

Balance Bikes – Taster Level 1

Session Set Up:

- Dress up and have face paint on.
- Equipment needed: Balance bikes, marker cones, geo shapes, hoops and bean bags.

Sign In (signed in sessions only):

- Welcome to Balance Bikes – a session to introduce and become familiar with balance bikes.
 - ✓ Learning to mount and dismount.
 - ✓ To learn to sit with weight down on the seat whilst understanding footwork patterns required for propulsion.
 - ✓ Learn how to stop using feet down and hand brake methods.
 - ✓ To become aware of static and dynamic balance and moving within a designated area with awareness of others
- Sign in as per policy.

Session Introduction and Welcome Activity

- Children and parents are greeted at the start of the session. Allocation of balance bikes to the children & bikes to be adjusted to fit the child. If there are more children than bikes, pair up children that are similar in height and ability. It is recommended that the child is able to touch the floor with feet flat on the floor and knees slightly bent. Helmets must be checked and fitted correctly. **Parents should be informed that they are not to hold the child's bike. The children must be encouraged to try for themselves to help gain confidence and familiarity with the bike.**
- **Bean Bag Freeze:** Give each child a bean bag, and ask them to place it on their shoulder. Then ask the children to start walking around the activity area without their bean bag falling off. Once children have gained confidence introduce the 'freeze' rule – if their bean bag falls off, they must freeze on the spot and wait for another person in the group to pick it up and give it to them. If the helper's bean bag falls off they too have to freeze. If you want to make the game easier, you can allow the helper to tap another child on the shoulder in order that they are free to pick up their bean bag and continue the game.

Main Body of Activity:

Practical Content

- **Walk the Line:** Using 2 lines marked out on the floor shoulder width apart (either lines already painted on a court or ropes). Ask the children to walk along from one end to the other arms out in front like riding a bike. This will replicate the movement they will use on the balance bikes.
- **Bike Walking:** Starting on the left of the bike, ask children to bend their knees picking up the bike placing both hands on either side of the handlebars. Ask the children to walk alongside their bike looking in the direction they are moving. Make a start and finish line 10m apart, ask children to push their bikes through the finish line in single file. Before children mount the bikes explain the method of stopping; children should be first taught to stop by putting the flats of their feet along the ground to come to a gradual stop. Encourage children to 'press down' on the seat with their bottoms and take one separate step after another to propel them forward. Gradually they will progress from walking to starting to speed up and run on their bike as they become more confident, but in this session keep it slow and allow children to get the feel of stopping with the feet down method.
- **Lane Riding:** Split the group into pairs. Set out 4 lanes approximately 1.5m wide. Create start/finish line approximately 10m long. To get an understanding for the game, have the children walk through the track first before introducing the balance bikes. The aim of this game is for the child to be able to manoeuvre in their lane from start to finish. Keep the parents close by during the start of this activity so they are able to catch their child if they lean over too far. The faster the child goes the easier the activity will be, but this should be discouraged at this early stage.
- **Go and Glide:** Using a suitable space set up a start and finish line. Allow one child to go at a time on their balance bike and encourage the child to push off with their feet gaining momentum and to see how long they can "free wheel" to the finish line.

- **Bean Bag Race:** Using a suitable space, place a hoop in the middle and place a number of bean bags in the hoop. Split the children into equal teams allocating them a colour to denote a team e.g. the blue team will line up behind the blue cone. Place the cones an equal distance away from the hoop. Each team will set off under starters orders and run to the middle of the hoop and collect a bean bag. They return it to their team. Having done so the next person can collect their bean bag. When the staff member shouts “stop” after a suitable amount of time the winning team is the team with the most bean bags.

End of Session

- Praise the children for their participation and discuss the key points they have learnt. Recommend activities that can be practised at home/away from the session and let participants/parents know when the next Balance Bikes session is.

Sign Out (Signed in Sessions only):

- Welcome the parents/guardians back and explain the highlights of the sessions – who won what etc.
- Give individual praise as you move through signing out.
- Sign out as per policy.