

## THE ROLE OF BALANCE BOARDS IN SPORTS


While it is obvious that good balance plays an important roll in most sports, it is less obvious how to improve existing balance skills and acquire new ones. A Balance Board can be a valuable piece of athletic training equipment for both of these purposes. Use of a Balance Board sharpens existing balance skills by training the neuromuscular system to quickly recognise and correct even the slightest deviation from equilibrium. This quick response time strengthens the athlete's ability to recover from loss of balance and control.

In addition to strengthening existing balance skills, Balance Boards can assist even advanced athletes in gaining new balance skills by putting the athlete into demanding and quickly changing balance scenarios not normally encountered during their existing training regime or sport. With even a little repetition, the athlete quickly learns patience and focus during near-panic moments, control while on the edge, and valuable recovery skills.

Known in technical terms as "**Proprioception**" (the ability to sense the position, orientation and movement of the body and its parts), with regular use of a Balance Board this sense of body awareness is further developed in athletes of all levels as well as non-athletes. With repetition, the neuromuscular system becomes accustomed to recovering from loss of balance and control therefore corrective actions and responses become increasingly automatic. With increased recovery skills embedded in muscle memory, the athlete is free to remain focused on the task at hand and thus, concentration is further enhanced.


This ability to quickly regain control builds confidence, reduces risk of injury, and allows athletes to look and plan ahead, improving performance and results. Although there are many common athletic benefits derived from improved balance through the use of a Balance Board, and dozens of specific applications to each sport, below we examine some primary benefits to specific sports.

### SNOW BOARDING



The Balance Board is an ideal training tool for Snow Boarders that allows you to gain great skills off the snow. Snow Boarders rely on good balance constantly while alternating edges and carving out turns. Good foot control, foot strength, and feel for the board and its edges are required to continue advancing in skill level and abilities. The Balance Board is an excellent tool for strengthening the feet as well as training them to make quick adjustments as is often required in Snow Boarding. While the side-to-side motion of the Balance Board is most visibly noticeable, a great deal of fore/aft balance is required and can be further developed on a Balance Board. Snow Boarders rely on fore/aft balance skills on every edge change. Once basic Balance Board skills are mastered, riding on tiptoes will challenge and dramatically improve this fore/aft proficiency, while strengthening feet and ankles to the max. For those boarders not lucky enough to live near a ski area, a Balance Board allows them to stay on top of their boarding skills 7 days a week, year-round, day or night, making their trips to the mountain that much more successful and fun. Even if you only get a handful of days a year, athletic training on a Balance Board will make a noticeable difference in how quickly you adapt to being back on your snowboard and how quickly your skills and abilities progress. Since with a Balance Board you can keep your balance, reaction and recovery skills sharp year-round, a Balance Board is a great investment and enjoyable way to reduce the risk of injury. **(Recommended board Zippy).**

### WAKEBOARDING




Wake Boarders can easily benefit from Balance Board training. To begin with, they are both "Board" oriented, requiring the rider to constantly adjust centre of mass over a board that is quickly changing plains and speeds. The Wake Boarder depends on strong yet skilled feet, strong ankles, strong legs, excellent balance, and use of proper stance and alignment. The Wake Boarder also depends on quick recovery skills because on the water, things can happen extremely fast. The Balance Board makes a perfect piece of training equipment for the Wake Boarder because it develops the skills and strength in all these areas and more. The action of a Balance Board when rocking side to side has many similarities to the action

## THE ROLE OF BALANCE BOARDS IN SPORTS

and feel of Wake Boarding. Once the basics are mastered, Wake Boarders can continue to challenge and enhance their balance skills by changing their stance to face length-wise with the balance board. Another great aspect of the Balance Board for Wake Boarders is that it is a great warm up tool for those waiting their turn on the water. When Wake Boarding is only possible on the weekends or on a seasonal basis, a Balance Board provides a great way to keep your Boarding skills intact and progressing 7 days a week, any weather condition, day or night, indoors or out. By using a Balance Board to keep your balance, reaction and recovery skills sharp, and your feet and leg muscles strong in between Wake Board sessions, you reduce your risk of blowouts and injuries on the days you take to the water.

