



Fundamental Movement Skills



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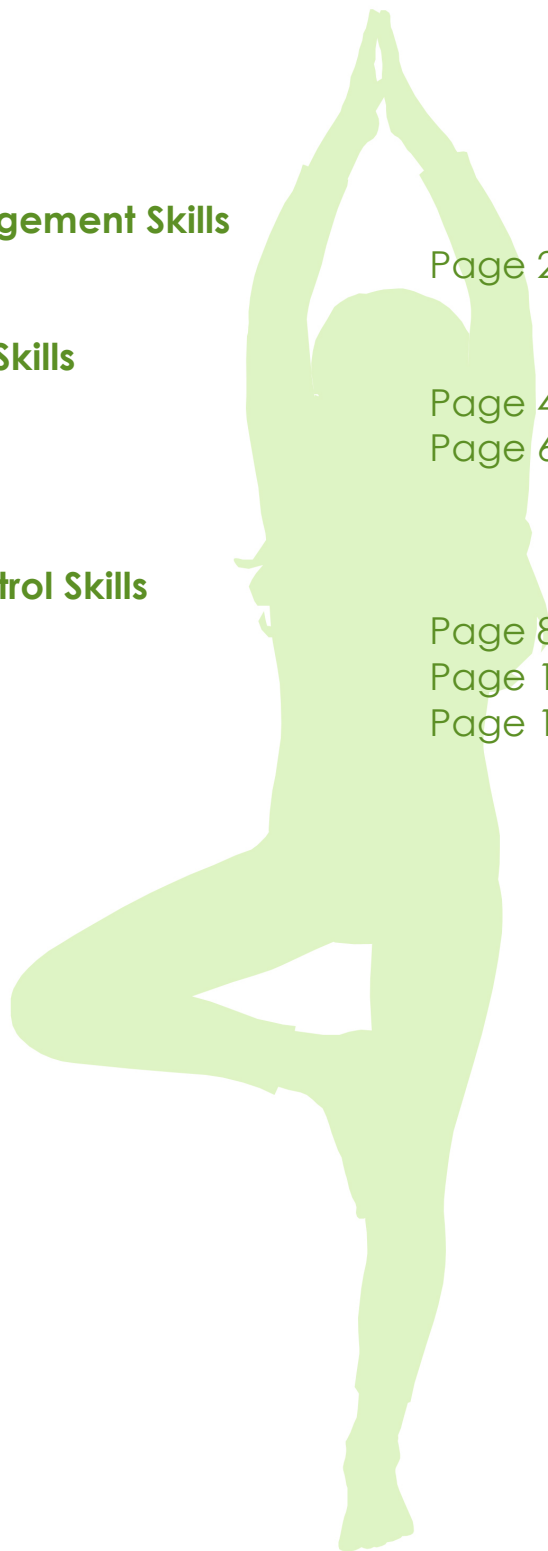
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Balance



Static Balance

Static balance involves a stable centre of gravity, with the body being still and firm over the base, e.g. standing on one foot or performing a headstand.

Supporting the Development of Balance

Visual Images

- ☀ Ask children to pretend to be a stork, standing straight with neck long and head high.
- ☀ Ask children to pretend to be an aeroplane, holding your wings out to the side.
- ☀ Place an image in front of their eye line or ask the children to find something to focus their eyes on.

Additional Ideas

- ☀ Children can start by leaning against a wall or holding the back of a chair with both hands. They then move to holding with one hand and eventually can let go.
- ☀ Experiment with balancing on different body parts, e.g. hands & one knee, one hand & one foot, etc.
- ☀ Try balancing on tip-toes.
- ☀ Balance on both sides (left foot and right foot).
- ☀ Incorporate balancing into different games.
- ☀ Eventually ask children to balance with their eyes closed.
- ☀ Try to balance while holding an object (such as a bean bag) on various parts of the body.

Balancing Statically

	Correct	Incorrect
Legs and Feet	<p>The supporting leg should be still with the foot flat on ground.</p> <p>The non-supporting leg should be bent, not touching support leg.</p>	<p>If the leg or feet start to move, the child will lose their balance.</p> <p>Lifting the non-support leg too high and tucking the foot onto or behind support leg.</p>
	(Ensure children practice balancing on both sides)	
Arms	Keep arms still or hold them out to the side to support balance.	Arms waving.
Eyes	Focused and eyes forward, which is important for children in early years to maintain their balance.	
Head and Trunk	A stable head and trunk will be important to maintain balance. Keep stomach/abdominal muscles tight.	

