

# Stability Skills



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# Landing

## Description

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Landing safely is an important skill for all children to learn. Essentially, it involves absorbing force over a large surface area and over a long period. Landings occur in a wide range of contexts such as: landing from a jump or a leap (leaping over a puddle); falling over accidentally (tripping over in the playground); and landing as part of a sport-specific skill (vault in gymnastics).



## Applying movement principles

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*Absorbing force:* To absorb force, impact should be spread over the maximum area or distance possible, or both. When landing from a jump, each joint should bend to absorb the force.

## Learning cues

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### Landing on feet

- land with feet apart
- bend knees
- land in the order of toes–ball–heel, wriggle toes
- pull stomach in – tuck bottom under
- stretch arms out in front
- hold head up, look straight ahead
- hold for 3 seconds (counting ‘thousand’ for each second)

### **Landing in prone position (on hands/arms)**

- hold arms shoulder width apart
- bend elbows
- spread fingers, keep hands flat
- hold head up
- hold body straight, pull stomach in (stop back from arching)

## **Learning phases**

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### **Discovering phase**

Children in this phase explore different ways of landing from a variety of jumps and low obstacles. Having fun and being creative are the areas of focus for this learning phase. Characteristics of learning in this phase are:

- no stable base of support is evident
- children land with flat feet
- little 'give' with the knees is evident.

### **Developing phase**

Children experience landing from various heights and distances, and recognise the importance of absorbing the shock of the landing. Characteristics of landing in this phase are:

- stable base of support is evident
- when landing on feet, the order of toes–ball–heel is more consistent
- knees bend after heels contact the ground
- children rotate forward on landing.

### **Consolidating phase**

Children exhibit confidence and control in landing in a variety of changing and unpredictable situations. Characteristics of this phase are:

- landing is controlled and safe
- a wide base of support is evident
- shock is absorbed through the 'giving' action of ankles, knees and hips.

## Overview

Learning phase	Activity name	Movement skills/concept	Suggested group size	Suggested space	Page
<b>Discovering</b>	Landing on Feet	Jumping, landing and balancing, space awareness (levels and directions) and relationships (with equipment).	1	Level hard or grass area	120
<b>Developing</b>	Landing on Hands- Falling Forwards	Falling to land on front support, body and space awareness.	1	Level hard or grass area	121
	Landing on Hands- Falling Backwards	Landing on hands after falling backwards from different levels.	1	Level hard or grass area	122
<b>Consolidating</b>	Landing on Hands – Falling Sideways	Rolling sideways to land safely after falling from different levels.	1-2	Level hard or grass area	123
	Falling Forwards at Speed	Forward shoulder roll at speed from different levels and directions.	1	Level hard or grass area	124
	Falling Backwards at Speed	Backwards shoulder roll, body and space awareness.	1-6	Level hard or grass area	125
	Bite the Dust	Falling forwards and backwards, landing on feet and body awareness.	1	Level hard or grass area	126

## Discovering Landing

### Landing on Feet

#### Movement skills/concepts

Jumping, landing and balancing, space awareness (levels and directions) and relationships (with equipment).

#### Set-up

Ropes and bases/discs.

Children are spread out, with one rope and one base/disc each, in a level grass or hard area.



#### Activity

##### Can you ...?

- stand on your base and, on the signal, try to jump (high to give you more time in the air) and click your heels together before you land – how many clicks can you do before landing and can you land on your base?
- jump from your base and see how many times you can clap your hands together before you land – as your feet touch the ground, freeze your body, perfectly still and stay in that position for three seconds
- jump over a rope and land on the other side without falling down – think of your feet sinking into the floor as if the floor were a sponge and freeze in that position for three seconds
- jump over your rope in different ways – try to take off on one foot and land on two
- change the direction of your jump to land – jump forwards, backwards, sideways
- jump high in the air as you travel over your rope and land as softly as you can – freeze and hold for three seconds
- jog, run, skip, gallop, hop, etc and, on the signal, jump to land – freeze and hold for three seconds

##### Can you see ...?

- toe–ball–heel landing sequence
- knees bending after heels contact the ground
- straight back
- holding or 'stick' balance
- head up, looking straight ahead

##### You could ask ...

Which ways of jumping did you enjoy the best?

What position did you hold when you landed on your feet?

Why do you need to hold this position for at least three seconds?

