

Static Balance

Static Balance is one of the most fundamental movement skills. It is the body's ability to maintain a stationary position with control while performing a task (e.g., standing in a moving bus, riding on an escalator, or getting dressed). It is also necessary in sporting activities such as catching, bouncing, or two-handed sidearm strike.

To achieve static balance, the body's centre of gravity needs to remain stable within a base of support. A body is more stable when it is supported over a wide base of support with the centre of gravity near to, and/or directly over, the base of support. A narrow base of support and a centre of gravity far from, and/or outside, the base of support creates instability and affects static balance.



Skill Building Activities

“Can you balance (static)...?”

MOVEMENT CONCEPTS

EFFORT AWARENESS

FORCE/EFFORT

- like a dragonfly on a leaf
- like an angry/a frightened statue
- with eyes opened/closed

TIME

- and hold for 10 counts
- on toes for two counts and then on heels for another two counts

FLOW

- while swinging your arms like a helicopter trying to take-off
- and freeze after a fast run-up

SPACE AWARENESS

LOCATION

- with one hand against a wall
- with one foot inside hoop and both palms outside on the floor

DIRECTION/PATHWAYS

- with hands outstretched at the sides
- on one foot for five counts and turn on the spot to face another direction

LEVELS/EXTENSIONS

- on tiptoe like a flamingo with feet together/apart
- at a low level like a snail
- with one foot higher than the hip

RELATIONSHIP AWARENESS

BODY PARTS/PEOPLE

- on three different parts of your body
- with a friend leaning on two different parts of your body
- on your back with feet pointing skywards

OBJECTS

- a folded towel on your head/shoulder/wrist/raised foot
- on a low stool
- on one foot with one hand on a basketball placed on the floor



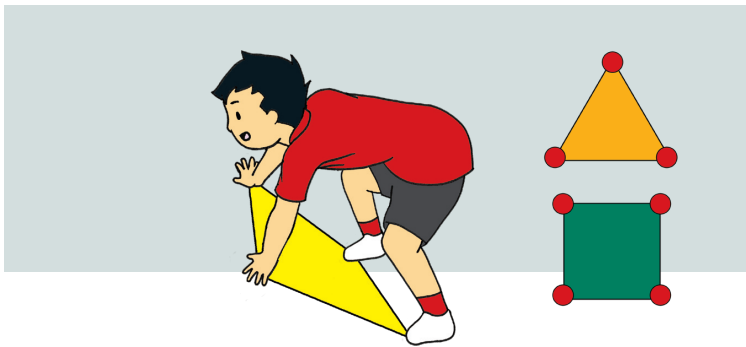
COMBINATIONS (MOVEMENTS WITH EFFORT, SPACE AND RELATIONSHIP AWARENESS)

- with one foot in the hoop and a bean bag on the shoulder. Hold balance and count to five
- jump forward/sideways and freeze into a low/medium/tall statue representing different animals

Let's Play

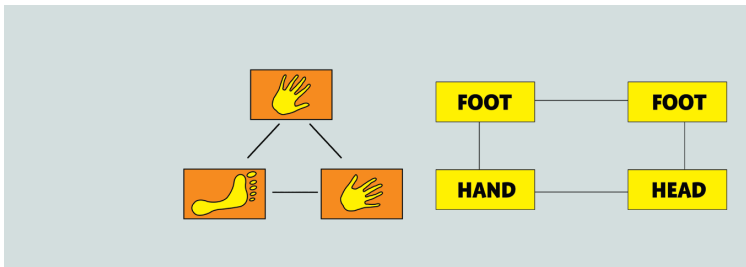
Activities for Skill Development – Static Balance

Activity 1 “Shape Balancer”



- Place different shapes on the floor (cut from colourful non-slip mats or drawn with chalk) and allocate one shape per child.
- Each child to balance different parts of his body on each corner of the shape he is standing on. Hold balance for three counts.
- Encourage children to name the shape they are balancing on.
- Children to try balancing on different shapes.

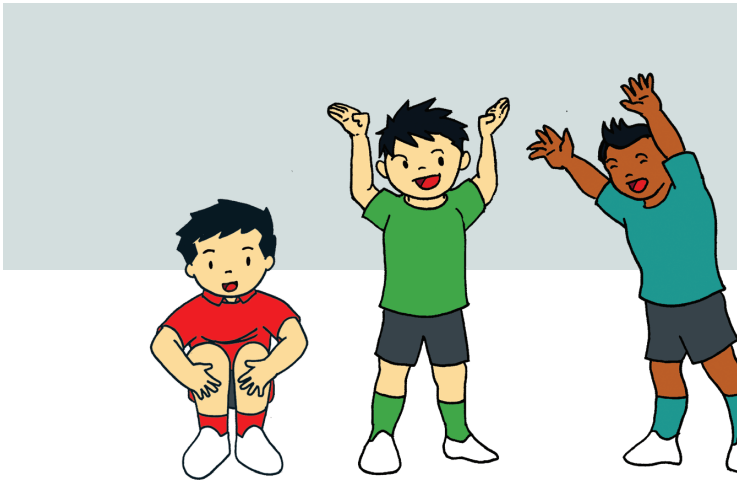
Activity 2 “Staying in Shape”



- Prepare word cards each with different parts of the body written or drawn on (e.g., hand, foot, elbow, buttocks, knee).
- Children to select three or four cards each, and form any shape on the floor with the cards.
- Children to balance specified body parts on the cards. Hold balance for five counts.



