

# Ultimate Pathways Beam

Item #11293

**What Are the Educational Applications?**

Balancing skills are important components at any level in Physical Education. When teaching these types of activities weight transfer and center of gravity should be important points for discussion. In the same respect, students should also understand the importance of body control and manipulation. By having body awareness a student can fine tune movements and have success performing various skills.

**How Can I Use This Product With My Students?**

Make your course as difficult or easy as you'd like! Add New and improved! Form a balance challenge up to 24 ft. long! Flexible design features 6 sturdy, interlocking foam beams on bases that allow the beams to rotate 180 degrees, giving instructors unlimited flexibility in the pathways they can create. And, each beam segment has 1 channel cut into it that accepts a segmented hoop, creating an additional balance challenge. Recommended for students up to 175 lbs. 4"H x 7"W. Some sample activities are described below. Assume for all activities that there is a panel mat underneath each beam for safety.

**Activity #1-Balance Walks**

Set up Giant Obstacle Course Putt Billiards so that the Discuss with students the importance of safety and spotting each other when using the beam. Proper walking form is to hold your arms straight out to the side making a "T" shape with you body to assist in balancing. The spotter walks behind the student either to one side of the beam or with the beam between legs while feet are on the floor and placing hands slightly under the student's under arms, but not touching. This way if the student becomes unbalanced the spotter simply catches the fall at the student's ribs to rebalance the him/her. Make sure students do not step on the beam without a spotter and that all students have a chance to do both jobs. When walking on the beam, students want to hold their "T" position and look at a spot directly in front of them that will help keep their head up and centered. Students can do several types of walks such as:

- Stepping with one foot in front of the other touching toe to heel
- Between steps taking foot the that is being brought forward and bending the stable foot knee

so that the stepping foot dips down slightly below the beams height and then is placed down in front of the stable foot. Repeat with alternate foot.

- Between steps taking the foot that is being brought forward and slowly with a straight leg kicking it up as close to waist height as possible and holding the position, and then placing it in front of stable foot. Repeat with alternate foot.
- Between steps taking the foot that is being brought forward and slowly with a straight leg, kicking it up as close to waist height as possible and holding the position, and then bending that leg so that foot touches the knee of the stable foot then placing it in front of stable foot. Repeat with alternate foot.
- Between steps taking foot that is being brought forward and slowly with a straight leg, kicking it up as close to waist height as possible and holding the position, and then bending that leg so that foot touches the knee of the stable foot, then turn knee out to the side, hold, then back to front and



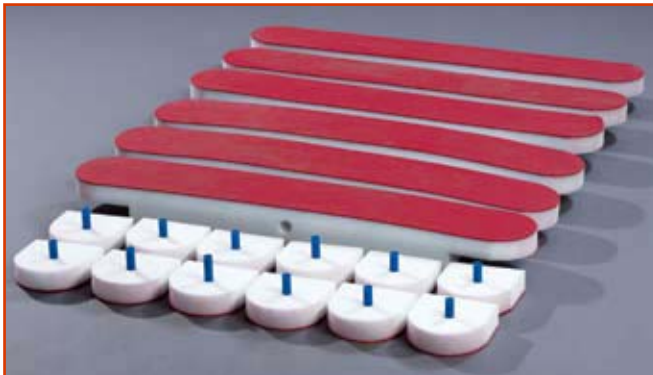
then placing it in front of stable foot. Repeat with alternate foot.

- Gallop down beam with same foot forward;
- Gallop down beam alternating foot every two to three moves;
- Slide facing sideways;
- Jump moving forward;
- Hop moving forward;
- Skip moving forward;
- Grapevine step facing sideways;
- Combine any of above listed movements

The beam setup can be either individual or you can connect some or all of the beams to make shapes. Students can choose their movement, or you can assign each beam in the shape to a different move so that every time there is a new beam the move changes. Another variation is to place poly spots of tape marks on certain places and have students stop and perform a balance, hop, or, jump on those spots, then continue moving. Beams in a shape work better as a station than a whole group activity because they create too much wait time.

### Activity #2-Beanbag Head Balance

Using the various movements and safety described in Activity #1, take a beanbag and ask students to perform movements while balancing a beanbag on their heads. This activity focuses on body control, balance, and precision rather than speed, so students are inclined to take their time and move more gracefully, rather than rushing through the skill.