##### Variations

*Vary object:* Jump over different objects (e.g. beanbags, balls, low-level box tops, benches).

*Children learn  
by discovering  
for themselves*

## Developing Landing

### Landing on Hands – Falling Forwards

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#### Movement skills/concepts

Falling to land on front support, and awareness of body in personal and general space.

#### Set-up

Variety of landing surfaces, crash pad, mats.

Children are freely spaced.



#### Activity

Children practise the following activities:

- from kneeling, put your fingertips on the ground, then, by pressing down, 'squeeze' the water out of an imaginary sponge
- from crouching, fall forwards and stop before your stomach touches the ground
- try the above on varied landing surfaces, over elastic or flexi cord
- from standing, fall forwards like a tree being felled, dominoes (group), a wave at the beach, etc.
- play 'Timber Tag' in a defined area with several taggers – when a player is tagged, they fall forwards calling 'Timber' and become the new tagger.

#### Can you see ...?

- bending of fingers, palms, heels of hand, then elbows
- fingers slightly inwards, hands flat
- straight back, tightened tummy

#### You could ask ...

How do you feel about falling forwards?

What do you need to do to land safely on your hands/arms?

## Landing on Hands – Falling Backwards

### Movement skills/concepts

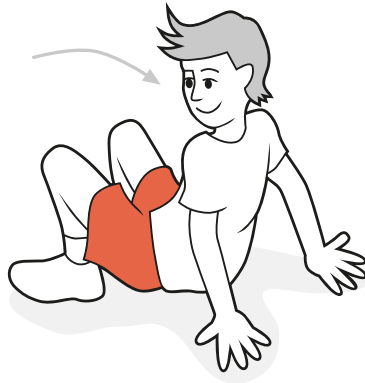
Landing on hands after falling backwards from different levels.

### Set-up

Variety of landing surfaces, crash pad, mats.

Children are freely spaced.

Are all  
children  
succeeding?



### Activity

Children practise the following activities:

- rock backwards from sitting, arms take weight – crouch, stand, fall backwards and land
- jump backwards over a line or out of a hoop – crouch, fall backwards and land
- jump backwards off low equipment – crouch, fall backwards and land

### Can you see ...?

- starting with landings on a padded or soft surface
- assisting those with a fear of falling backwards
- fingers facing same way as toes
- hands breaking the fall, then bottom, back and shoulders touch the ground
- legs high to avoid hitting nose

### You could ask ...

What are some situations that may cause you to fall backwards?

If you were falling backwards, what should you do to land safely?



## Consolidating Landing

### Landing on Hands – Falling Sideways

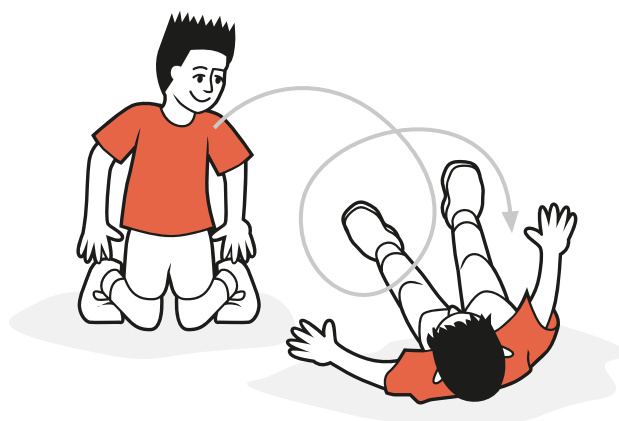
#### Movement skills/concepts

Rolling sideways to land safely after falling from different levels.

#### Set-up

Variety of landing surfaces.

Children are freely spaced.



Are children  
having fun?

#### Activity

From kneeling, fall sideways to rock onto arm, side and shoulder.

- try both directions
- fall down a slope (wedge-shaped mat) – roll sideways
- while moving, fall and roll sideways, then stand and keep going – start with walking, gradually increasing speed to jogging, running and dodging
- in pairs, shake hands in front support, then try to pull your partner off balance

*Tip the spider:* In pairs, one partner (spider) is on all fours. The other partner tips the spider onto their side by pushing on the spider's shoulder that is closer to the partner and pulling on the spider's opposite hand.

