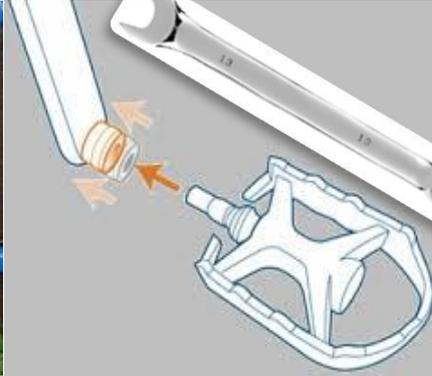


Stabiliser Free SESSION PLAN



A **regular** bicycle can be used as a balance bike by simply removing the pedals:

- * A 15mm spanner is needed
- * The drive side (right side with cogs) unscrews as usual
- * The non-drive side (left side with no cogs) unscrews the **opposite** way (clockwise to loosen)



And **lower the seat** so that both feet are flat on the ground. Usually requires a 13mm spanner, Allen key or could be quick release.

With the pedals removed and put safely to one side and the seat lowered we are ready to get going!

Typical session:

Safety checks and set up:

- 1: **Check** the **bikes** e.g. tyres pumped, no loose parts, brake works etc
- 2: Do a quick **check** of the **playground** to make sure there is no debris, stones, glass etc
- 3: Place **cones** to mark out a circle/rectangle, needs to be large enough for your group (at least 1 bike apart)
- 4: Fit **helmets** to each child

There are **4 important skills** to learn before replacing a bike with pedals:

- strides:** Demonstrate how a giant or T-Rex walks (get used to holding weight of bike)
- quick steps:** Demonstrate how an T-Rex runs (speed creates momentum which creates balance)
- hops:** Demonstrate kangaroo hops (2 feet push at same time – tricky coordination for little-uns)
- gliding:** Challenge the child to quick step or hop as a run up and then lift both feet in the air and glide for 2 meters before putting them back down. Increase the distance with confidence.

To improve **balance and safety awareness**, always encourage children to **keep their head up** and look ahead. Find a feature to have them focus on if possible.

Replacing the pedals:

- 1 **Replace one pedal:** Children to place one foot onto the pedal and to scoot along using their other foot. When they are happy with this you may put both pedals on.
- 2 **Hold the child (not the bike):** Place both hands on their shoulders and ask the child to place both feet on the pedals. They will find it a bit wobbly to begin with but reassure them that you have hold of them safely.
- 3 **First go:** Supporting the child, they may now move off by pedalling. At first this will feel odd and occasionally a foot may slip off the pedal but remember to keep reassuring a child throughout. Keep repeating this until they are happy and confident.
- 4 **Setting the pedal:** Demonstrate to a child how they can use their foot to position the pedal at 2' o clock by placing one foot under a pedal and moving it upwards. With a pedal set the child may practice just this

skill. Bringing the pedal up to the 2' o clock position and driving down on the pedal to propel the bike forward. To be repeated until confident.

5 Moving off: Support the child with this. You may find that providing some stability with one hand on their handlebar is also required. With the pedal set and driven down your child can practice putting the other foot on to the pedal. This may take a number of goes and may require your support of the shoulders or standing nearby. Utilise a slight gradient in the playground if you have one for this.

6 Step back: If they are ready you will be able to let go of the shoulders and they should be able to pedal along for a short while. If you can, step back to exaggerate the distance cycled. Allow them to continue practicing this and within a short time they will be riding!

Let's build upon those skills!

Gaining confidence:

1 Using the brake: Point out both brakes and ask the children why brakes are important. Walk the children around in circle or around a perimeter of the playground and say STOP (children stop their bikes by pulling both brakes equally). Repeat several times in a fun suspenseful way (like musical chairs).

2 Pedal bike brakes: Set up a start and finish line. Children begin by standing on clean side of the bike (non-chain side) with their hands resting on handlebars and covering both brakes. Children may mount their bikes, glide and gently apply their bikes to bring them to a stop.

3 Stop box: Set up a start and finish line. Mark out a stop box area at one end of the playground – you could use chalk to draw out a box or create one using bean bags or cones. Children will glide up to the stop box. Encourage them to stop with their feet in the stop box. This should be hard as they need to reach the stop box at speed. Next progress them to using their brake to aid them stopping in the stop box.

4 Obstacle course: Use anything at hand to make the course e.g. cones, bean bags, hoops, skipping ropes or chalk lines to allow children to practice their skills. Start children one at a time and slowly to begin with. Once they are familiar with course set out you may encourage them to go a bit quicker. For progression children may also have some ideas as to the choice of layout for the obstacle course.