Activity 3 “Tree in A Storm”



- Children to imagine they are Seeds (do a tight crouch).
- Give signal for Seeds to grow, gradually sprouting different parts:
 - tree trunk (child stands up slowly)
 - branches (child stretches arms out)
 - leaves (child wiggles or waves fingers)
- Create a story:
 - “The wind is blowing...” (arms start to flap and fingers wriggle more vigorously)
 - “A storm is brewing...” (body sways from side to side and arms continue to flap vigorously)
 - “Leaves are falling...” (hands or fingers wriggle and move downward slowly)
- Remind children that as trees, they must remain rooted (cannot move their feet).

Activity 4 “Flamingoes”



- Children to imagine they are Flamingoes in a park and walking tall.
- On signal “Here come the tourists”, they stop to balance on one foot while smiling for the tourists ‘to take a picture’.
- On signal “Tourists are gone”, Flamingoes unfreeze and resume walking.
- Encourage skill development with progressively challenging conditions:
 - Hold balance longer.
 - Children to balance on different foot alternately.
 - Children to bring non-support leg higher.

Dynamic Balance

Dynamic balance is maintaining balance when the body is moving. It is required in every locomotor activity (e.g., walking, running up stairs, stepping over a small drain) and in play and sporting activities (e.g., dribbling a ball, climbing on playground apparatus, balancing on a beam, fleeing and dodging).

During movement, the child has to manage instability challenges by constantly seeking to balance the centre of gravity over a moving, and usually narrow, base of support. Providing children with different dynamic balance activities will help them develop body movement awareness.



Skill Building Activities

“Can you balance (dynamic)...?”

MOVEMENT CONCEPTS

EFFORT AWARENESS

FORCE/EFFORT

- while doing a logroll flat on the ground/down a slope
- while rocking on your back and rolling over

(Refer to locomotor skill building activities)

TIME

- while crossing the bench/beam slowly using different locomotor movements
- while running and kicking the ball slowly/quickly

FLOW

- while flying like a bee
- while marching like a toy soldier
- on one foot according to a start-stop signal

SPACE AWARENESS

LOCATION

- while skating without colliding into anyone
- while curling over a bar

DIRECTION/PATHWAYS

- while marching
- while jumping backward
- while walking down the slope (may be substituted with all different locomotor movements)

LEVELS/EXTENSIONS

- while doing a forward logroll
- while moving like a caterpillar
- while jumping up and turning in the air

RELATIONSHIP AWARENESS

BODY PARTS/PEOPLE

- while walking towards a friend on a line and crossing each other without stepping out of the line
- while jumping away from your friend

OBJECTS

- while walking and balancing a folded towel on different parts of your body
- on an inclined/raised kerb
- while stepping on bean bags



COMBINATIONS (MOVEMENTS WITH EFFORT, SPACE AND RELATIONSHIP AWARENESS)

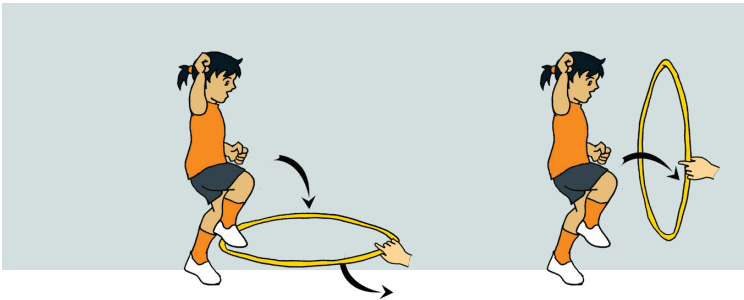
- while leaping over a row of bean bags without colliding into anyone, to land inside the hoop
- while marching slowly across the room like a toy soldier, with a folded towel on your head

(Refer to locomotor skill building activities)

Let's Play

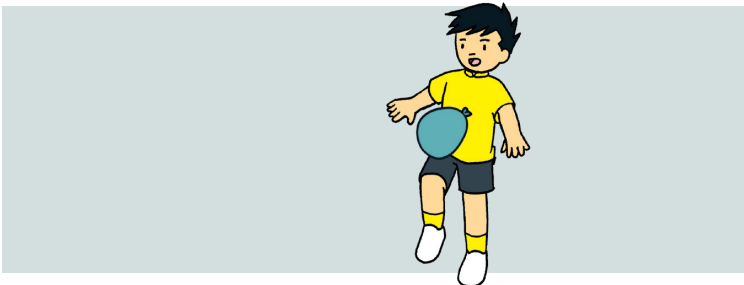
Activities for Skill Development – Dynamic Balance

Activity 1 “Through the Needle’s Eye”



- **Extreme Left:** Hold a hoop just below child’s knee for her to step into without touching it, and then to crawl out from under it. Hoop can be held by an adult or by using two stools.
- **Left:** Hold hoop vertically, just above the ground. Child to step through without touching it.