### Activity #3-Obstacle Course Relay

Use Activity #1 or #2 movements as part of an obstacle course relay where in between other activities students must move a specific way down the beam in order to move to another task. Depending on the age level and skills of the students, the spotter element may be eliminated here but that is at the discretion of the instructor. The relay can be done for time or as a station. To add difficulty, insert hula hoops into the segmented hoop channel for students to change levels by ducking or crawling underneath the hoops.

### Activity #4-Dismounting

For this activity, place 5 bell ball arches in various areas Dismounting is how a person gets off of a piece of gymnastics equipment. Typically, this is done in public school physical education classes with a jump or stepping of the apparatus. Depending on your student's level here is a short list of dismounts to have your students practice:

- Straight body
- Quarter turn
- Half turn
- Three quarter turn
- Full turn
- Tuck
- Pike
- Straddle
- Star jump (open body position similar to jumping jack)

### Activity #5-Titanic

Titanic is a cooperative game based on the true story of the sinking ship. During the introduction students will be asked what they know about the real Titanic and that will be used as a segway to the activity. At that point it will be explained that the students are going to reenact the events of that night the Titanic was sinking, but try and change history so everyone survives. When done with introduction, tell students to show the listening position when they are ready to board the ship.

Have students find a space inside a large area of mats placed on the floor. These mats will represent the deck on the ship. Every student must have a place on the deck. Students will be explained in dramatic version that the Titanic is sinking in freezing water and they are on the deck. The students or "passengers" must find a way to get across to the life raft on the other side of the gym using the pieces of equipment available. Between the Titanic and the life raft are several large pieces of ice (YOU CAN USE ULTIMATE PATHWAYS BEAMS FOR THESE) that students may stand on temporarily to help them reach the life raft. All other parts of the gym are water. The water is freezing cold, so if a student touches the water at any time while crossing they must go back to the Titanic and start over.

The objective is for the entire class to get across to

the life raft without leaving anyone behind. If one person is left the group is not successful. You can provide students with minimal items to help them move between the ice – scooters, rope, poly spots or ULTIMATE PATHWAYS BEAMS.

This game is the ultimate test of cooperation skills. Total chaos occurred the night of the Titanic sinking. Many more lives could have been saved if people had cooperated with one another. We will see if we can change history that night. Question and answer techniques will be used periodically during the activity to stress cooperation and safety. Students who make it across to the life raft will have a survey to fill out about their individual-versus-group success (variation: the higher the grade the less equipment or mats scattered in the space).

### How Do I Make This Product Developmentally Appropriate For My Students?

- Prior to using Ultimate Pathways Beam teachers should teach correct form for various movements such as leaping, etc.
- Prior to using Ultimate Pathways Beam teachers should teach proper spotting technique
- Prior to using Ultimate Pathways Beam teachers should teach safe landing technique
- Remind students to be aware of others and where Ultimate Pathways Beam are placed throughout the gymnasium to minimize bumps and falling
- Ultimate Pathways Beam are firmly planted and connected in the proper places
- Can be used with various ages and skill levels but recommended for beginners and/or younger individuals

### How Does This Product Relate to Current Educational Thinking?

Despite the type of balance movement being

performed center of gravity is an essential element. This basic concept is also applied in a variety of sports-related settings. Having a sense of ones body and understanding how to manipulate it with various pieces of equipment at varying levels is essential to any program.

By incorporating a balance beam that is low to the ground and can be set up to create pathways, a physical education program expands the possibilities of learning for students.

In view of COPEC'S (Council on Physical Education of Children) position that all activities have both appropriate and inappropriate practices, please list and describe a few appropriate practices regarding how this item or these activities are valuable to a physical education program.

- Teaching movement skills
- Can be used in non-sport setting
- Can be used indoors or outdoors
- Appropriate for a variety of age ranges
- Appropriate for a variety of skill ranges
- Allows individual development in a group activity session
- Easy to incorporate as a differentiated instruction too

### Safety Issues & Concerns

- Make sure Ultimate Pathways Beam is securely planted in place and parts snugly fit together
- Do not allow students to stand to close on Ultimate Pathways Beam when others are using simultaneously
- Do not allow students to pull on Ultimate Pathways Beam as this can result in the item coming apart
- Place a panel mat underneath Ultimate Pathways Beam prior to use
- When appropriate have students spot each other when using Ultimate Pathways Beam

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