Dynamic Balance

Dynamic balance is maintaining control and balance while moving, e.g. walking on a balancing beam, riding a bicycle, balancing while throwing or catching a ball.

Supporting the Development of Balance

Visual Images

- Wheeled Ask children to pretend to be a clown in a circus balancing on a tightrope.

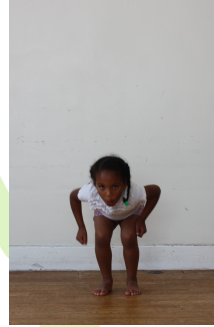
Additional Ideas

- Children should be given a wide surface/line to walk along, eventually give them narrower lines and surfaces to walk on.
- Once children are confident in walking on the ground, they can attempt walking on a wide raised beam. At first, support child and stand close to them to help them feel safe.
- Incorporate balance tasks in games and obstacle courses.
- Eventually encourage children to attempt walking on a narrow line/beam in different ways, e.g. on tip toes, backwards, with an object on body parts, bending down to pick up something mid-walk, stepping over and object placed on the line/beam.

Balancing Dynamically

	Correct	Incorrect
Movement	Walking smoothly. Maintains forward momentum while stepping with alternative feet. Walking without pauses indicates confidence and ability.	Shuffling, rocking from front to back of their feet.
Arms	Use arms to maintain balance.	Arms waving.
	Arms can be used to help balance and counterbalance when body moves out of balance.	
Feet	Walking forward with toes facing forward.	Facing sideways and sidestepping.
	When a child is able to balance they will be able to keep both feet on the beam or line that they are walking on, with toes facing forward.	
Head and Trunk	It is important to keep the head and trunk steady in order to maintain stability.	

Jumping



Jumping for Distance

The jump for distance is a skill that helps assess a child's timing and rhythm as well as their ability to coordinate the movement of their arms and legs.

It is important to teach children to land safely and to give them time to practice the landing with bent ankles, knees and hips.

Jumping Correctly

Ankles, knees and hips bend on take off and landing.

By flexing the ankles, knees, and hips, more muscles are used to push, which will create more force when taking off.

If these joints are not flexed when landing they will not absorb the impact, which could lead to jarring and stress to the joints. Children will also be more stable when landing in a flexed position, as they will have a lower centre of gravity.

	Correct	Incorrect
Eyes	Focused forward. This action eliminates lateral movements and therefore is more efficient.	
Arms Preparation	Before taking off, swings arms behind body.	Arms not moving back behind body in preparation.
	This will allow for greatest available range of movement, which will support the forward momentum of the jump.	
During Jump	Arms swing forward and upward.	
	The arms help with lifting the body into the air and move the child's centre of gravity upward and forward. Arms can also support stability when landing.	
Legs	Legs extend completely when taking off. This action generates the power to lift the body.	Legs not extending completely when taking off, which will limit momentum and force against the ground.
Direction	Jumps forward, backwards or side-ways as directed.	
	When taking off, the force should be exerted backwards as well as downwards. Give children a target to jump towards.	

Feet	Both feet leave the ground together.	Taking off on one foot, which will reduce the power of the take off.
	Body weight should be evenly distributed between both feet. If a child lands on both feet, this demonstrates control and balance. Give a child a beanbag to hold between their knees.	

Jumping for Height

Once children are able to jump for distance, they will be able to learn to jump for height. This jump involves getting as high as possible from a standing position.

Jumping Correctly

Ankles, knees and hips bend on take off and landing.

By flexing the ankles, knees, and hips, more muscles are used to push, which will create more force when taking off.

If these joints are not flexed when landing they will not absorb the impact, which could lead to jarring and stress to the joints. Children will also be more stable when landing in the flexed position, as they will have a lower centre of gravity.

