

CoolBoard Instructions for Neurodivergence

Please note: These instructions are for advice only, and in no way guarantee safety. All balance boards are inherently unstable so care must be used and risks evaluated. USE IT AT YOUR OWN RISK.

Starting to balance:

The bigger 40 cm Disc is the easiest option to balance on because it is more stable. Most people like to start with the Disc being 1 ½ inches high. The Discs are inflatable, and so are adjustable – let out some air to make it closer to the ground and make the movements smaller and so less challenging – or inflate to increase the challenge.

- Place the Disc on the floor in a clear area.
- Place the CoolBoard dead centrally on the Disc – just make sure its positioned such that the edge of the CoolBoard won't pop the plug out of the Disc, so either point the plug sideways or lengthways, and not diagonally.
- Place one foot towards one end of the Board centred toe to heel.
- Place the other foot **lightly** at the other end.
- Then attempt to balance the Board so it is not touching the ground.
- You are now balancing!
- Posture – good posture helps both physically and mindfully – feet equally placed symmetrically on the Board, slightly soft/bent knees, tail tucked in a little, nice straight back, shoulders back and down, neck upright with head stacked on top.

What to do next? Some people get enough joy from balancing that it is enough for them, but many people like to add to the challenge by including physical and/or mental tasks, which can provide many mental, emotional, and physical benefits. The following lists of tasks are by no means exhaustive – imagination is the limit – so get inventive and find out what works for you.

Children often get excited, so it is good if you can get them to focus on learning to keep the Board level with good posture. This allows body and mind to learn and remember that centred feeling, imprinting it. You can always let them have some 'play' time on it wobbling about for fun to burn some off, before getting down to more focused balancing. As they improve you can use the Ball as a carrot saved for after doing tasks on the Disc.



Physical tasks whilst balancing on the Disc:

- Lower an edge to the floor and then re-centre. By re-centring between movements it helps the user to mentally and physically re-centre. (left edge, right edge, front/toe edge, back/heel edge)
- Lower a corner to the floor then re-centre – same as above.
- Head and Eye movements – slowly rotate your head from side to side, then try moving your eyes up, down, left and right.
- Play catch with a soft ball or mini bean bag. If you can juggle – try!
- Hang a table tennis ball from the ceiling (bit of cotton and some tape – done) set the CoolBoard up on Disc within reach of the hanging ball, bat the ball with left or right hand while balancing.
- Body tapping – tap left hand to right shoulder, tap right hand to left shoulder, tap hand to opposing knee, bring hands together and clap. Try sequencing various taps, including double taps etc.
- Playing it cool – balance as normal – now try to clasp your hands behind your back whilst keeping the Board level. Add in keeping eye contact with someone stood in front of you. Try maintaining a conversation. Try closing eyes. This can be fun and challenging, make it cool!
- A bit of cool – do ‘snowboarding grabs’ – while balancing, squat down and touch the edge of the board. You can use either hand and go for any edge, including through the legs for a ‘back-side grab’. Kids, big and small, often respond well to ‘snowboardy/skateboardy’ moves!
- One legged – with the Board centrally on the Disc – place one foot dead centrally above the Disc – balance. This is more advanced, so a helping hand or wall within reach is good to start.
- One legged step – start as above, then try to touch the other foot to the floor in front of the Board, and then behind.
- 30 cm Disc – swap the 40cm for the 30 cm Disc – the movement will be more challenging, and the same tasks can be added once the initial balance is achieved.
- Mix it up! Some of these tasks can be done at the same time to further increase the challenge, e.g. one legged catch, or mix with the mental tasks below.

Mental tasks whilst balancing on the Disc:

As I am sure you are aware, research has shown that doing mental tasks while balancing has a positive effect on those with neurodivergence, behavioural issues, and more. Getting both the body and brain working together as well as both hemispheres of the brain.

- Count – try to keep the Board level while you count to a target number, e.g. 50.
- Count down – same as above counting backwards.
- Recite the alphabet - both forwards and backwards.
- Spell – start with simple words and increase difficulty.
- Read from a wall chart or similar
- Mental Maths – perform mental arithmetic – start easy and increase.
- Memory games – recite a poem, remember a list of items, sing a song, listen to a story and say back what happened.
- Pretty much anything mental can be done while balancing – so get creative and make it fun! E.g. List what you have for dinner for the last week in order, and mark the dinners out of 10...
- Mix it up! Add more physical tasks while doing a mental task, e.g. ‘play it cool’ while reciting the alphabet backwards.