

BALANCE

Ages: 7 to adult

Music suggestions are from *Music for Creative Dance (MCD)* Volumes 1, 2, 3, and 4 and *BrainDance Music* by Eric Chappelle.

Length

30 to 60 minutes. You may extend this class to 75 to 90 minutes by adding sections of dance technique.

Warming Up

BrainDance: Dancers perform the first four patterns moving on-balance and off-balance and the second four patterns counterbalancing with a partner. *Suggested music:* *BrainDance Music*, #6.

Introducing the Concept: *Balance—on-balance, off-balance.* Dancers read and say the words as they physically demonstrate the concept of *balance*.

Exploring the Concept

For a 30-minute lesson, choose one of these activities.

Exploring the Concept 7: Partner Balances

Dancers work in pairs as leader 1 and leader 2. Leader 1 forms balancing shapes in self-space while leader 2 dances on-balance and off-balance through general space away and back to leader 1 by a directed number of counts. Partners then form a counterbalanced shape together before switching roles. *Suggested music:* *MCD* Vol. 1, #15.

Shaping 6: Machines

Dancers form machines composed of balancing shapes by attaching to each other one at a time. Encourage shapes on various levels, movement of other body parts, and sounds to accompany the movements. *Suggested music:* *MCD* Vol. 1, #3.

Reflection

“Make a balancing shape that you tried yourself or observed.”

Developing Skills

For a 30-minute lesson, choose one of these activities. For a 60- to 90-minute lesson, do both these activities,

or choose one and replace the other with dance technique such as pliés, tendus, swings, and jumps.

Developing Skills 5: Tipping

Dancers practice various ways of tipping, falling, rolling, and recovering safely. *Suggested music:* *MCD* Vol. 4, #3.

Combining Movements 5: Word Cards

Dancers (or you) choose words from a word chart or word cards that inspire on-balance and off-balance movements, such as *float, hop, spin, stretch, suspend, and fall*. Then a combination is created with these movements and practiced several times. *Suggested music:* *MCD* Vol. 4, #3.

Creating

Choreographing 6: Props

For a 30-minute lesson, dancers improvise following this structure: Balance the prop on body parts, let the prop pull you off-balance through general space, balance in various shapes on the prop. For a 60- to 90-minute lesson, dancers work in pairs to choreograph a dance suite based on the improvisation structure previously mentioned. The pairs may perform the sections in an order of their own choosing and may also add counterbalance partner shapes while balancing on the prop. *Suggested music:* *MCD* Vol. 2, #14-16.

Cooling Down

Sharing and Evaluating Choreography: For a 30-minute lesson, class is divided in half—performers and observers. Roles are changed after the first half performs. Observers mirror back a movement or shape they observed. For a 60- to 90-minute lesson, two or three pairs at a time share their suites. Observers discuss exciting moments they observed.

Closure Circle: Dancers form a circle and briefly review the *balance* concept vocabulary verbally and physically.