

BETTER BALANCE STARTS HERE

No matter your age, improving balance can help you avoid injury, stay agile and feel better overall.

Have you ever wondered at what age we go from ‘falling over’ to ‘having a fall’? Either way, balance is critical for avoiding both! Balance helps us walk, go up and down stairs, get up from a chair, and perform everyday tasks—it’s vital to our daily lives. That’s where balance training comes into play.

Balance can be improved with exercise—the more consistently you practise, the better your balance becomes.

FACT ONE

Improve reaction time

When you stumble, for any reason, balance training can help your body rebalance faster to avoid a fall.

FACT TWO

Increase strength and support joints

Strengthening the right muscles can help improve balance and also helps reduce stress on painful joints.

FACT THREE

Improve flexibility

Balance and flexibility go hand-in-hand. Incorporating exercises that increase flexibility can improve range of motion and help you move more easily.

FACT FOUR

Enhance mind-body coordination

There are lots of muscles and sensory systems involved with balance, and with balance training your brain has to make them work together. Studies suggest that there’s more than physical benefits to gain – balance training may help with mental sharpness too.

Balance training at home

Balance training is great for everyone—you can be any age, with any skill level. You can also practise anywhere with no equipment needed.

Try these a few times a week



EXERCISE ONE

'Tightrope' walk

Walk heel to toe (with no gaps in between) like you are walking on a tightrope or balance beam. You can do this alongside your kitchen bench or table if you need support. To make it harder: look straight ahead, not down at your feet. If you find it easy, try closing your eyes.



EXERCISE TWO

Single leg balance

Stand on one foot behind the back of a chair. Try to balance without using your hands on the chair back for support. Hold for 10 to 30 seconds, then change legs. Repeat 5 times on each leg. To make it harder: try closing your eyes.



EXERCISE THREE

Stand up, sit down

Sit with your feet hip-width apart, arms outstretched. Then see if you can stand up slowly. Try not to use momentum or your hands to help. Then repeat by sitting back down in the same way.



EXERCISE FOUR

Heel raises

Stand beside a bench or wall and use one hand for support. Have your feet shoulder-width apart. Slowly rise up onto your toes, hold for a second and lower again. Repeat 8 times to start. As it gets easier, increase to 15. To make it harder: lift one foot off the floor and rise on the other foot.

Remember, safety first with any balance exercises. If you are in doubt or unsure of how to improve your balance safely, seek guidance from your GP, or a physiotherapist or exercise physiologist.

If you have any concerns or questions about your health before undertaking any physical activity, please consult with a physician or health-care professional first.

Sources

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