

# Balance Beam

What could be more fun than being three years old and walking across a balance beam with your friends? This is a very simple-to-construct, very durable, and very easy-to-use piece of equipment that the kids will love. It's a great way to challenge their developing muscles and balance.



## Materials

- ☐ 5-foot section of 4-inch Schedule 40 PVC pipe
- ☐ Two 4-inch Schedule 40 PVC wye-fittings (this fitting looks like a huge version of the tee-fitting in the Pipe Construction Set described in chapter 15)

## Tools

None

## Estimated Build Cost

It will cost around \$20 to build this project and it will last forever.

## Directions

**1.** It can't get a whole lot easier than this. Just push a wye-fitting (use the perpendicular hole) onto each end of the pipe. What you end up with should be a long and skinny capital letter "I" lying on your

**TIP:** Any child brave enough to attempt a walk across can enjoy the balance beam, regardless of age.

floor. The wye-fittings stabilize the pipe and keep it from rolling. Project built.

**2.** Put the balance beam on the floor in your play area, and use will be almost instant. To avoid problems, let the kids know that the balance beam stays on the floor and that they must take turns crossing.

## Storage

This is a tough one. We keep our balance beam in a corner by the treadmill where it is out of the way until needed. It would also store easily under a bed or couch. If you plan to keep yours outside, it will stand up to all kinds of weather, so just set it out of the way when not in use.

## What's Learned

Learning balance and coordination is the primary focus of this activity. Children also acquire social skills, learn how to follow directions, practice taking turns, and have a chance to encourage their friends as well as be praised by their peers.

## Variations

- Add appropriate background music.
- Consider adding some grip tape (the kind that you see on stairs and skateboards) to the beam's surface. It will help make balancing easier.
- Discuss gymnastic events and gymnasts and then create your own Olympic competition.
- Take the balance beam to the outside play area. In fact, this might be a great home for your beam since it will be perfectly fine exposed to the weather.
- For a more challenging activity, construct this piece of equipment from 3-inch pipe and fittings.



- Make noises, the funnier the better, into one of the pipe openings.
- Suspend the balance beam between two chairs and cover it with a blanket or tarp to create a fun and cozy kid-sized tent.

