

Chapter 3

Observing fundamental movement skills

What's in this chapter?

This chapter introduces some ways to help you observe and make judgements about the development of students' fundamental movement skills.

The chapter includes a checklist for each of the twelve fundamental movement skills to assist you in observing the skill components. It also includes professional development activities to help you to understand and recognise the components of each fundamental movement skill.

You should use the skills checklists and the professional development activities in this chapter along with the video, *Get skilled: Get active—Show me how*. This video has examples of students who are still developing and students who are already proficient in each fundamental movement skill.

Why should you observe fundamental movement skills?

Teachers observe students in the classroom and the playground performing a variety of skills. You can use these observations to make judgements about what students can or can't do.

Observation is a valuable tool for teaching purposes. When observing students' fundamental movement skills, you can use the information you collect to:

- plan and program lessons or activities for the whole class, small groups or individuals
- assist individual students by providing feedback about their performance
- evaluate the effectiveness of your teaching program.

How and when should you observe fundamental movement skills?

When observing fundamental movement skills it is useful to keep in mind the following considerations.

- Observation should be part of the natural teaching and learning situation. Observation needs to be unobtrusive, as some students may alter their movement pattern if they are aware that they are being observed.
- When observing students performing fundamental movement skills, you should focus on how the movement looks or which components are evident in the performance, rather than on the final outcome of the movement, such as how fast the student ran or the accuracy of the throw.
- Observation should be objective. This will come with practice and discussion with colleagues. Ask a colleague to observe and make comments on the performance of a small group of students. Compare your observations with those of your colleague.
- Fundamental movement skills need to be observed in a variety of contexts and over a period of time if you are to make a fair judgement as to whether a skill has been performed proficiently. Observation should occur in as many situations as possible and in a variety of contexts. This can include in physical education lessons, in the playground or at sport.

What do you need to observe about fundamental movement skills?

The first step when observing students perform fundamental movement skills, is to look at the overall performance of a skill. The key to this is to ask: *Does it look right?*

More detailed observations can be undertaken when you are familiar with the individual components of the skill and there is a clear purpose for these observations. For example, it may be to provide feedback to students or to evaluate a unit of work focusing on kicking.

It is not necessary to be a specialist PE teacher or to have a strong background in sports to be able to observe students and make judgements about their performance of fundamental movement skills. Most teachers have a good idea of what a proficient performance looks like. It is the ability to explain why a student doesn't look right that requires a higher level of observational skill.

Introducing the checklists

Checklists have been provided in this resource to help you with your observation and to make judgements about students' proficiency in fundamental movement skills. There are twelve checklists. Each has the following features:

- An *overall check* to prompt you to look at the whole movement as it is being performed. If it looks right, in terms of smoothness and the coordination of the movement, then it is likely that you have observed a proficient performance of that particular skill.
- *Organisers* along the top of the checklist, which provide a focal point for observations. These may be body parts (e.g. legs, arms, head and trunk), or phases of a movement (e.g. preparation, propulsion and follow-through on landing). They are presented not in the order in which the skill should be taught, but in the order in which they are observed.

- *Components* of the skill. Each skill is broken down into either **introductory** components, which are the dark coloured boxes, or **fine-tuning** components, which are the light coloured boxes. See Chapter 2 for more information about introductory and fine-tuning components. If a student's performance of a skill does not "look right", then your observations should concentrate on the individual components. The introductory components are the ones that should be the initial focus for teaching purposes. As the student progresses, you may need to focus on the fine-tuning components.
- *Photographs* of the components, which model proficient performance of the skill.
- A *comments* section to allow you to record your observations.
- A *hints for observation* box. This section gives you information about:
 - the instructions to give to students
 - the best place for you to be positioned for observation
 - what is needed to complete the skill e.g. equipment.



Does it look right?