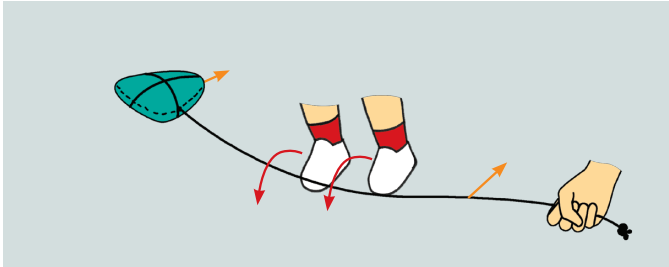
Activity 2 “Keep It Up!”



- Children to keep their balloons in the air with different parts of the body (e.g., hands, knees, head).
- For older children, alternate between upper (e.g., hand, elbow, head, shoulder) and lower body parts (e.g., knee, toes, foot, thigh).
- Balloon should not touch the floor. Watch out for others in the same space.



Activity 3 “Jumping Beans”



- Tie an object (e.g., shoe, bean bag) to a skipping rope. Swing rope to and fro at ground level. You may do this standing or sitting.
- Children to stand in a semi-circle in front of you at a distance that allows you to swing the rope freely without hitting them.
- Children to jump over the rope as it is swung slowly around.

Activity 4 “Crab Chase”



- Children to imagine they are Crabs.
- Demonstrate the crab movement to children: facing upward, lift body and move, balancing on both hands and feet.
- Crabs to imitate the movement.
- Assign an ‘It’ (can be an adult or a child) who has to move likewise to chase and tag the Crabs.
- Crab who is tagged becomes the new ‘It’.



Bending and Curling

Bending over with control is an essential life skill (e.g., bending over to pick up something or to tie shoelaces). A simple forward roll also requires bending and curling of the body. Similarly, many playground apparatus encourage children to bend and curl (e.g., curling around a monkey bar, crawling through tunnels).

For a young child, bending or curling to touch knees or toes while sitting on the ground is a good start to learn the skill. This is because when seated, the child is on a wide base of support and his centre of gravity is near ground level, both prerequisites for maintaining stability. In contrast, bending over from a standing position creates a sense of instability even though young children do enjoy seeing the world 'upside down'.

Bending or curling is a flexibility skill and should be encouraged so that children learn to stabilise their bodies in different positions and levels.



Skill Building Activities

“Can you bend or curl...?”

MOVEMENT CONCEPTS

EFFORT AWARENESS

FORCE/EFFORT

- like a strong stone bridge
- into a small fishball
- and roll like a heavy watermelon

TIME

- and stand up slowly/quickly
- and roll slowly on the mat
- like a tortoise out of its shell according to signal

FLOW

- and swing your arms like the trunk of an elephant
- and walk on all fours, balancing a bean bag on your back

SPACE AWARENESS

LOCATION

- into small snails near the wall
- inside a hoop
- and walk on all fours to end of room

DIRECTION/PATHWAYS

- and roll forward
- and roll to the sides
- and inch forward like a caterpillar

LEVELS/EXTENSIONS

- with hands touching feet
- while keeping the back on the ground
- with one foot higher than the hip

RELATIONSHIP AWARENESS

BODY PARTS/PEOPLE

- with one arm around a leg
- like a bridge for a friend to crawl under
- into a small snail for a friend to skip around/step over

OBJECTS

- around a low bar
- around a basketball
- with hands and feet on the curve of a hoop on the floor



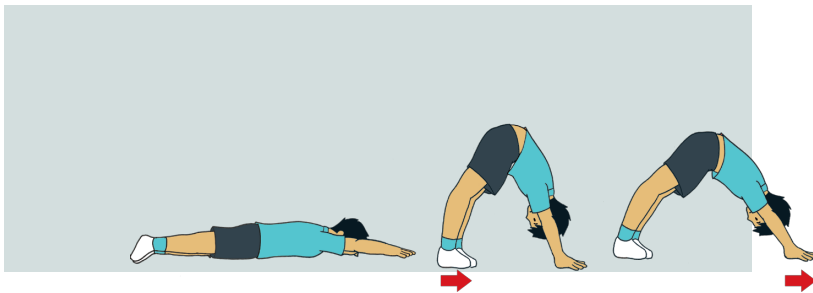
COMBINATIONS (MOVEMENTS WITH EFFORT, SPACE AND RELATIONSHIP AWARENESS)

- like a stone bridge over two lines for your friend to crawl under
- like a small fishball. On signal, stand up and stretch like a star before bending over to touch your knees.