**(Recommended board Flow/Zippy).**


### **SKATE BOARDING**



Like many other sports, skate boarding has grown to become a highly evolved and challenging sport pushing young athletes to perform tricks of extreme difficulty, requiring years of hard training. The Balance Board is about as close to a perfect match for a training tool that a skate boarder could ask for. The Balance Board enhances many of the same skills a skate boarder relies on day in day out; balancing on a board that is constantly changing plains while requiring instantaneous adjustments to one's centre of gravity. A Balance Board will assist skate boarders in many areas of their skating. One specific example would be re-entry from air tricks in the ramp. When a skater descends the wall for re-entry, the board will quickly change plains as the ramp surface changes from the vertical to the horizontal. This requires the skater to quickly adjust centre of mass to maintain centre over the changing riding surface. The Balance Board requires similar adjustments to be made constantly. Advanced skaters can push Balance Board tricks to the extreme, creating ever-challenging situations to continuously challenge and improve their skills. Since you may not always be able to skate when or where you want, a Balance Board provides a great way to keep your Skating skills intact and progressing 7 days a week, any weather condition, day or night, indoors or out. By keeping your balance, reaction, and recovery skills sharp, and your leg muscles strong through Balance Board training in between skating opportunities, you reduce your risk of accidents, falls and injuries on the days you skate.

**(Recommended board SK8/Indy).**

### **IN-LINE SKATING**



Balance Boards are a great training tool for In-Line skaters. With the short length and running surface of the In-Line skate (as compared to say, a snow ski), Fore/Aft balance is crucial to avoiding falls. While Balance Boards can do wonders for general stability and balance, they can also go a long way towards further developing and maintaining fore/aft balance. In the most basic stance on a Balance Board (feet facing forward across the length of the board) fore/aft balance is constantly engaged while the rider moves the board from side to side. To emphasize training specific to this fore/aft balance while on a Balance Board, the rider can turn their feet and face length-wise with the board. When riders reach an advanced level on the Balance Board, they can ride with feet facing length-wise on the board while side-by-side (in a "hang ten" type of position). This extremely challenging position (only to be attempted by advanced riders) is an excellent exercise to further promote fore/aft balance. Another great fore/aft exercise for the advanced rider is to ride on tiptoes. For those who work from 9 to 5 and In-Line skating is only possible on the weekends, a Balance Board provides a great way to keep your In-Line Skating skills intact and progressing 7 days a week, any weather condition, day or night, indoors or out. By keeping your balance, recovery and reaction skills sharp, and your leg muscles strong through Balance Board training in between skating opportunities, you reduce your risk of accidents, falls and injuries on the days you skate.

**(Recommended board Flow/Zippy).**

## THE ROLE OF BALANCE BOARDS IN SPORTS



### **FIGURE SKATING & ICE SKATING**

Both the Figure Skater and the Ice Skater will find Balance Boarding a terrific boost to their skating skills. Since a great amount of Figure and Ice skating skill lies in the feet, a Balance Board is a natural compliment and excellent training device. Balance Boards strengthen the feet and sharpen the many muscles of the feet for improved balance. Both Figure and ice Skaters will appreciate the fore/aft balance skills that can be gained and maintained on a Balance Board. Figure skaters will appreciate the foot control required to take Balance Board riding to a higher level. Ice Skating and Figure Skating involve constant recovery from loss of balance. Regular use of a Balance Board enhances agility and a skater's ability to quickly recover from off-balance situations. A Balance Board can continue to challenge even advanced Ice & Figure Skaters by changing positions on the board and trying advanced manoeuvres. Once a figure skater has mastered the basic riding skills, they can attempt riding on their tiptoes, training and utilizing very similar muscles and skill sets used in difficult Figure Skating manoeuvres. Figure Skaters will also enjoy the challenge of balancing on the Balance Board with one foot, simulating the many manoeuvres that require sustained one-foot control and balance. Figure Skaters who become advanced Balance Board riders can attempt 180s and 360s on their Balance Boards. When Figure & Ice Skating is only possible on the weekends or seasonally, a Balance Board provides a great way to keep your Skating skills intact and progressing 7 days a week, any weather condition, day or night, indoors or out. By keeping your balance, recovery and reaction skills sharp, and your feet and leg muscles strong through Balance Board Training in between skating opportunities, you reduce your risk of accidents, falls and injuries on the days you take to the ice. **(Recommended board Flow).**

