



DATE:

ORGANIZATION/PROGRAM:

ACTIVITY LEADER:

GROUP NAME:

## Falling 2.1: Safe landing

5 - 8 year olds

**TIME:** 30 minutes

**SKILL:** Balance

**EQUIPMENT:** floor mats, hula hoops,  
music

### Introduction (1 - 2 minutes)

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

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

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

*Why do you think it's important to know how to fall?*

## Warm-up: Swim to shore (5 - 7 minutes)

- Leader places floor mats around activity space as “islands” — one mat for every 3 - 4 children.
- Leader chooses 3 or 4 children to be “sharks”.
- All other children are “swimmers”.
- “Swimmers” start on their stomachs and pretend to swim while on the floor of the activity space—the “ocean”.
- Sharks start on their backs and cannot go on or over the islands.
- When the music starts, everyone gets up and swimmers try to run to an island as fast as they can without getting tagged by a shark.
- Children who are tagged become “jellyfish” who help the sharks.
- Jellyfish can only move by jumping with two feet.
- Once all swimmers are all safe on an island, the music stops and sharks, jellyfish, and swimmers return to the ocean (floor) to begin again.
- The 2-4 children remaining at the end of each round of play are the winners — they are the “sharks” in the next round.

## Demonstration: Falling forward (3 - 5 minutes)

- Leader asks children to sit in a semi-circle.
- Leader explains and demonstrates falling forward from their knees by using a floor mat:
  - » *Hands are held up, shoulder width apart with fingers spread out.*
  - » *Fall onto hands and bend elbows to absorb impact, spreading fingers.*
  - » *Keep head up and face away from the ground by looking to the side.*
- Leader can also demonstrate falling forward from a standing position:
  - » *In slow motion, bend knees until they touch the mat softly and repeat the steps above.*
- Leader emphasizes safety and shows the space that is needed to fall so that children do not fall onto another person or object.

## Practice: Falling forward (5 minutes)

- 3-4 children kneel or stand along one side of a floor mat (typically 4'x6') and take turns falling forward onto the mat.
  - » *First start on your knees, fall forward, and land on your hands as softly as possible.*
  - » *When you are comfortable, try falling forward from a standing position by bending your knees slowly to the mat first.*
  - » *If you feel very comfortable falling, you can try to fall directly onto the mat by touching your hands first and then your knees.*

## Game: Safe landing (10 minutes)

## TIPS FOR INSTRUCTION

- There are many ways to fall while avoiding injury.
- It is beyond the scope of this lesson to address every way.
- Emphasize safety first, and make sure children practice at an appropriate level.

## CUES

- *Hands at shoulders*
- *Fingers spread*
- *Absorb with arms*
- *Head up*
- *Turn face*

- The goal of this game is to land your “airplane” safely on each airport landing strip, represented by different floor mats.
- The leader spreads out mats around the activity space.
- Children move around the activity space with arms spread like airplane wings.
- Children approach mats and perform a forward fall onto their hands to “land their plane”.
- Children get up again and continue flying around the room trying to land on as many strips as possible.
- When the leader shouts “*helicopter!*” children stop and spin around 3 times and come to a sitting position without using their hands.
- When the leader shouts “*blast off!*”, children try to stand-up and jump as high as they can without using their hands.
- When the leader shouts “*all planes in the hangers!*” children run to the mats and lay on their stomachs for a rest.
- Leader can choose a few students to twirl hula hoops around their waists as “tornadoes” that other children avoid. Anybody touched by a tornado must become the tornado.

## Wrap-up (2 minutes)

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

*Why is it important to know how to fall?*

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