

Balance Beam Notes and Random Activities:

Areas of Perception Addressed by these exercises:

1. Auditory Memory
2. Sensory Motor Integration
3. Motor
4. Locomotion
5. Directionality
6. Laterality
7. Contact
8. Sensory Perceptual

1. In case you didn't know, some Balance Beams are made so that you can begin children out on the 4" side then increase the difficulty by using the 2" side.
2. Use painter's tape – 3 or 4 inch wide or get a 2x4 & sand it so it is not rough and use it on the floor.
3. Balance Beam Alternative (also known as Walking Board): Lay a 2x4" board across on the floor when starting these activities. Gradually, with proficiency, you can raise it by placing it on two tires lying flat on the ground. The board can be raised even higher when the children are developmentally ready.
4. Make sure to use each 2x4 horizontally (with the 4" width being parallel to the ground) to maximize the stability of the balance beam and to get closest to the 4" width. (Remember that a true 2x4 is only 3.5" wide).
5. Sand the edges of the beam and follow up with a coat of polyurethane to decrease the risk of splinters.

1. Warm up your body. Lead her/him in a few stretches to limber up their muscles. (Get in a few crunches while you're at it. Who needs that gym membership anyway?)
2. When children are first learning new Balance Beam activities, they look at their feet while walking. As they master the task, they are then able to look straight ahead.

3. An early objective for walking the Balance Beam should be that the child can walk the entire length forward and backward without stepping off. (You may need to start with crawling forward and backward on the beam.)
4. Encourage children to use both arms outstretched – horizontal and to the side - for maintaining their balance. Walk forwards, backwards, sideways (step, feet together; step, feet together), as well as sideways where your child is crossing over and crossing behind (grapevine step).
5. Then walk on the beam with arms at your waist, elbows out from your body. Walk forward, backwards, sideways – step, together; step, together going from left to right and then right to left.
6. Then position your arms outstretched in front – doing the same activities.
7. Then position your arms straight up – along & above your head – doing the same activities
8. Then do a jumping activity – where your feet are on the beam and then straddle the beam, then on the beam and then straddle the beam.
9. Warm-up-Have your child stand, lie down on the beam (on front, side, or back) and return to standing position
10. Move slowly – practice jumping and switching feet. Use the cues “Switch and go.”
11. You can add a few tricks: hopping across the beam, a pivot turn, doing a squat turn, do a leap (“Pretend you’re leaping over a soda can.”), a pirouette, a jump or a one-legged stance, a backward swig turn.
12. As you or your kids get more proficient, imitate their favorite gymnast by doing balancing feats like arabesques, handstands, lunges, and pirouettes.
13. For the really talented and balanced kids, incorporate tumbling maneuvers like somersaults and cartwheels.
14. Play Simon Says on the beam