### **WINDSURFING**

A Balance Board can be a valuable piece of training equipment for the Windsurfing enthusiast, competitor, or for the total beginner. Since Windsurfing is board oriented, a Balance Board naturally builds on the skills required to learn or excel at this challenging sport. With ever changing wind speeds, changes of course and the need for making quick and skilled adjustments with the feet, Windsurfing places non-stop multi-directional demands on the athlete's balance skills and abilities. A Balance Board places similar demands on the rider; teaching and improving skills in many areas while improving strength of the feet, ankles and legs. Experienced Windsurfers will appreciate the foot skill and balance required to change riding stance and directions on a Balance Board. To build leg strength and further challenge balance skills, once basic Balance Board riding skills are mastered, a rider can lower their stance on the Balance Board. As skills progress, the rider can attempt lower and lower positions until learning to ride in a squat or low surf-style position. A Balance Board facilitates quick learning of new balance skills and techniques, supports the maintenance of existing skills and rapidly improves ability to recover from loss of balance, helping the Windsurfer return to centre of balance quickly. For those who can only Windsurf on the weekends or on a seasonal basis, a Balance Board provides a great way to keep balance skills intact and progressing 7 days a week, any weather condition, day or night, indoors or out, any time of the year. Keeping balance skills sharp on a Balance Board allows the weekend or seasonal Windsurfer to return to their previous skill level quicker, begin making progress sooner, and reduce the risk of injury. **(Recommended boards Longboard/Zippy).**

### **MOTOCROSS & BMX**

Motocross and BMX riders can gain valuable skills by adding a Balance Board to their training regimen. While it has never been scientifically proven to our knowledge, we believe it is likely that the top Motocross riders in the world possess some of the best balance skills in the world. While there is a lot of muscle and throttle involved in getting to the top of the Motocross world, there is also a tremendous amount of finesse, skill, balance, endurance and all-around athleticism. These athletes push their bodies, skills, courage, minds and machines to the max. A Balance Board can add new dimensions to off-track training and can be taken along to use while travelling and while at remote practice locations and tracks. All athletes including Motocross Riders and Racers know that anything that gives them an edge over their

## THE ROLE OF BALANCE BOARDS IN SPORTS

Competition is valuable, provided it meets the test of being easily and conveniently incorporated into their already demanding schedule. A Balance Board meets this test with flying colours. It is compact and easy to transport, fun to use, delivers great balance and strength training as well as a cardiovascular workout. Once basic Balance Board riding skills are mastered, these athletes can continue to challenge their skills by practicing advanced riding techniques. The Balance Board strengthens the feet, ankles, and legs and sharpens overall body awareness, sense of space, and centre of gravity. For those Motocross and BMX riders who may only be able to get out on weekends or on a seasonal basis, the Balance Board provides a great way to keep your balance skills intact and progressing 7 days a week, year-round, any weather condition, day or night, indoors or out. By keeping your balance and reaction skills sharp, your feet, ankle and leg muscles strong, and your recovery skills alert on a Balance Board, you reduce your risk of crashes and injuries on the days you ride. **(Recommended board Zippy/Indy).**



