



# Balance Beam Drills for Mites and Squirts

By: Jay Dawes MS, CSCS,\*D, NSCA-CPT,\*D, FNSCA  
Director of Education National Strength and Conditioning Association (NSCA)

Developing an adequate base of agility, balance and coordination (ABC's) at a young age is critical in order to optimize long term motor development.

A fun and inexpensive way to improve the ABC's is through the use of a balance beam. All you need is a 2 x 4 and a little creativity.

The following are just a few examples of balance beam drills that can be done with both Mites and Squirts to help develop the ABC's. These drills should be done by for a set amount of time or repetitions.



FIGURE 1



FIGURE 2

**Heel-to-Toe Walk:** On a balance beam, walk the length of the board, starting with the right foot, place it on the balance beam. Bring the left foot forward, bringing the heel of the left foot in contact with the toes of the right foot (Figure 1). Walking heel to toe, proceed down the length of the balance beam. Once this is mastered this drill can be made more challenging by walking backward or by placing the hands on the hips, so they cannot be used for counterbalance. Kids can also toss a ball in the air and catch as they walk forward (Figure 2). This challenges the vestibular system, located in the inner ear, which is used to regulate balance. Challenge kids to catch the ball as many times in a row as possible without falling off the beam and without dropping the ball.



FIGURE 4

**Balance Beam Staggered Squat:** Walk the length of the board, and on each stride, change the level of the hips as you walk down the beam (Figure 3). Kids should be instructed to see how many times they can repeat this pattern without falling off the beam.

**Balance Beam Hops:** Hop side-ways down the length of the board “sticking the landing” before the next hop. This drill should then be repeated moving in the opposite direction (Figure 4). Challenge kids to make it all the way down the board and back without falling off.



FIGURE 5



FIGURE 6

**Forward/ Backward Line Hops:** Start by facing the beam. Hop back and forth over the beam with both feet for 10 seconds (Figure 5). Challenge the kids to perform as many hops as possible, under control, in the amount of time allotted.

**Lateral Beam Hops:** Standing to the side of the beam hop side-to-side as quickly as possible for 10 seconds (Figure 6).



FIGURE 7

**Scissors:** Begin by straddling the line. Rapidly switch the feet forward and backward in a scissor type motion while moving down the line for 10 seconds (Figure 7).