#### Can you see ...?

- arms staying straight
- hands facing inwards towards body
- surface even and soft

#### You could ask ...

When might you use this type of landing?

What do you need to do to land safely when falling sideways?

## Falling Forwards at Speed

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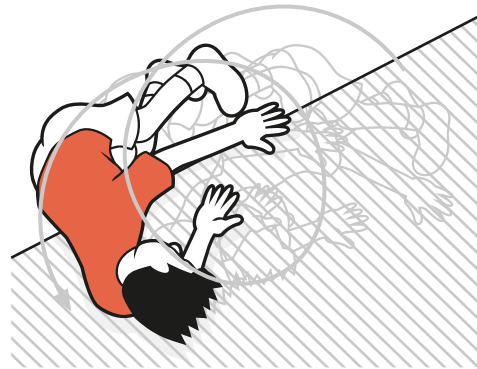
### Movement skills/concepts

Forward shoulder roll at speed from different levels and directions.

### Set-up

Slope or ramps, firm mats or suitable surface.

Children are freely spaced.



### Activity

Children practise a forward shoulder roll.

- fall forwards down a slope – look sideways
- from one side of a line, roll diagonally forwards to other side
- roll diagonally over elastic
- try chessboard rolling – roll from one square (or circle) diagonally forwards to the next

### Can you see ...?

- body extended and low
- hands flat, turned inwards
- landing with lower arm–upper arm–shoulder–back–feet
- falling and rolling slowly at first, then with increasing speed

### You could ask ...

How do you feel about falling forwards fast?

How can you fall forwards fast but safely?

### Variations

*Add obstacles:* Dive over a low obstacle and roll forwards.

## Falling Backwards at Speed

### Movement skills/concepts

Backwards shoulder roll, body and space awareness.

### Set-up

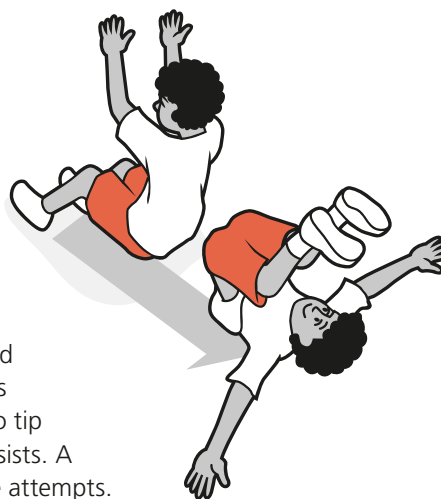
Firm mats, large balls, slopes or ramps.

### Activity

*Tip the boat:* In pairs, players sit opposite each other on a mat in a tightly tucked position, with arms strongly wrapped around legs. One player (the tipper) places their toes under the opponent's feet. The tipper has to tip the boat of the opponent. The opponent resists. A tip scores one point. Switch roles after three attempts.

*Backward shoulder roll:* Fall back and shoulder roll down a slope.

*Rock the boat:* Place a mat on about eight balls. While four children swivel the mat (boat), two (or three) other children sit on it, fall off (or out of) the boat and backward shoulder roll. Children can kneel or crouch as well.



### Can you see ...?

- head looking to one side, knees on that side close to ears
- looking at knees as they come over
- arms out to side
- falling slowly first, then with increasing speed
- landing surfaces safe and even

### You could ask ...

How can you land safely when falling backwards?

How do you feel when you fall backwards?

## Bite the Dust

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### Movement skills/concepts

Falling forwards and backwards, landing on feet and body awareness.

### Set-up

Benches, box tops, mats, hoops, ropes, chalk.

Children, equipment and targets are spread out in a general space.

### Activity

Children move in random directions to a specified pattern (e.g. eight runs, fall forwards and freeze; or eight skips, jump to stand still, and fall backwards).

Children 'make-believe' they are falling and landing. Examples are:

- landing from a parachute jump
- falling from a bicycle
- falling while ice skating or rollerblading
- being tripped in a game of netball/soccer
- losing balance while walking along a steep cliff and rolling down the bank
- slipping off the monkey bars and falling on the bark.

### Can you see ...?

- landing surfaces safe and even
- awareness of others
- correct techniques

### You could ask ...

What is the first thing you need to think about when you lose your balance or start to fall? Why is this?

Children often break an arm or collarbone when they fall. What can you do to prevent this when you fall?

*Be creative*