Features of the checklist

Static balance

Name of the skill

Photographs of the skill

Organisers to provide a focal point for your observations

Record students' names here

Overall check

Name	Overall check Does it look right?	Legs			Head and trunk		Arms 5. No excessive arm movements.	Comments
		1. Support leg still, foot flat on the ground.		3. Head stable, eyes focuses forward.				
		1	2	3	4	5		
		2. Non-support leg bent, not touching the support leg.	4. Trunk stable and upright.					

Record your observations here

Introductory components

Fine-tuning components

Hints for observation

- Instructions: "Watch me demonstrate how I want you to balance. Now stand on one leg for as long as you can or until I tell you to stop."
- Observation position: To the front.

Hints for observation

■ = Introductory components
▒ = Fine-tuning components

Static balance



Name	Overall check Does it look right?	Legs					Head and trunk		Arms	Comments
		1. Support leg still, foot flat on the ground.	2. Non-support leg bent, not touching the support leg.	3. Head stable, eyes focused forward.	4. Trunk stable and upright.	5. No excessive arm movements.				

■ = Introductory components
 ■ = Fine-tuning components

Hints for observation

- Instructions: "Watch me demonstrate how I want you to balance. Now stand on one leg for as long as you can or until I tell you to stop."
- Observation position: To the front.

Sprint run



1

4

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6

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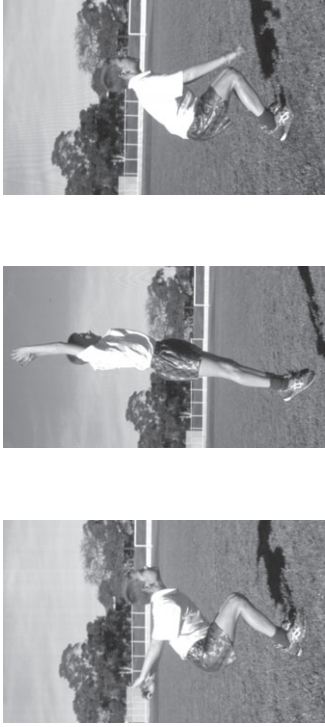
Name	Overall check	Legs		Head and trunk	Arms		Comments
	Does it look right?	1. Lands on ball of the foot.	2. Non-support knee bends at least 90° during the recovery phase.		3. High knee lift (thigh almost parallel to the ground).	4. Head and trunk stable, eyes focused forward.	

■ = Introductory components
 ■ = Fine-tuning components

Hints for observation

- Instructions: “Run as fast as you can from one end to another.”
- Observation position: To the side halfway along, and to the front
- Needed: A flat open area, approximately 20 metres long.

Vertical jump



Name	Overall check Does it look right?	Preparation		Propulsion		Landing		Comments
		1. Eyes focused forward throughout the jump.	2. Crouches with knees bent and arms behind the body.	3. Forceful forward and upward swing of the arms.	4. Legs straighten in the air.	5. Lands on balls of the feet and bends the knees to absorb landing.	6. Controlled landing with no more than one step in any direction.	

■ = Introductory components
 ■ = Fine-tuning components

Hints for observation

- Instructions: "Jump as high as you can."
- Observation position: To the side.
- Observe approximately five jumps: "Repeat until I ask you to stop."