### SNOW SKIING

The Balance Board is an outstanding training tool for Snow Skiers of all levels. Like Snow Boarders, Snow Skiers rely on balance skills with every turn. The more advanced a Snow Skier becomes, the more the feet play a critical role in making minuscule adjustments quickly. In addition, ability to separate the upper and lower body becomes increasingly important as a Snow Skier's ability progresses. For the feet, the Balance Board provides excellent strength and balance training. For separation of upper and lower body, the Balance Board is outstanding. The better one becomes at riding a Balance Board, the quieter the upper body becomes, even while the lower body and feet may be working the Balance Board very actively. Similarly, the better one becomes at Snow Skiing, the quieter the upper-body becomes even when the feet and legs are very active and working intensely. Snow Skiers also require a great deal of Fore/Aft balance skills and the Balance Board is a great piece of equipment to refine these skills. Advanced skiers use fore/aft balance for advanced skiing techniques such as pressuring the tail of a ski while maintaining centre. Novice Snow Skiers will advance more quickly with Balance Board experience. For those Skiers not lucky enough to live near a ski area, a Balance Board allows them to maintain and refine their balance skills 7 days a week, making those precious days on the snow that much more successful and fun. Even if you only ski a couple days per year, training on a Balance Board will make a noticeable difference in how quickly you adapt to being back on your skies and how quickly your skills and abilities progress. Since with a Balance Board you can keep your balance skills, reactions and recovery skills sharp year-round, a Balance Board is a great investment and enjoyable way to reduce the risk of injury. **(Recommended board Zippy).**



### SURFING


Balance Boards are a favourite among surfers of all levels. Although obviously not as fun and rewarding as surfing itself, on days when the waves are flat or when things like jobs, nightfall, distance from the surf, or other annoying things get in the way of surfing, a Balance Board can at least provide some fun, challenge and maintenance of your skills and strength. No matter what Balance Board a surfer may choose, the benefits of regular use are sure to follow. To begin with, balancing on a board on top of a roller creates many similar balance challenges that the surfer encounters while on a board riding a moving wave. Surfers are in a state of quick and never ending adjustment of centre of mass over their boards while on a wave. On a Balance Board, surfers can replicate this dynamic by keeping the balance board moving from side to side while changing body positions and orientations (riding with feet facing forward across the board's length and then changing so the feet face sideways, length-wise with the board). Surfers can get down in a low position as if in the tube and with practice, grab the rail and maintain balance. Surfers can also pump a Balance Board in similar fashion

## THE ROLE OF BALANCE BOARDS IN SPORTS

to generating speed on smaller waves. Balance Boards build leg and foot strength, critical to advancing surfing skills. Most surfers prefer to ride Balance Boards with bare feet, further refining the micro-muscle memory and strength in their feet that assist in balance and control of the board. On the Surf Pro by Indo, the deck is extra long to allow plenty of space for long board cross-stepping (walking the length of the board) and hanging ten.

**(Recommended board Longboard/Indy).**

### HOCKEY



Ice Hockey (and Roller Hockey) players not only have the challenge of balancing on two small blades, but also must do so in the midst of heavy contact and impact from other skaters. While it is expected that Hockey Players will take many falls, improved balance skills will help them recover from near-falls and keep them in the game. With all the contact in Hockey, being centred is crucial to taking and delivering checks. It does not take much to put a skater down on the ice if they are already off balance. A Balance Board builds the skills and additional strength necessary for quick recovery from being off balance. Shot making can also benefit hugely from being centred at the time of shot execution. Hockey players must scramble and scrap for a shot opportunity. Most often, opportunities to score come at frantic times in the midst of chaos. When a skater is balanced, or at least near balanced, they have the power and body position to take their best shot. When a skater must attempt a shot from an off-balance position, power and accuracy are greatly diminished along with the odds of scoring. A Balance Board builds strength in the feet and legs, develops fore/aft balance, quickens balance reactions and balance recovery skills. For the seasonal Hockey Player or those who have limited Ice-Time during the week, a Balance Board allows for training 7 days a week, keeping balance skills and foot strength in top form. For the occasional Hockey Player, a Balance Board is a great investment and enjoyable way to reduce the risk of injury by keeping balance skills sharp. **(Recommended board Zippy/Indy).**

### NON-ATHLETES

One does not have to be an Olympic hopeful, a competitive athlete or a regular gym user to benefit from a Balance Board. Research has shown clearly the benefits of exercise and continued mental challenge and stimulation. The Balance Board provides these benefits and more. Five minutes on a Balance Board will convince you of its ability to provide you with quality cardiovascular and strength training. The concentration required to maintain equilibrium will convince you of the Balance Board's ability to focus your mind and attention on the task at hand. Non-Athletes can reap the overall health benefits offered by a Balance Board and enjoy the process along the way.