Let's Play

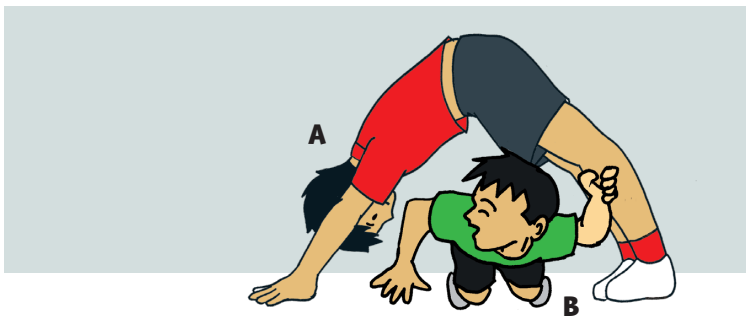
Activities for Skill Development – Bending and Curling

Activity 1 “Caterpillar Walk”



- Children to imagine they are Caterpillars.
- Start flat on ground, facing down position. On signal, feet to ‘walk’ slowly towards hands that are to be kept flat on ground.
- When feet reach close to hands, hands ‘walk’ slowly forward till body is flat again. Repeat.
- Encourage children who have reached the end line to cheer for others.

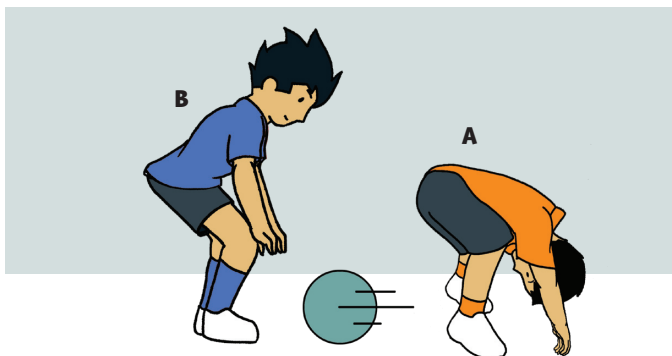
Activity 2 “Water Under the Bridge”



- Pair children up (A and B).
- Child A to form a bridge with his body by placing both hands and feet on floor.
- Child B to crawl under and immediately forms a similar bridge for Child A to crawl under.
- Repeat.



Activity 3 “Through the Tunnel”



- Pair children up (A and B), Child A in front of Child B.
- Child A bends over and pushes ball (or bean bag) to Child B behind. Child A then gets up and turns around to face Child B.
- Child B who has received the ball from Child A, also turns around, so that Child A is now behind him.
- Child B bends over, and pushes ball to Child A.
- Repeat. Count number of passes made when the stop signal is given.

Activity 4 “Foot Crane”



- Pair children up (A and B).
- Child A lies flat on ground or mat, facing up. Child B places bean bag (or soft toy) between Child A's feet.
- Gripping bean bag with his feet and keeping knees straight, Child A lifts feet till bean bag is just above head. He reaches out to retrieve it or if child is able, drop the bean bag behind head.
- Child B's turn to do likewise.



Turning

Turning is a rotational movement around the body's axis. The body can turn around on the spot (e.g., in dancing, around obstacles) or while it is in motion and in mid-air (e.g., gymnastics). Maintaining stability while the body is in mid-air is generally more challenging than turning on the spot.

Many daily activities, games and sports involve turning around the body axis. Turning is easier when the base of support is small and narrow, and more difficult when the base of support is wide.



Skill Building Activities

“Can you turn...?”

MOVEMENT CONCEPTS

EFFORT AWARENESS

FORCE/EFFORT

- like a towel in a washing machine (wash/spin cycle)
- like peanut butter being stirred in a jar
- like a ballerina in a musical box

TIME

- your body in time with slow/fast music
- on the spot with feet crossed
- according to a start-stop signal

FLOW

- in a hoop, lifting left knee to touch right elbow slowly
- and move around the room like a ballerina
- in different directions according to the drumbeat

SPACE AWARENESS

LOCATION

- on the spot without leaving your mat
- and move to another hoop
- and hold body in a twisted shape away from your friends

DIRECTION/PATHWAYS

- with hands and head in same sideways direction
- around with right hand touching left shoulder while left hand reaches skyward

LEVELS/EXTENSIONS

- to the side while seated on the floor
- with back to wall, bend knees and turn to touch wall
- and spin with legs straddled

RELATIONSHIP AWARENESS

BODY PARTS/PEOPLE

- to look behind without moving your feet
- around while holding hands with a friend
- with hands high up like a pair of chopsticks

OBJECTS

- while holding a stick against the ground
- and pass the bean bag to a friend standing behind you



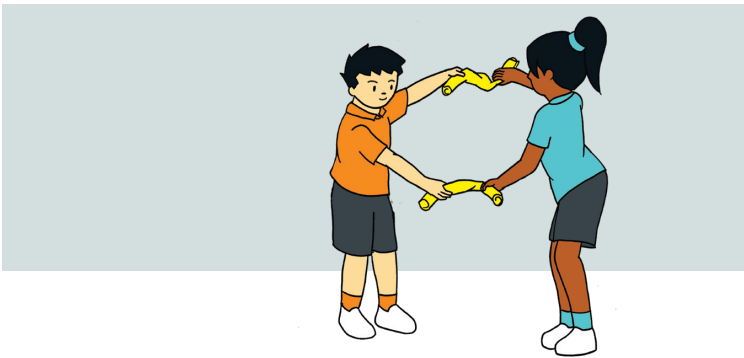
COMBINATIONS (MOVEMENTS WITH EFFORT, SPACE AND RELATIONSHIP AWARENESS)