Catch



1



2



3



4



5



6

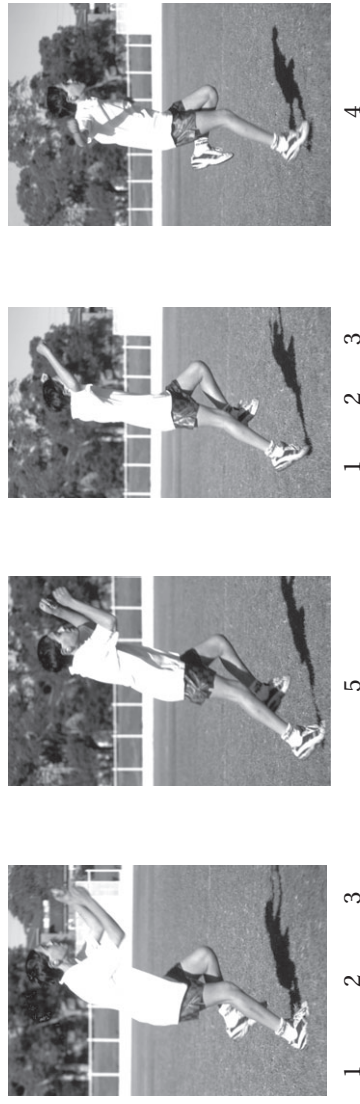
Name	Overall check Does it look right?	Preparation		Reception		Comments
		1. Eyes focused on the object throughout the catch.	2. Feet move to place the body in line with the object.	3. Hands move to meet the object.	4. Hands and fingers relaxed and slightly cupped to catch the object.	

■ = Introductory components
 ■ = Fine-tuning components

Hints for observation

- Instructions: "Catch the object with two hands."
- Observation position: To the side and slightly towards the front (45 degree angle).
- Needed: Small, soft object (Year 1); tennis ball (Year 3).

Hop



Name	Overall check Does it look right?	Legs					Head and trunk 4. Head stable, eyes focused forward throughout the jump.	Arms 5. Arms bent and swing forward as support leg pushes off.	Comments
		1. Support leg bends on landing, then straightens to push off.	2. Lands and pushes off on the ball of the foot.	3. Non-support leg bent and swings in rhythm with the support leg.	1	2			

Hints for observation

- Instructions: "Hop from one end to the other."
- Observation position: On the support side, halfway along.
- Needed: A flat open area approximately 15 metres long.

■ = Introductory components
 ■ = Fine-tuning components

Side gallop



1 2 3 4 5

Name	Overall check Does it look right?	Legs			Head and trunk		Comments
		1. Smooth rhythmical movement.	2. Brief period where both feet are off the ground.	3. Weight on the balls of the feet.	4. Hips and shoulders point to the front.	5. Head stable, eyes focused forward or in the direction of travel.	

Hints for observation

- Introduutory components
- Fine-tuning components
- Instructions: "Side gallop from one end to the other and return."
- Observation position: To the front.
- Needed: A flat open area approximately 15 metres long.

Skip



5

2

4

3

1

Name	Overall check Does it look right?	Legs				Head and trunk 4. Head and trunk stable, eyes focused forward.	Arms 5. Arms relaxed and swing in opposition to legs.	Comments
		1. Shows a rhythmic step-hop.	2. Lands on ball of the foot.	3. Knee of support leg bends to prepare for hop.				

Hints for observation

- Instructions: "Skip from one end to the other."
- Observation position: To the side, halfway along.
- Needed: A flat open area approximately 15 metres long.

■ = Introductory components
 ■ = Fine-tuning components

Overarm throw



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Name	Overall check	Preparation		Propulsion		Follow-through	Comments
	Does it look right?	1. Eyes focused on target area throughout the throw.	2. Stands side-on to target area.	3. Throwing arm moves in a downward and backward arc.	4. Steps towards target area with foot opposite throwing arm.	5. Hips then shoulders rotate forward.	

Hints for observation

- = Introductory components
- = Fine-tuning components
- Instructions: "Throw the object as far as you can." (Student may take a 2-3 step run-up.)
- Observation position: To the throwing arm side.
- Needed: A bean bag or small ball.

Leap



1



3



6

Name	Overall check		Preparation		Propulsion		Follow-through	Comments
	Does it look right?		1. Eyes focused forward throughout the leap.	2. Knee of take-off leg bends.	3. Legs straighten during flight.	4. Arms held in opposition to the legs.	5. Trunk leans slightly forward.	

Hints for observation

- Instructions: “Run up to the marker and leap as far as you can.”
- Observation position: To the side of the marker.
- Needed: One marker (or a line), and a flat open area either side.

