"Tightrope Walker," which can be done indoors or outside, helps children practice body control, focus, and balance as they move from one place to another.

What You Need

- a small space, indoors or outside
- masking tape, string or yarn, or chalk; a portable drum or a small sign with green on one side and red on the other (optional); a picture of a tightrope walker (optional)

What You Do

To create a tightrope—a straight line—for the children to walk on, use masking tape on an uncovered floor or string or yarn on a rug. Hold one end of the string or yarn and tie the other end to the leg of a desk or chair. Use chalk if you do this activity outdoors. The tightrope should be six to eight feet long. Challenge the children to walk a longer tightrope if you repeat the activity. Line up the children at the starting point: for instance, in the hallway, outside, or at the classroom door. Point out the destination. You can say, “We will all be walking from here, our starting point, down this hallway to the door of the classroom, our destination.” Show the children a picture of someone walking a tightrope. Say to the children:

Have you ever seen a picture of a tightrope walker or visited the circus and seen a tightrope walker in person? Tightrope walkers have to have very good balance, don’t they? We’re going to imagine we’re walking on a very high and very narrow tightrope, which is this line of masking tape (or string or yarn). Keep your eyes on your feet as you step on the tightrope. Try to place your whole foot on the rope when you take a step, and then change to the other foot very carefully. Don’t try to go fast—it’s important
to take your time so you’ll stay on the rope! Hold your arms out wide at your sides to help you keep your balance.

I will clap my hands one time (or beat the drum or hold up the green sign) to let each of you know when to climb high up the imaginary ladder and start across the tightrope. When you get all the way to the end of the tightrope, imagine you are climbing down the long ladder back to the ground. Then sit down and watch the other tightrope walkers come across.

Start the children one by one. Make sure a child is at least halfway across the tightrope before you cue the next child to begin.

**Modifications**

A wider path can be designated for those children who are unable to balance well or walk the narrow tightrope. The wider path can be the whole space between two straight rows of blocks, or between two lines of tape, string, yarn, or chalk. The path can be much shorter for children who are not able to sustain the activity for more than a few steps.
"Surprise!" is a great activity for transitions from one place to another or from one part of the daily routine to another. It’s filled with a variety of movement prompts that help get children’s creative juices flowing!

**What You Need**

- a small space, indoors or outside
- three-by-five-inch index cards (one for each child)

**What You Do**

Before you begin the activity, write a different movement idea on each index card. Choose from any of the ideas below, and add any that you know the children would enjoy:

- walk sideways
- take baby steps
- take giant steps
- walk in a zigzag pattern
- hop
- jump
- walk as low as you can
- walk as high as you can
- march, lifting your knees up high and swinging your arms
- walk as if you are carrying a huge bag of rocks on your back
- float like a balloon, and then pop when you get into the room
• sneak into the room silently
• make a funny face while you march
• walk in a curlicue pattern
• make a funny shape with your body before you start walking and a different one when you are in the room
• clap your hands over your head while you march
• do traveling jumping jacks
• stomp as though walking through mud puddles
• walk sideways on your tiptoes
• hop while you clap your hands
• alternate steps and jumps (for example, three steps and one jump) and repeat the pattern
• slide as though ice-skating

Line up the children at the starting point: for example, in the hallway, outside, or at the classroom door. Point out the destination. You can say, “We will all be walking from here, our starting point, down this hallway to the door of the classroom, our destination.” Say to the children:

**Today we are each going to enter the classroom in a different way. I am going to choose a movement for each of you from one of these cards. Then one by one, you will do that movement as you enter the room.**

If the destination is a small area, ask the children to sit down once they have reached the destination and watch others as they move in various ways. If the destination is a large space, allow the children to continue their movements once they reach the destination. Provide a cue, such as a hand clap, once everyone has reached the destination. Ask them to freeze for four counts and then go down to the floor for four counts to finish in

**Modifications**

Because you will be choosing and writing specific movement prompts ahead of time, prepare the ideas based on the differing abilities of the children. If you know the instructions for this exercise will be difficult for a specific child, choose something simple and straightforward, such as “take baby steps,” and then do the movement with her. When she catches on, encourage her to continue the movement to the destination by herself.
a seated position. If there is time, use the cards again to assign different
movements, or ask the children to try some of the movements they saw the
other children doing.

Try repeating this activity another day, guiding the children to create their
own ways of moving. “Surprise!” can also be done in a larger space, outside
or inside, and not as a transition from one place to another but with the
children moving freely in response to the movement prompts. If you want
all the children to try each movement prompt together, hold the cards up
one by one while all of the children respond to each one.