- like a towel in a machine wash cycle by linking/crossing two or three body parts together without ‘falling out of the machine’ (hoop)
- and twist your body slowly on the spot and freeze when you hear the drumbeat

Let's Play

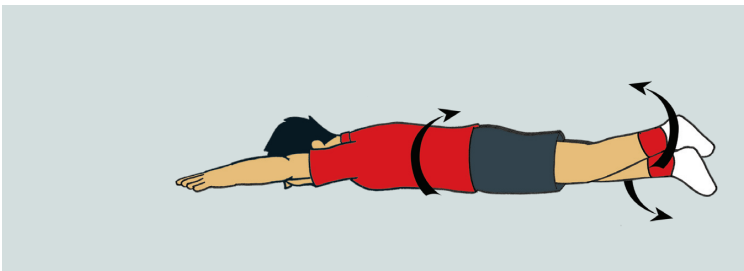
Activities for Skill Development – Turning

Activity 1 “Towel Turners”



- Pair children up (of similar height if possible).
- Facing each other, pair to hold each ends of the towels. Partners to turn slowly inward until they are facing each other again.
- Now, repeat by turning inward in the other direction.
- Children to take turns to give the signal to turn.

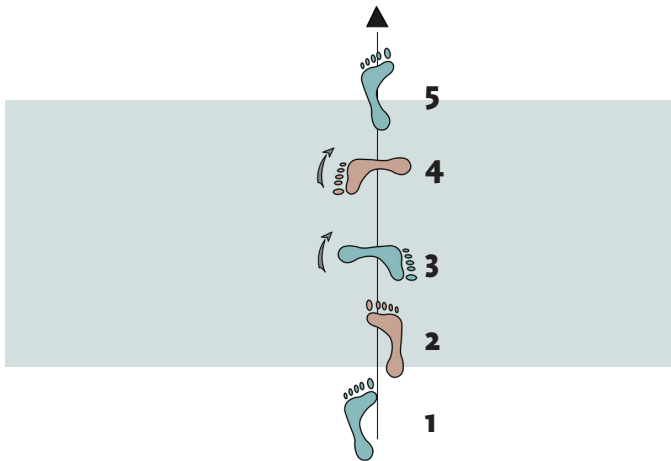
Activity 2 “Logrolls”



- Child lies on mat, fully stretching himself with hands above head and legs crossing each other at ankles.
- Now get child to roll along the mat.
- If assistance is needed, place one hand under child's shoulder and other hand under his waist. Gently roll child along the mat.

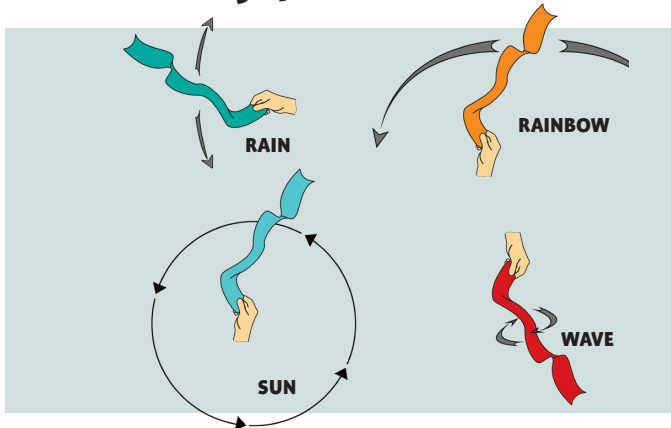


Activity 3 “Tight Rope Dancer”



- Draw or tape a line on the ground. Place a couple of footprint markers as shown.
- Child to walk on the line, turning slowly clockwise with every third and fourth step till end of line.
- Repeat, turning anti-clockwise this time.

Activity 4 “Scarf Dance”



- Each child to be given a scarf.
- Get children to practise the following actions:
 - Rain: Shake scarf in a wiggly movement.
 - Rainbow: Wave scarf left to right overhead.
 - Sun: Draw big circles with scarf.
 - Waves: Shake scarf and turn around on the spot, beginning with scarf at feet level, slowly moving up to waist level.
- Encourage use of alternate hands.
- Create a story and get children to do the relevant actions upon hearing the cue words. For example, “It is raining. Out at sea, the waves are getting bigger and stronger... But wait... the sun is suddenly out, peeping through the clouds... Look, is that a rainbow we see...? Wow, what a beautiful rainbow!”





Twisting

Twisting occurs when different parts of the body cross the mid-line of the body (e.g., reaching backward to retrieve something without moving the feet). This creates stability challenges for the child as the centre of gravity has shifted while the base of support remains unchanged (feet remain stationary).

Twisting activities thrill children as they feel their themselves being 'knotted up'. Twisting activities help children to develop body flexibility as the twisting movements require a range of motion at different body joints.

Skill Building Activities

“Can you twist...?”

