

What Are the Educational Applications?

All movements requiring balance-whether static or dynamic, upright or inverted-involve the center of gravity over the base of support. This concept can be illustrated in several ways, such as with pyramid-shaped objects (stable) or inverted pyramid shapes (unstable). Students should understand the principals that determine success in balancing and how some environments can help or hinder their balance when they learn different skills. Students learn several forms of balance, and challenge their skills, as they practice different activities on their balance beam. Below are a few of Rob Causton's lesson ideas.

**Safety precaution: Be sure to use appropriate matting and always keep students close to the ground.*

How Can I Use This Product With My Kids?

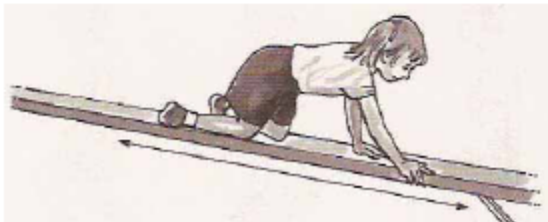
Use your lightweight and safe Kidnastics Balance Beam for a variety of balance, agility, and fitness activities. The activities described below are called *Upright Dynamic Balances*.

*Beginners need not be limited to the balance beam. They can perform the activities using a line on the floor, a rope, a bench, etc. to provide a variety of practice environments before progressing to the beam.

Activity #1-Forward or Backward Walking

Warm-Up-Have students *crawl* forward and backward on their beam.

Use the following cues for getting students started:
"Try a doggie walk!"
"Crawl to the end and touch the end."
"Now crawl backwards."



Crawling Forward and Backward

Performance points to stress to students:

- Eyes should be focused in front.
- Hold beam (or floor) with hands.

Progression: Have students stand up and practice forward and backward walking.

Use the following cues to get them started:
"Let's pretend we are tightrope walkers!"

Performance cues to stress to students:

- Eyes should be focused at the end of the surface.
- Arms should be horizontal and sideways.



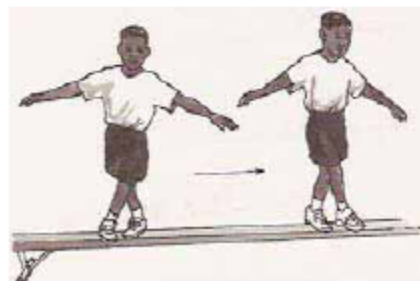
Forward & Backward Walking

Advanced: Have students try crossing over and crossing behind.

Use the following cues to get them started:
"Step over, step behind."
"Grapevine step."

Performance cues to stress to students:

- Eyes should be focused on footwork and direction of travel.
- Arms should be horizontal and to the side.



Cross Over, Cross Behind

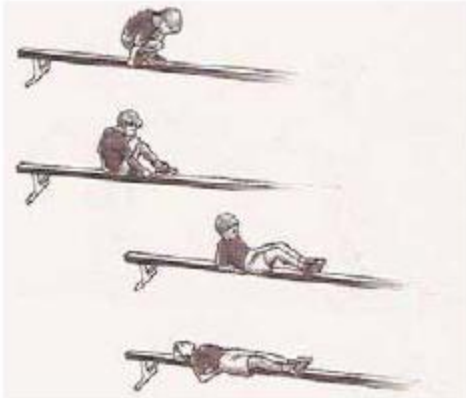
Activity #2-Jumping and Switching Feet

Warm-Up-Have students stand, lie down on the beam (on front, side, or back) and return to stand position.

Use the following cues for getting students started: "Take a nap on the beam...now wake up and go to school!"

Performance cues to stress to students:

- Move slowly.
- Hold beam (or floor) with hands.



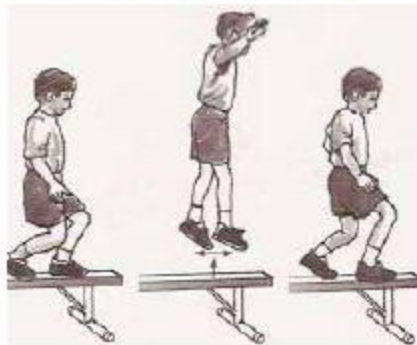
Stand, Lie Down, and Return to Stand

Progression: Have students practice jumping and switching feet.

Use the following cues for getting students started: "Switch and go!"

Performance cues to stress to students:

- Eyes should be focused on the end of the beam.
- Arms should be horizontal and to the side.



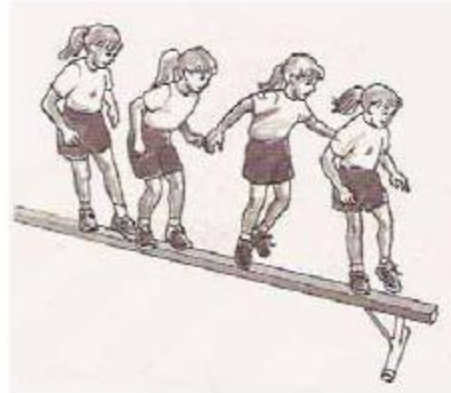
Jump and Switch Feet

Advanced: Have students try hopping across the beam.

