

Balance Beam

Ingredients: Roll of masking tape

Prep Time: 5 minutes

Recipe for Fun!

Make a balance beam with masking tape or blue painter's tape and take turns walking on it. *Note: Do not use tape on wood floors. It will pull up the polyurethane and stain.*

Make a long balance beam with a line of masking or blue painter's tape. Have fun taking turns walking across it. Make it shorter or longer or add zig zags to suit your child's abilities and fun level.

Benefits:

- **Provides proprioceptive input.** Proprioception is knowing where your body is at all times. For instance, knowing where your arms are without having to look at them. Your body uses this input to control balance, coordination and movement.
- **Balance.** The ability to freeze and hold a position (static balance) and the ability to maintain balance when moving (dynamic balance) are necessary for everyday activities, like sitting at a desk or climbing stairs.
- **Social etiquette.** Having one balance beam provides the opportunity to practice sharing and waiting your turn.

Possible accommodations:

- **Make two parallel lines** with masking tape wide enough for a child to easily walk (using their typical gait) within the lines. Gradually move one piece of tape to narrow the path, leading to a greater challenge requiring more concentration and coordination.
- **Make the path zig zag.**
- **Place gaps in the tape** so a child must "leap" from one beam to the next.
- **Add objects** randomly on the sides of the path. When a child reaches that object have him bend down to get it without moving off the beam. Objects can be stuffed animals, small toys, or individual plastic letters. Have the children verbally identify the object when they pick it up to encourage cognitive tasks as well. Add numbers so when they reach a number, they have to walk forward that number of steps or backward that number of steps.
- **Kick a soft ball** on the balance beam.
- **Walk backwards** on the beam.
- **Balance on one foot** on the beam.

Ways to walk:

- Walk backwards
- Balance on one foot
- Walk heel-toe
- Lunge walking
- Sidestep
- Walk on tiptoes
- Imitate animals (e.g., sway arm for an elephant trunk)