MOVEMENT CONCEPTS

EFFORT AWARENESS

FORCE/EFFORT

- your hands around body tightly like an interwoven rope
- to the back without moving your feet as if to lift a heavy box

TIME

- to the beat of slow/fast music
- your hands together and draw circles in front slowly/quickly

FLOW

- to the music while balancing a towel on your shoulders
- your hands and swing them freely as you move around the room

SPACE AWARENESS

LOCATION

- without leaving the hoop/mat
- on the Twister mat according to instructions

DIRECTION/PATHWAYS

- to the left/right/back
- around a horizontal bar
- clockwise/anti-clockwise as if shaking ants off your body

LEVELS/EXTENSIONS

- one leg over another while seated on the floor
- to touch wall with knees bent
- hands high above head and spin in the air

RELATIONSHIP AWARENESS

BODY PARTS/PEOPLE

- with hands together above the head
- one hand across the opposite shoulder to scratch the back
- holding hands with a friend

OBJECTS

- to the right and reach for a bean bag behind you
- around a pole like a snake
- and cross your legs while bending down to pick up a ball



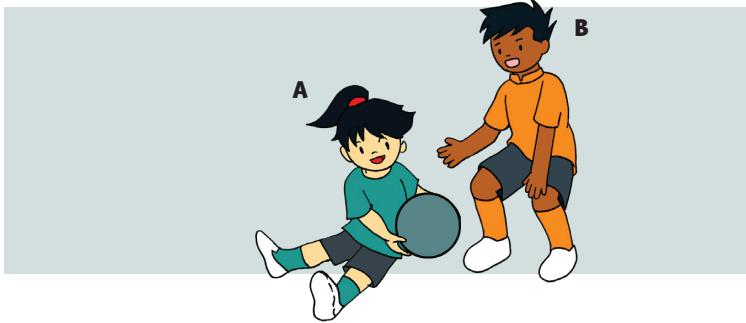
COMBINATIONS (MOVEMENTS WITH EFFORT, SPACE AND RELATIONSHIP AWARENESS)

- to the back without moving your feet, keeping hands together in front
- while lying on the ground with hands and legs entangled, and untangle slowly like an ice block melting gradually

Let's Play

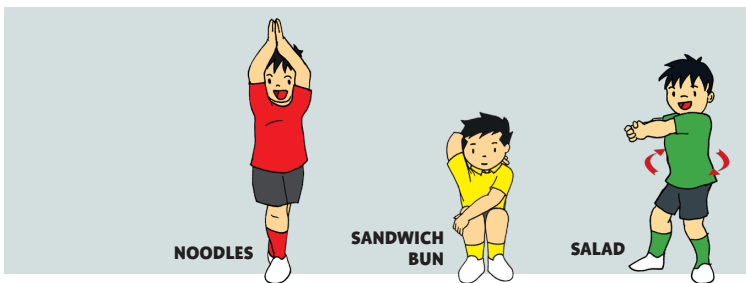
Activities for Skill Development – Twisting

Activity 1 “Twister Ball”



- Pair children up (A and B), Child A is seated and Child B is standing behind with the ball.
- On signal, Child A twists upper body to the right (without moving feet) to collect ball from Child B, then twists to the left to return ball to him.
- Repeat process of getting ball on the right and returning it on the left.
- Introduce different variations:
 - Reverse direction.
 - Children back to back.
 - Alternate between sitting and standing.

Activity 2 “Lunch Menu”



- Children to practise the following actions:

Noodles:	Stand tall, crossing legs and arms. Arms overhead.
Sandwich Bun:	Knees bent, cross one arm over back of head to touch opposite shoulder; other arm cross in front to touch opposite knee.
Salad:	Twisting and rotating around the waist.
- Children to do the respective actions when the respective food items are called out.



Activity 3 “Egg Beater”



- Place a ball or bean bag on the floor between child’s feet.
- On signal, child to move ball in a figure ‘8’ around the feet. Then reverse the direction.
- Ball must maintain contact with the ground at all times.

Activity 4 “Flipping Pratas”



- Child to stretch out flat on ground, face up.
- Keeping both hands and feet on ground, child to push body up.
- Taking one hand off the ground first, she turns body over slowly to face the ground, moving other limbs to balance body as she does so.
- Then she reverses her actions to turn body back to original starting position.



Stretching

Stretching is a fundamental stability skill required in many aspects of daily living as well as in physical activity and sports. Stretching while the body is lower to the ground is usually easier than when the body or its parts are further from the ground or in the air.

Different parts of the body can be stretched separately or together at the same time (e.g., outstretching of the hand and the body to reach for a book from a top shelf). Children should be provided with fun and engaging activities to explore stretching different parts of the body while in static or dynamic balance.



Skill Building Activities

“Can you stretch...?”