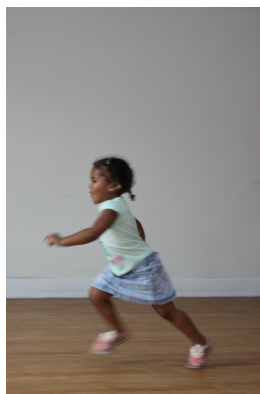
	Correct	Incorrect
Head and Trunk	Keep the head up and the trunk should remain upright so that most of the force will be exerted downward. The chest should be pushed forward and out with eyes focusing forward.	
	This will allow for greatest available range of movement, which will support the forward momentum of the jump.	
Arms and Legs	Arms swing in time with the leg movement.	Not timing the arm action to match the leg movement.
	Arms help to lift the body into the air.	
	Start with the arms behind the body. Arms swing forward and up in time with leg action.	
Legs	The force is exerted downward from a crouched position so that the body is projected upward. Spring up high like a kangaroo.	
Feet	Heels raised, land on both feet.	Landing flat-footed.

Supporting the Development of Jumping

Visual Images

- ✿ Teach children to land first from a low height, such as a bench, step or over a line or marker.
- ✿ Ask children to pretend to be rockets and take off. This will help them to understand that they need to push off and get as high as they can to reach other planets/the moon.

Running



Sprint Running

Running is an extension of walking, except there is a flight phase when neither foot is on the ground.

Supporting the Development of Running

Visual Images

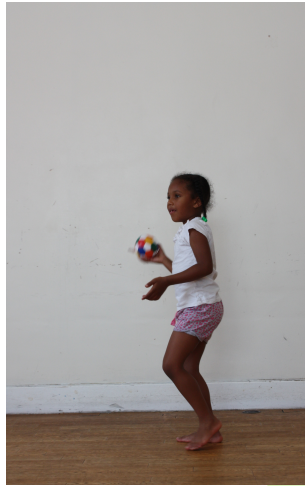
- ✿ Ask children to think of animals that bounce, run and move fast such as a rabbit, dog or kangaroo. This will help them to imagine moving forward at a speed.
- ✿ Ask children to pull their feet off the ground as if they are on hot sand or freezing cold ice. This will help them to understand the pulling motion they will require for moving their feet. Teach them to pull their feet off the ground rather than pushing off the ground.
- ✿ Ask them to pretend to be a really thin tree leaning into the wind. This will help them to develop the correct forward stance.
- ✿ Ask them to imagine that their arms are branches. They will need to bend them at the elbow at a 90° angle and move forward and backwards.
- ✿ Tell children to be sure to bend their knees and move their arms forwards and backwards like marching soldiers.
- ✿ Allow children to start by running downhill; gravity will help their momentum.
- ✿ Play chasing games where they will have fun while practicing their running.

Running Correctly

	Correct	Incorrect
Head and Trunk	Head and trunk stable.	Trunk moves excessively or head moving from side to side.
	When children move erratically, it will make it difficult to move in the desired direction.	
Arms Movement	Arms drive vigorously forward and backward.	Arms swing erratically or across the body.
	Arms drive vigorously forward and backward in order to actively assist the action. The more vigorously the arms are thrust forward, the greater the momentum.	
Body Position	Lean forward.	Body upright.
	When leaning forward it allows the feet to push against the ground and maintain the forward motion.	
Feet Position	Feet land along a narrow path.	Running with legs far apart and flat feet.
	Feet landing along a narrow path will maximize the speed of the motion and also indicates that the child has good balance.	
	Accomplished runners run on their forefeet or heel-toe.	
Legs and Feet	High knee lift. Foot close to buttocks.	Low knee lift resulting in a short stride.
	Knees lifted high and feet moved close to the buttocks will enable a greater stride length. This will also have an impact on the speed of the forward motion.	
Elbows	Elbows bent at a 90° angle.	
	When elbows are bent at a 90° angle the length of the arm will be shorter which will increase the speed of movement through the shoulder.	
Eyes	Eyes focused forward eliminates lateral movements.	



Throwing



Overarm Throwing

Throwing involves applying a pushing force to an object to propel it. By three years of age, children should be able to throw overarm, with accuracy, direction and strength increasing with age.

Children should develop a preferred throwing arm, which will not necessarily be the same as the preferred writing side.

Supporting the Development of Throwing

Support Ideas

- ✿ At first children should not worry about throwing in a particular direction.
- ✿ When children develop their throwing skills use markers to encourage them to throw further.
- ✿ Eventually help children to try hit targets.

