

MOVEMENT

in the Primary Grades

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9 Building Non-Locomotor Skills

Non-locomotor skills are all about students learning to control their body, when the body is stationary (fixed in one place). Some of the most important non-locomotor skills include balance, body control and rhythm.

Developing Balance

Good balance means keeping the body stable while holding a position for several seconds without falling over.

By the primary grades students generally have good balance when standing on both feet, unless they have special needs.



There are three things that impact balance:

- 1. How big a base** the student is trying to balance on. The biggest base would be laying flat on their back, and the smallest would be balancing on tip-toes on one foot. Moving to a smaller and smaller base develops balance.
- 2. How tall the student stands** – technically how high their centre of gravity is – crouching low with arms down is more balanced than stretching up and having arms raised.
- 3. How rigid** the student can keep their body. Tensing muscles can help students stay balanced.

As students improve their balance have them move to a smaller base and make their body higher. Have them balance on different body parts – knees, bum, one-hand and one-foot.

Developing Body Control

By the primary grades, students often have good body control skills when they are standing or sitting upright. Developing body control skills at these grades is about controlling the arms and legs when in a different body position.

Have students lay on their backs on the floor and point to the ceiling and the walls with their right hand, their left hand, with one foot, and then the other foot.

Developing Rhythm

A critical non-locomotor skill to develop is rhythm. This can be developed through movement to music, the beat of a drum, or other instruments. Use consistent beats and beats that vary predictably (get faster, get slower, or have a definite pattern).