MOVEMENT CONCEPTS

EFFORT AWARENESS

FORCE/EFFORT

- and move lightly like a spider on a web
- like a branch being blown by strong wind
- like you are plucking rambutans from a tall tree

TIME

- your limbs in and out of a shell slowly (lying face up)
- hand and foot on same side according to the drumbeat
- hands out quickly and turn on the spot

FLOW

- to push a ‘heavy rock up a hill’
- and swing like a tornado
- like a mosquito stuck on a spider’s web

SPACE AWARENESS

LOCATION

- like a big star standing inside the hoop
- feet in the air without touching anyone
- with one hand and one foot on the ground

DIRECTION/PATHWAYS

- your hands backward
- your feet in opposite directions
- arms from side to side like wipers on a windscreen

LEVELS/EXTENSIONS

- like a starfish on the beach
- and jump up like fireworks
- like a fencer ready to attack

RELATIONSHIP AWARENESS

BODY PARTS/PEOPLE

- like an aeroplane about to take-off
- on the ground like a chopstick for a friend to roll you like a log
- and reach for a ball held high by a friend

OBJECTS

- your legs to straddle a hoop
- and hit soap bubbles
- and mark on the wall with a chalk



COMBINATIONS (MOVEMENTS WITH EFFORT, SPACE AND RELATIONSHIP AWARENESS)

- and move forward/sideways lightly like a starfish with hands and toes on the ground
- your hands and legs in and out according to signals given for fast/light and slow/strong movements

Let's Play

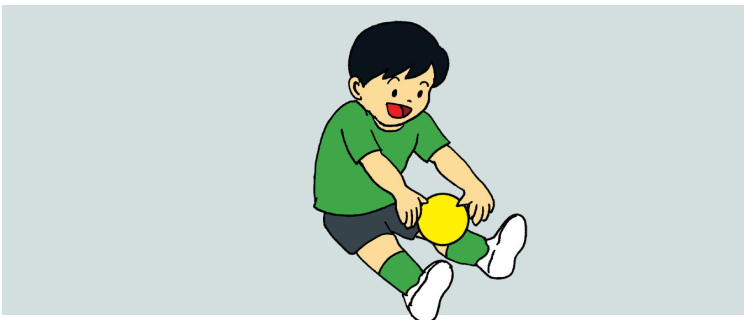
Activities for Skill Development – Stretching

Activity 1 “Snow Angels”



- Begin by showing children pictures of ‘snow angels’ made on snow (easily available on the internet).
- Space children out and get them to sit on ground, feet together fully extended. Then lie down facing up, with arms extended to the sides.
- If possible, sprinkle talcum powder on ground space around each child.
- Keeping arms and legs straight, sweep limbs out to the sides (legs to maximum straddle and hands to touch head) and back to body.
- If talcum powder is used, outline of the ‘angel’ can be seen.

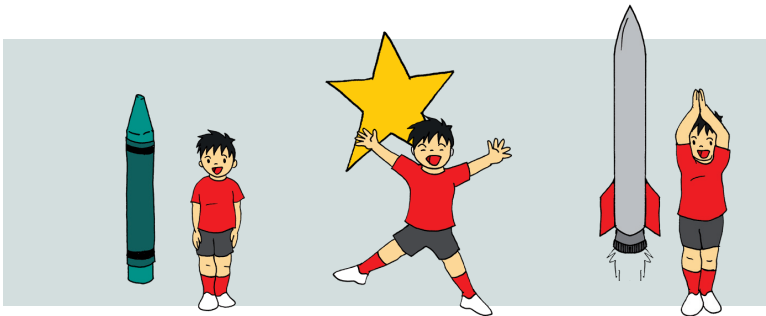
Activity 2 “Around the World”



- Each child to be given a small ball. Younger children may do this activity seated.
- Child to roll ball down along right leg to toes, then back up across chest to left palm (by now stretched outward from body). Then, he rolls ball back along left arm, down chest to left toe and back to chest.
- Next, he raises right hand overhead and rolls ball up along raised right arm and hand. Holding ball with hands overhead, slowly bend over to touch toes with ball.
- Applaud children as their ball has gone around the world – North, South, East and West!



Activity 3 “Jumping Jack/Jane”



- Children to practise the following actions:
 - Crayon: Stand upright with hands by the side.
 - Star: Jump with hands and legs straddled, arms at shoulder level.
 - Rocket: Feet together, lift hands upward with palms together.
- Practise each a few times, then combine all three calls in quick succession and watch the class of Jumping Jacks and Janes!



T ransferring Weight

Transferring weight is fundamental to maintaining stability of the body. The human body is capable of transferring body weight from foot-to-foot, hand-to-hand, foot-to-hand and vice versa. Most of the locomotor and object control movements involve foot-to-foot weight transfer (e.g., walking, jumping, throwing, kicking and dribbling). Foot-to-hand and hand-to-hand weight transfers are most frequently used in playground apparatus (e.g., spider pyramid, monkey bars and climbing frames) and sports (e.g., gymnastics, acrobatics and rock climbing).

It is important to show a child how to transfer body weight safely, for example, by bending knees to absorb body weight upon landing after a jump. Children should also be wearing shoes and exploring on grass or gentler playground surfaces when transferring weight from a high platform to a lower level.



Skill Building Activities

“Can you...?”

