



DATE:

ORGANIZATION/PROGRAM:

ACTIVITY LEADER:

GROUP NAME:

## Balance 3.1: Balance poses

8 - 12 year olds

**TIME:** 30 minutes

**SKILL:** Balance

**EQUIPMENT:** Pinnies, hula hoops, soft balls, beanbags, balloons, mats, music

### Introduction (2 minutes)

Call the children into a circle or into designated lines and greet them.

Explain any special safety rules and remind children to stop, look, and listen whenever you signal.

Explain in 20-30 seconds what you will be doing today.

*Today we will play, learn, and practice how to balance and hold different poses properly.*

*Can one of you show me how to balance using one body part? Two body parts? Can anyone make an interesting shape while balancing?*

*What sports or activities use balance as a skill? (e.g. yoga, gymnastics, dancing, figure skating, hockey, martial arts.)*

## Warm-up: Zookeeper tag (5 minutes)

- Choose two “zookeepers” to be “it” and give each of them a pinnie.
- All other children are “wild animals”.
- Place 6 hula hoops (animal enclosures) around the activity space.
- Ask all “wild animals” to spread out around activity space.
- On your signal, the “zookeepers” try and tag the wild animals.
- When a wild animal is tagged, they must go to an “enclosure” and freeze in the shape of an animal.
- Another wild animal can free them by lifting the hula hoop over their head.
- Switch the “zookeepers” every 1-2 minutes.

## Demonstration: Balance poses (5 minutes)

- Demonstrate the following balance poses for 5-10 seconds each.
- Let the children know that their poses don't have to be perfect, but they should always try their best.

### Star pose

- Stand up straight and spread feet wide apart.
- Extend your arms sideways at shoulder height and parallel to floor, palms facing forward.

### Dog pointer pose

- Begin on all fours, hands under shoulders, knees under hips.
- Stretch left arm and right leg out so that they are parallel to floor.
- Repeat with opposite arm and leg.

### Sitting on horse pose

- *Stand with feet wide, knees bent, and arms in front as if holding the reins*

### Crab pose

- Sit on floor with knees bent, feet flat, and toes pointing forward.
- Hands under shoulders and flat on floor with fingers pointing forward.
- Lift your bum so that your back and thighs are parallel to floor and arms are fully extended, head back looking up towards the sky.

## Snowboarder

- Similar to “sitting on horse”, but arms are extended to the sides and parallel to ground.
- Bend knees and lean to one side or the other.

## Sailboat

- Take a wide stance, one foot pointed outwards.
- Bend at waist, tilt upper body, reach hand to gently rest on shin or foot that is pointing outwards.
- Reach your other arm straight up.

## Shark

- Lay flat on tummy, lift up head and shoulders, hands together behind back.

## Practice: Balance poses (5 minutes)

- Have the children practice the poses with you in a semi-circle or in their own space.
- Make small groups and ask them to practice the balance poses and take turns making up their own poses that all the children in the group can do together.

### TIPS FOR INSTRUCTION

- Play calm music while children are practicing.
- Encourage children to be still like statues while they are holding their poses.
- Help children understand how having a bigger base of support will help them be more stable and have better balance (e.g. spreading their fingers on the ground when on the hands).

### CUES

- *Look forward*
- *Good pose*
- *Body still*
- *Hold for 5, 10, or 15 seconds*

## Game – Balance pass (10 minutes)

- Divide children into groups of 3 or 4.
- Groups spread out around activity space and each group makes a circle.
- Each group has a soft ball, bean bag, or balloon.
- Explain that you will call out a balance pose and then begin the music.
- *When the music is playing, I want you to hold the balance I call out and try to pass the ball around the circle.*
- Count out loud the number of times you can roll, pass, or bounce the ball, bean bag, or balloon without losing your balance.

- Repeat activity with different balances that were practiced or other appropriate balance poses.
- Circles should be small enough for easy passing.

## Lesson progression

- It is a good idea to repeat the lesson one or two more times so that the children can have time to get better at skills and build their confidence.
- Children can close their eyes to increase the challenge level. Tell them to open their eyes if they start to lose their balance so that they avoid falling and hurting themselves.
- Pair students up and have them challenge each other by balancing bean bags on different parts of the body while holding their stances.
- Encourage children to explore and demonstrate their own balance poses that they can hold for 10 seconds.

## Wrap-up (2 minutes)

Call the children back into a circle or designated lines and review what they learned today.

*What are four things (cues) we need to do when balancing?*

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