Use the following cues for getting students started: "Let's pretend you're a dog with a broken leg." "Let's hippity hop to the end of the beam."

Performance cues to stress to students:

- Focus eyes on the end of the beam.



Hop Across Beam

Activity #3-Pivot Turn

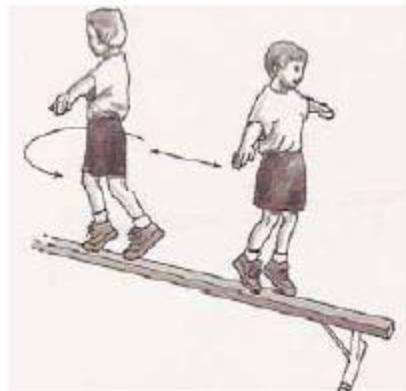
Warm-Up-Have students perform the same warm-up as in Activity #2.

Progression: Have students practice doing a pivot turn on the beam.

Use the following cues for getting students started: "Up on your toes and twist!"

Performance cues to stress to students:

- Posture should be upright.
- Put left foot in front of right or vice versa.
- Rotate on balls of feet.
- Eyes should be focused on the beam.
- Arms should be horizontal and to the side.



Pivot Turn

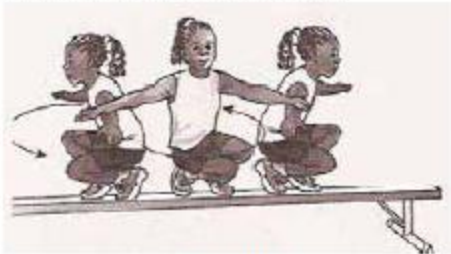
Advanced: Have students try doing a squat turn.

Use the following cues for getting students started: "Stay down low!"

Performance cues to stress to students:

- Eyes should be focused on the end of the beam.

- Back should stay upright and straight.



Squat Turn

Activity #4-Leap

Warm-Up-Have students perform the same warm-up as in Activity #2.

Progression: Have students practice doing a leap on the beam.

Use the following cues for getting students started:
 "Pretend you're leaping over a soda can!"
 "Step and stretch."

Performance cues to stress to students:

- Eyes should be focused on the end of the beam.
- Land on the leg that leads.
- Arms should be horizontal and to the side.



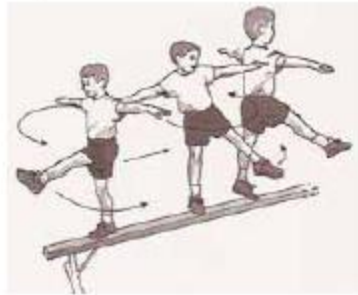
Leap

Advanced: Have students try doing a backward swing tum.

Use the following cues for getting students started:
 "Swing your leg backward; now look and turn!"

Performance cues to stress to students:

- Eyes should be focused on ends of the beam.
- The tum is quick.



Backward Swing Tum

Activity #5-Variations to Try

- Have students try performing any of the above activities in unison with a partner who is using his/her own balance beam.
- Have students try performing any of the above activities with a beanbag on their head or shoulders.



FlagHouse Activity Guides - <http://www.FlagHouse.com/ActivityGuides>

Whether or not you are a gymnast, balance beam activities can help strengthen your core muscles and your legs while also developing a stronger sense of balance. Beam [exercises](#) are also great for children, allowing them to develop balance and agility while getting an early start on the quest for life-long fitness.

Walking

The most basic balance beam activity is [walking](#), and it has several variations. Walk forward or backward on a beam, walk at normal paces or walk heel-to-toe. If you master that easily, try walking sideways on the beam. Stand on the beam facing the side, with your left leg "leading"-- you will be moving across the beam toward the left. Step out with your left foot, then cross your right foot behind the left; step out again with your left foot, and this time, cross your right foot in front of the left. Keep going until you reach the end of the beam. You can also try a développ 

walk, meaning that extend your leg in the air to ankle level, knee level, hip level, whatever is comfortable for you, before placing your foot down on the beam.

Variations

Hold a bean bag while doing any of the above activities on the balance beam.

Stand or kneel or sit in different positions on the beam and throw a beanbag with both hands 1 foot up and catch it with both hands.

Stand or kneel or sit in different positions on the beam and throw a beanbag with both hands 2 feet up and catch it with both hands.

Stand or kneel or sit in different positions on the beam and throw a beanbag with both hands 3 feet up and catch it with both hands.

Stand or kneel or sit in different positions on the beam and throw a beanbag with right hand 1 foot up and catch it with both hands. Or with right hand or with left hand

Stand or kneel or sit in different positions on the beam and throw a beanbag with left hand 1 foot up and catch it with both hands or with right hand or with left hand

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