Throwing Correctly

	Correct	Incorrect
Stance	Standing side-on to the target.	Standing front-on to the target.
	Stand side-on to direction of throw with the opposite foot to the throwing arm forward. This will allow the hip and shoulder to rotate forward during the throw.	
Throwing Preparation	The throwing arm moves in a downward and backward arc.	The throwing arm lifting up and over the shoulder.
	The throwing arm should move in a downward and backward arc, transferring their weight onto the back foot and the trunk rotates. This will also increase the force of the throw.	
Feet	Stepping forward with the foot on the opposite side as the throwing arm.	Stepping forward with the foot on the same side as the throwing arm.
	When throwing, the foot on the opposite side to the throwing arm should step forward and the trunk should rotate so that the opposite side to the throwing arm is facing the target.	
Hips	Much of the throwing force is generated by the forward rotation of first the hips and then of the trunk. This will also help stop muscle strain of the arms and shoulders.	
Elbow	The elbow should be bent as the throwing arm moves behind the head as this will create a greater speed.	
Throwing Arm	The throwing arm follows through across body.	



Catching



Being able to catch is vital in order to play many team games; however, it is one of the more difficult fundamental skills.

It is important that children have ample opportunities and time to play with all types of balls and equipment that they can catch, starting with large light balls/equipment.

Progression of Catching

Start with bounce and catch or toss and catch.

Self-bounced balls are the easiest airborne balls to catch.

When children are showing ability to move on, introduce differently-sized objects to catch.

- ✿ Receive a large rolled ball
- ✿ Bounce and catch a ball with two hands
- ✿ Catch a large ball that is bounced by another person
- ✿ Catch a large ball that is gently thrown by another person
- ✿ Catch a small rolled ball
- ✿ Catch a small suspended ball
- ✿ Catch a small ball that is gently thrown by another person.

Challenges for More Able Children

- ✿ Throw an object/ball high, low and in different directions for children to catch
- ✿ Reduce the size of ball and shape of the object to catch
- ✿ Increase the distance that the ball will be thrown
- ✿ Clap hands between throw and catch
- ✿ Use one hand only when catching (either from someone else or when self-bounced).

Catching Correctly

	Correct	Incorrect
Feet	Feet should move to place their body in line with the ball, which will allow them to judge the path of the ball.	
Eyes	Focus on the ball.	Closes eyes, looks away, moves away.
	Eyes should focus on the ball. This will have a positive impact on the child's ability to judge when to catch the ball. Throw an object in the air with an image on and ask children questions about the image.	
Hands and Feet	Prepare to reach out to meet the ball before catching. The elbows should be bent to absorb the impact, preventing jarring of the joints. The ball should be caught in the hands only and not trapped between hands and the chest.	
Fingers	Fingers should be soft and slightly cupped. This will prevent jarring of the fingers.	
The Catch	It is important that the closure of the hand and finger should be well timed to ensure that the child catches the ball/object. Children will initially trap the ball between their forearm and chest, so encourage them to catch with two hands and allow plenty of time for them to practice this.	



Kicking



Kicking involves applying a force to an object with the foot.

By the age of 3 years, children should be able to kick from a stationary position.

Supporting the Development of Kicking

Support Ideas

- ✿ Place a marker next to the ball where they should place their non-kicking foot.
- ✿ Draw an image on the ball for children to focus on when approaching the kick.
- ✿ Initially, children should try kicking for distance and eventually work on accuracy.
- ✿ Start by kicking a large soft ball.
- ✿ Children can try kicking against a wall - or they will be spending more time collecting the ball than actually kicking it!
- ✿ When children are confident at kicking from a stationary position, move to supporting them to practice running up to the kick.
- ✿ Get children to try kicking with both feet.
- ✿ Eventually, children should be able to kick towards a partner or target.

Kicking Correctly

	Correct	Incorrect
Supporting Leg Placement	The support leg should be planted to side of ball. If it is not it will affect the force at which the ball is kicked.	
Knees	The knee of the kicking leg should bend 90o, which will lengthen the speed at which the ball travels.	
Eyes	Ensure child keeps focusing on the ball. This will help with foot-eye co- ordination.	
Stance	Kicking with a backward body lean allows the ball to be struck with a greater force.	
Arms	Opposite arm to kicking leg swings forward.	Opposite arm is not used for balance.
	The arm opposite to the kicking leg should swing forward in order to maintain balance.	
Kicking Foot	Contact the ball with the instep.	Contact the ball with the toe.
	The foot should contact the ball with the "shoelace" part of the foot.	
Kicking Leg	Ensure that the kicking leg follows through towards the target. This will support the maintenance of balance, protect joints and muscles and stop deceleration of the kick before completed.	

