

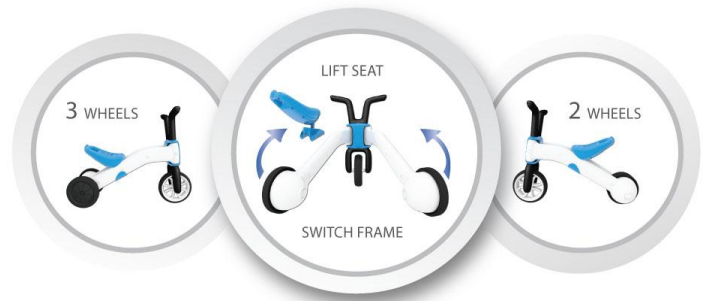
The “gradual balance” concept

Learning balance and motor skills at your child’s pace.

Until just a few years ago, the concept of a balance trainer bike (a bike without pedals that is pushed forward by the child’s feet on the ground – let’s call it a balance trainer from here on) was completely new and considered as a luxury or toy. It took off with a slow start, until recently. The balance trainer market has been growing extremely strong in recent years for 1 main reason; parents experience firsthand the incredible effect a balance trainer has on the development of their child and they proudly and actively recommend this concept to other parents. **The balance trainer market has been one of the strongest growing word-of-mouth markets in the toy and bike industry in recent years.**

While balance trainers are certainly a great step in the development process of learning to ride a bicycle (and more in general to learn coordination skills), they still are quite a challenge for the child to learn at first, as the child has typically only ridden on very stable 4-wheeled or 3-wheeled ride-ons before it makes the switch to a completely unstable balance trainer.

The “gradual balance” concept facilitates this learning process by offering a more gradual transition between stable and balance.



Phase 1: moving away from stability (age 1-2)



The **Bunzi gradual balance trainer** is specifically developed to offer a **fairly stable 3-wheel tricycle mode** when the child learns its first balance, be it with additional help from the 2 back wheels. The back wheels offer more stability, but are positioned close enough to trigger the child to feel it is in control of its own balance whenever it leans too far outside. It is purposely less stable than a traditional 4-wheel ride-on, so in first stages of using the gradual balance trainer it is recommended to supervise the child. The seat in this mode is at a fairly low position so the child can at all times reach the ground more than easily.

2 feet simultaneously: most children in the early stages will push the gradual balance trainer forward with both feet simultaneously. The

low seat facilitates this age-specific coordination.

Age 1-2 : in our observations in kindergartens, on average a child of 1.5 years (18 months) feels comfortable to start riding the gradual balance trainer in 3-wheel mode. Some start at 1, some only at 2 years, but the average is around 1.5 years. *In any case it is advisable to only let your child ride a tricycle when it has mastered the basic balance of standing and walking on its own.*

Phase 2: growing towards balance (age 2-3)



In a second phase the **Bunzi gradual balance trainer** can be switched over into **2 wheel balance mode**. From this moment on the child will learn its true balance on a ride-on it is already familiar and comfortable with.

The big advantage in this approach is that the Bunzi gradual balance trainer can be switched back and forth between 3-wheel and 2-wheel mode so easily that it becomes a gradual learning process for the child: if the 2-wheel mode is a bit too early, the product is switched back to 3-wheel mode for a few hours or even days or weeks. After spending some more time grasping the basic coordination skills and basic balance, the gradual balance trainer is switched over to the 2-wheeled balance mode. And any time the child feels a bit less comfortable in 2-wheel mode, the 3-wheel

mode is there to gain some confidence again.

Alternating feet: most children at this stage (some earlier, some later) will start to push the gradual balance trainer forward by alternating the right and left foot. The higher seat position facilitates this new coordination skill.

Age 2-3 : in our observations in kindergartens, on average a child of 2 years feels comfortable to start riding the gradual balance trainer in 2-wheel mode. Gradually between 2 and 3 years of age, the child will become more comfortable riding the 2 wheels and it is noticeable that the child starts to lean more into the turns and uses its body weight to balance and steer at the same time.

A growing bike

As mentioned, the Bunzi gradual balance trainer adapts to the child's growth.

In **3-wheel tricycle mode**, the seat will be in its lowest position, allowing the child to reach the ground so easily that it becomes more difficult (although not impossible!) to lose balance. The feet provide ample support and enhance the child's feeling of control over its own body weight. The typical parallel pushing movement of both feet in the early stages of development is easier to do when the seat is in the low position.

When switching to **2-wheel balance mode**, the seat is positioned higher, because:

- The child has grown
- It stimulates the balance feeling
- The child will be in a better ergonomic position to really push off and make speed
- The alternating pushing actions of both feet are facilitated by the higher position

Depending on the height of the child, the maximum age at which the child enjoys to ride the gradual balance trainer in 2-wheel mode is **3 to up to 5 years**. Note that the maximum rider weight for the gradual balance trainer is 25kg, which should never be exceeded.

Advantages of the gradual balance concept

- One single ride-on that the child feels comfortable with to **learn as it grows, step-by-step**. Switch back and forth between 3 wheels and 2 wheels whenever it feels right to do so.
- Every child is different: there is **no need to plan** for the right moment to buy a balance bike. Just switch to 2-wheel mode whenever you think the child is ready. If not, just switch back for a while.
- Developing balance motor skills helps the child in **developing its coordination and physical self-confidence** in a fun and gradual way.
- Motor skills are the **building blocks** of a child's future physical and mental development and there are numerous advantages in learning balance at an early age.
- Enjoy learning balance skills earlier : **kids just love balance bikes** and the gradual balance concept lengthens the period in which kids can enjoy playing on balance bikes.
- A **budget-friendly** approach as the gradual balance trainer offers both concepts in one.

Is quicker better ?

There is no rush to learn balance, so no need to worry if your child is 2 and didn't really feel confident yet to try out its balance. But, waiting for a child to become 4-5 years old and then trying to teach them to ride a bicycle for the first time without any balance training is not only old-fashioned, it is unnecessarily late. Let children enjoy learning their balance, it's fun! The most important factor in judging when to start with balance training is whether or not the child **enjoys** to ride the tricycle mode or balance mode. There is no need to push a child that is not ready for a next challenge. **Children learn by playing, so let them enjoy their learning curve !!**

We hope you will enjoy our play innovation !

Find out more at www.chillafish.com

