falling over, ride our bikes, play football etc.
- **Pebbles:** Scatter some pebbles on a safe surface. Demonstrate picking one up with your toes (you will probably stretch out your arms at the side to help you balance as one of your feet moves to grasp the pebble). Request that the children have a go at picking one up too. You could introduce a container for the children to put their pebbles into with their toes
- **Bean bags:** Children balance the bean bags on different parts of their body while standing still or moving around, e.g. balancing a bag on their head, shoulders or perhaps on their elbows
- **Animal walks:** Mimic the movements of different animals that require balance, such as crab walk, bear walk, kangaroo jumps and flamingo stands (balancing on one leg)

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- **Musical statues:** Play some music and encourage the children to dance freely. Tell them that when the music stops, they must freeze like a statue and hold their balance until the music starts again
- **Yoga:** Introduce some basic yoga poses, such as 'tree' pose or any of the 'warrior' poses. Online you will find lots of ideas and free resources
- **Sensory path:** Use cushions, mats, stepping stones and other textured surfaces and request that children hop, jump, walk along the pathway, stimulating their senses and improving balance
- **Obstacle course:** Set up a simple obstacle course with various challenges, such as walking on a log or beam, crawling through tunnels, balancing on a designated spot, perhaps while holding an item too. The children may have some good suggestions for obstacle course challenges.

### Extension ideas:

- Go on a nature walk balance trail. Encourage the children to identify natural objects along the way, such as rocks and tree stumps, which can be used for balancing.

### NDNA products to support you with this activity:

- Online course - [Physical activity in the early years](#)
- Publication - [Your Essential Guide to Working with Children Under Three](#)