MOVEMENT CONCEPTS

EFFORT AWARENESS

FORCE/EFFORT

- walk like a giant with knees raised high outward and body swaying from side to side
- imagine walking in a pool of marshmallows

TIME

- spin on the spot like a washing machine
- walk and hold your leg up for three seconds for every step taken

FLOW

- march like a toy soldier along lines on the floor
- glide alternate feet forward as far as you can
- fly like a little lost bird looking for its mother

SPACE AWARENESS

LOCATION

- place hands on the ground and kick feet to the back
- jump/leap over wide/narrow ‘rivers’ scattered around the room

DIRECTION/PATHWAYS

- travel on heels backward
- travel on toes clockwise/anti-clockwise
- walk down the stairs

LEVELS/EXTENSIONS

- jump like a frog
- rock your body to the left and to the right
- walk along a low/medium height balance beam

RELATIONSHIP AWARENESS

BODY PARTS/PEOPLE

- hold hands with a friend and walk as if your inside legs are glued together
- hop on alternate legs with hand touching raised knee of non-hopping leg
- walk around on your heels

OBJECTS

- reach out to burst all the soap bubbles
- hop from hoop to hoop
- leap over the coloured floor mats/tiles in the playground



COMBINATIONS (MOVEMENTS WITH EFFORT, SPACE AND RELATIONSHIP AWARENESS)

- walk slowly and heavily like a giant along a low balance beam to the end, and jump into a hoop
- place hands on the ground and kick feet to the back and then jump forward like a frog

(Refer to locomotor and object control skill building activities.)

Let's Play

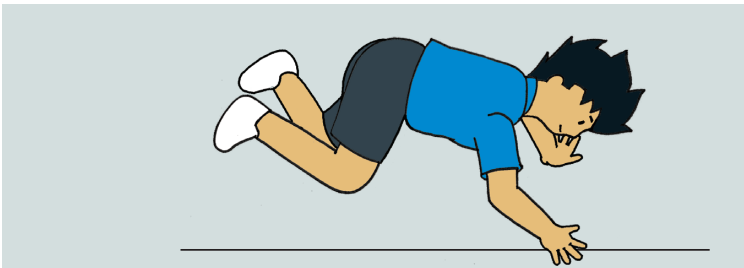
Activities for Skill Development – Transferring Weight

Activity 1 “Follow the GPS”



- Prepare prints for different parts of the body (e.g., footprints, handprints) and place them on the floor. Ensure prints are close together for younger children.
- Child to place respective parts of body onto prints. To move, only one part of the body is allowed to be lifted off ground at one time.
- Encourage child to rearrange prints to create different positions.
- For older children, use word cards marked accordingly (e.g., foot, hand, knee).

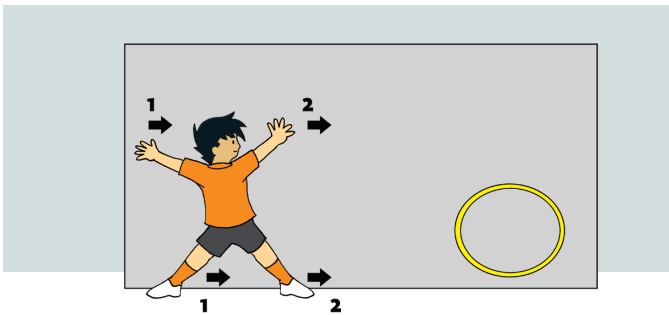
Activity 2 “Frog-Leaping”



- Child to squat with palms flat on ground in front of body. Lifting hands, thrust body forward.
- As hands return to the ground, quickly kick feet upward and forward close to hands.
- Get child to croak like a frog. Also explore leaping further if child is proficient.

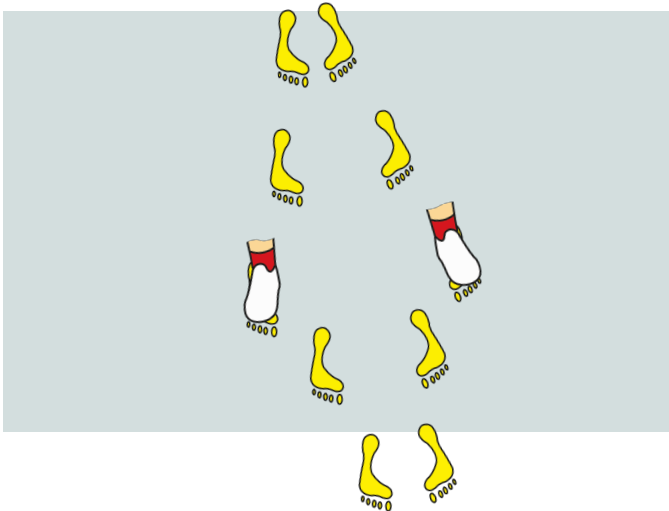


Activity 3 “Spider Walking”



- Child to be on all fours.
- Child lifts body off the ground with both arms and legs. Keeping hands and legs straddled wide, he walks like a spider on the wall.
- If travelling to right, first move left hand and foot at the same time to the right, followed by right hand and foot simultaneously.
- Repeat till he reaches his ‘web’ (hoop) at opposite end.

Activity 4 “Far and Wide”



- Prepare pathway from narrow to wide and back to narrow.
- Child to start at one end, feet together. Jumping up, he lands one foot on each footprint at the same time. Continue till end of pathway.
- At the end of pathway, jump and turn in the air to face footprints again. Repeat.