■ = Introductory components
 ■ = Fine-tuning components

Kick (stationary ball)



1



2



3

Name	Overall check Does it look right?	Preparation		3. Non-kicking foot placed beside the ball.	Propulsion		Follow-through 6. Kicking leg follows through high towards the target area.	Comments
		1. Eyes focused on the ball throughout the kick.	2. Forward and sideward swing of arm opposite kicking leg.		4. Bends knee of kicking leg at least 90° during the back swing.	5. Contacts ball with top of the foot (a "shoelace" kick) or instep.		

Hints for observation

- Introductory components
- Fine-tuning components
- Instructions: "Run up to the ball and kick it as far as you can."
- Observation position: To the kicking leg side.
- Needed: Large soft ball.

Two-hand strike (from a T-ball stand)



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Name	Overall check	Preparation		Propulsion		Follow-through	Comments	
	Does it look right?	1. Stands side-on to target area.	2. Eyes focused on the ball throughout the strike.	3. Hands next to each other, bottom hand matches the front foot.	4. Steps towards target area with front foot.	5. Hips then shoulders rotate forward.		6. Ball contact made on front foot with straight arms.

Hints for observation

- Introductory components: "Make sure the stand is level with your waist. Hold the bat in two hands and hit the ball as far as you can."
- Fine-tuning components: Observation position: To the front of the student (side-on to the target area).
- Needed: T-ball stand, baseball bat, small soft ball.

Dodge



1



2



3



4



5

Name	Overall check	Legs		Head and trunk		Whole body	Comments
	Does it look right?	1. Changes direction by bending knee and pushing off the outside foot.	2. Change of direction occurs in one step.	3. Body lowered during change of direction.	4. Eyes focused forward.	5. Dodge repeated equally well on both sides.	

Hints for observation

- Instructions: "Run up to each marker and dodge from it as fast as you can."
- Observation position: To the front.
- Needed: Six to ten markers arranged in a zig-zag formation.

■ = Introductory components
 ■ = Fine-tuning components

Putting it into practice

Introducing the video

The video, *Get skilled: Get active—Show me how*, has been produced to help you to develop your observational skills. On the video, students from Kindergarten to Year 5 demonstrate the twelve selected fundamental movement skills. The students are described as either **developing** or **proficient** in their performance of each skill. These demonstrations will assist you to gain an understanding of each fundamental movement skill and its components.

Each skill is presented on the video in the following way:

- a graphic interface indicates the skill that is being featured
- a coloured ball identifies the level of performance of the skill (i.e. proficient or developing)
- a student performs the skill proficiently. The text and the voice-over are used to highlight each skill's components
- a number of students who have developed a few but not all of the components also perform the skill. The voice-over is used to help focus your observations on these developing components



Exploring the components of the static balance

- the skill is demonstrated once again by the proficient student. The text and a freeze frame repeat the components of the skill.

The video should be used with the checklists of the fundamental movement skills found earlier in this chapter and the professional development activities that follow.

Introducing the professional development activities

The professional development activities in this chapter will help you with your understanding and observation of fundamental movement skills. These activities can be used flexibly depending on the needs of the different audiences using the resource.

Some suggestions for using these activities include:

- At a staff development day, develop a PDHPE K-6 scope and sequence with a focused sequential approach to teaching fundamental movement skills.
- At staff meetings, introduce three or four skills per meeting and use the video to help teachers come to recognise the components of each skill.
- At stage or grade meetings, examine the fundamental movement skills which should be taught in the year or stage. Reflect on your PDHPE programs and identify where fundamental movement skills will be taught. Create a list of activities which enable students to practise their fundamental movement skills.
- At PDHPE committee meetings, work through the materials and develop strategies to inform staff about the issues relating to fundamental movement skills.
- As an individual or with a colleague, try some of the activities in your own class and discuss the findings with a colleague.

