

FUN GAMES AND ACTIVITIES THAT PROMOTE BALANCE AND COORDINATION



Balance and coordination are two of the most important gross motor skills in a child's physical development. It allows children to participate in sports and physical activities, it reduces their risk of injury and improves their ability to perform everyday tasks. Poor development in these areas can cause physical limitations, which can lead to social issues - like social isolation or low self-esteem - due to their inability to keep up with their peers.

Fortunately, there are a number of ways to help your children develop balance and coordination. The 7 games and activities below combine physical development and fun to help reinforce these important skills.

1. Twister

This physical, “twisted” game is a great way to promote both gross motor and social-emotional development. As children become entangled trying to reach certain colours, they’ll also improve their strength, balance and hand-eye coordination. Playing Twister also helps them begin to understand personal space and body awareness. While your children will see a fun game, you’ll see an opportunity to promote important physical and social skills.

2. Catch-a-Ball

Need a fun and challenging activity for children? Catch-a-Ball is the answer! This activity develops hand-eye coordination as well as improves focus and concentration. With a string attaching the plastic ball to the cup, children must aim to “throw” and catch the ball in the cup. Time will fly as they enjoy this engaging activity.

3. Animal Yoga

Any child will jump at the chance to imitate their favourite animal. And with animal yoga, they can spring into action as they stretch, strut, waddle and stroll like a two- or four-legged creature. Like traditional yoga, this activity promotes balance, focus and coordination while adding in fun for children.

4. Bowling

Whether they’re a master bowler or they bowl gutter balls, your children will enjoy this activity! Bowling requires you to move your body in a wide range of motion, promoting balance, coordination, flexibility and hand-eye coordination. It even improves your focus, as you concentrate on knocking down all of the pins, or bowling a strike. For this activity, you can take children to a local bowling alley or set up your own with a 10-pin bowling set. Either way, they’ll have fun while improving certain skills.

5. Hopscotch

This game is a long-time favourite, and it's also one of the best ways to develop dynamic balance, coordination and even rhythm. Throughout the game, children are hopping on one leg to make it through the hopscotch grid. They're also switching movement patterns quickly and frequently. And to play, all you need is a hopscotch grid (using chalk or tape) and a marker (like a bean bag or rock). This makes hopscotch an easy way to get children moving and to promote these skills.

6. Crab Walking

Crab walking is a simple, do-it-anywhere activity that practices important gross motor skills, like bilateral coordination, core stability and strength. Even better, your children will have fun imitating crabs! To do crab walk, have children sit on the floor - feet in front of them and arms behind them with fingers pointing forward. Then they will lift their hips off the floor and start "walking" forward by moving alternating arms and legs (left hand - right foot, right hand - left foot). This easy activity is fitness disguised by fun!

7. Freeze

Can your children hold a static position for longer than 5, 10, or even 30 seconds? Playing a game of freeze will test their balance and body strength. It will also gauge their level of focus, as they concentrate on holding their body as still as a statue. Make it more challenging by asking them to hold the position for longer periods of time. To add on the fun, turn it into a competition, and reward the student who can hold their pose the longest!