#### **Benefits come in the form of:**

- Improved strength of the feet, ankles and legs
- Improved centre of balance
- Heightened body awareness
- Improved cardiovascular system
- Greater endurance
- Increased confidence
- Better agility
- Improved ability to recover from trips and adjust to uneven terrain while walking
- Rehabilitate after injury
- Greater overall safety during routine mobility. i.e. getting out of the car, picking up or carrying heavy items around the home.

In addition, Non-Athletes who may decide to take up a sport can be better prepared for the challenge through Balance Board Training. For those who unable to get to a gym regularly, a

## THE ROLE OF BALANCE BOARDS IN SPORTS

Balance Board can be used indoors 7 days a week, regardless of outdoor weather condition



### **CHILDREN & TEENS**

Children and Teens can benefit from a Vew-Do Balance Board in many ways. To begin with, a Balance Board is VERY FUN and children love them. This means that children will want to ride the board often, getting a workout and enjoying every minute of it. As children progress and become more skilled in their riding abilities, their self-confidence will rise. Children who may be struggling with a weight problem will benefit because unlike running, a Balance Board is FUN and children really do enjoy spending time on them and sharing them with their friends. Children who are (or will be) participating in sports gain an early edge from Balance Board Training due to all the skills and strength the Balance Board builds. Children can get a good cardiovascular workout on a Balance Board while gaining agility, coordination, foot, ankle and leg strength, and body awareness and balance skills. Children can prepare for seasonal Winter Sports in the summer and Summer Sports in the winter, helping them to regain skills quickly, begin making progress sooner and avoid injury due to preparedness. The Vew-Do Balance Board teaches recovery skills and reactions, freeing the young athlete's mind for greater focus and learning.

Once basic skills are mastered, children can continue to challenge their abilities with advanced Balance Board riding techniques. (See tricks). Children and Teens can enjoy a Balance Board 7 days a week, year-round, indoors and out, regardless of outdoor weather conditions. A Vew-Do Balance Board gets the children off the sofa and into life. As a gift, the Vew-Do Balance Board is a favourite for children and it will not end up in the cupboard after the first couple of uses. If you are buying a Balance Board for a child, teen or other beginner please read and follow the safety guidelines. **(Recommended boards Mini, 101, SK8 or Indy).**



### **ATHLETIC TRAINERS & COACHES**

Athletic Trainers and Coaches will appreciate the skills a Vew-Do Balance Board can build and reinforce in their students. The Vew-Do Board is something that students will actually look forward to riding and can be used as a reward for a job well done. With strength and skill building that benefits all true sports and athletes, the broad applications of the Balance Board make it a great tool for the trainer to keep near by. During many athletic training sessions, some athletes are doing drills while others may be waiting their turn. The Balance Board can be used to keep idle athletes busy, focused, warmed up, and honing skills. If a Trainer or Coach believes her students would benefit from better balance, stronger feet, ankles and legs, increased athletic confidence (which transfers to overall personal confidence), better sense of centre, quicker recovery skills and a challenging yet fun way to achieve these benefits, then a Balance Board should be included on their list of training tools for this season. (See exercises).

These same strength and skill benefits contribute towards reducing risk of injury. Trainers and Coaches will appreciate how much children enjoy riding a high quality Balance Board. Once basic Balance Board riding skills are acquired, student athletes can continue to challenge their balance skills by trying advanced riding techniques.  
**(Recommended boards Zone Solo or Zone Pro Complete).**