

Balance Drills

1. **Stand with one foot on the ground while the other foot is resting on a stool in front of the other foot.** This is the primary skill in working towards balancing on one foot. If this is too easy, replace the stool with a ball that your child has to rest his or her foot on. Then, progress to just standing on one leg. To make it more challenging play a game (such as catch, zoom ball or balloon tennis) while balancing.
2. **Stand on top of a bosu ball.** A bosu ball is an exercise ball cut in half with a flat plastic surface on the bottom. If your child gets really good at standing on top of the bosu ball, turn it upside down so that the ball is underneath and he or she is standing on the flat side. Once this is mastered, play catch while standing on the bosu ball.
3. **Stand on a balance board.** A balance board is a flat surface made of wood or hard plastic that has a rounded or curved underside. This can be a very challenging activity just to stay upright!
4. **Simply stand on one foot!** Make this into a contest with the whole family and see who can maintain their balance the longest. The person who wins gets to pick a family activity.
5. **Put two lines of tape on the ground and practice walking on a pretend balance beam.** The space between the two pieces of tape could start large (6 inches) and progress to 4 inches apart. If your child steps out of bounds, he or she has to start again. By employing a balance beam that is flush with the ground, this will decrease any possible fear of falling. Once this becomes easier, utilize a real balance beam to work on more challenging balance skills.
6. **Sit on an exercise ball while playing a board game at the table.** Don't let your child put his or her feet on the ground while playing unless they need to make sure they don't fall.
7. **Play hopscotch only while jumping on one foot.** No switching feet is allowed! This makes the game slightly more challenging.
8. **Sit, kneel, or stand on a flat platform swing.** Once your child can simply balance, play catch, zoomball, or balloon volleyball while sitting, kneeling, or standing.
9. **Stand on a trampoline with just one leg on the surface.** To make this even more challenging, invite someone else to walk on the trampoline (or jump) while trying to keep your balance!
10. **Try any of the above activities with your eyes closed.** Balancing with your eyes closed is significantly harder than having your eyes open. Therefore, if your child has mastered all of the above activities, make it one step harder to keep them challenged!

The possibilities are endless! Get creative and make these activities easier or harder depending on your child's progression of skills. By working on balance, your child will learn to use their muscles properly in order to adjust to changes in movement. This will set them up for success in playing games and sports with their peers! As always, ensuring your child's safety during these activities is very important. Utilize pillows, mats, and adult supervision when practicing these activities.