ACTIVITY 1: Looking at the big picture

Purpose:

This activity is designed for a group situation, such as staff meetings, PDHPE committee meetings or district PDHPE interest groups. It works best if you use a facilitator or presenter to lead the group through the activity.

What's needed:

- butchers paper or whiteboard
- checklists for static balance and sprint run
- snapshots of static balance and sprint run in video, *Get skilled: Get active—Show me how*.

Steps:

1. Ask the group to list the twelve fundamental movement skills in this resource. When completed, record them on butchers paper or on a whiteboard.
2. Discuss the following questions:
 - Why might these skills be considered “fundamental”?
 - How do they vary from what you may have previously thought to be fundamental movement skills?
 - What are your concerns about making judgements about students’ proficiency in performing these fundamental movement skills?
 - What is needed for you to be able to make judgements effectively and confidently?
3. Examine the checklist for the static balance. Discuss the layout and the terminology used to describe the components. Refer to the example on page 46.
4. Invite each member of the group to work with a partner. Take turns performing the static balance. Use the checklist to evaluate your partner’s performance. Share your findings with your partner.
5. Watch the introduction and the first skill on the video, which is the static balance, to become familiar with the format. Stop the video after the final closing shot of the proficient performance of the static balance (i.e. before the sprint run).
6. Ask the group to locate the “Overall check” column on the static balance checklist. Invite the group to complete the overall check column for the static balance for the students on the video. Ask the group how they identified which was the proficient student. Recall the comments made on the video for the static balance. Direct the group to the links between the student’s performance, the text on screen, the voice-over and the checklists.
7. Now examine the sprint run checklist. Invite a member of the group to perform this skill. As a group, make a decision about the overall check: Does it look right?
Watch the relevant section of the video. Encourage the group to make comments about the students’ performances. Discuss:
 - What were the observable differences between the performance of the proficient student and the developing students? Encourage the use of language similar to the components when making comments. For example “trunk unstable, lands flat-footed.”
 - Compare your observations and comments with those on the video.
8. Negotiate with the group how this session is to be continued. For example:
 - Devote some time now and some time in the near future to work through a similar process to become familiar with all the skills and their components.
 - Watch all of the video, with discussion breaks after a number of skills.

ACTIVITY 2: Focussing on a skill

Purpose:

This activity is designed to enable teachers to become familiar with the components of fundamental movement skills and to further develop their observation skills. It can be undertaken as a group activity or on an individual basis.

What's needed:

- a selection of checklists for fundamental movement skills
- video, *Get skilled: Get active —Show me how*.

Steps:

1. After reviewing all the fundamental movement skills and their components, choose one or two skills to focus on and observe in more detail.
2. Cue the video to the relevant skill. Play the video with the volume off (so that you cannot hear the voice-over). Use the checklist to record your observations of the students on the video. Replay the video to observe the skill a number of times.
3. Discuss your observations with the rest of the group.
4. Replay the video with the volume up to enable you to hear the voice-over. Compare and discuss your observations with the comments made on the video. Are there any other things you observed?
5. Repeat this process, focusing on other fundamental movement skills.

ACTIVITY 3: Testing yourself

Purpose:

This next activity can be done individually or with a colleague. It is designed to allow you to apply the knowledge and skills gained from activities 1 and 2, and to observe students in a natural setting.

What's needed:

- checklist for one fundamental movement skill
- students demonstrating this skill in a variety of situations.

Steps:

1. Select a fundamental movement skill and work through the accompanying checklist. Once you are familiar with the features of the checklist and the components of the skill (you may wish to refer to the video for this), set up some opportunities to practise observing the skill.
2. Some suggestions include:
 - Observe a small group of students in the playground.
 - Observe students in a class situation.
 - Observe selected students at sport.
 - Observe students in a variety of contexts.The focus of your observation should be on the skill components, not the outcome.
3. Remember to concentrate on one fundamental movement skill, as students will demonstrate a wide variety of movements in their activities.