

Fitness: Balance training

From the time you learned to walk, you've depended on balance to stay upright.

Balance is defined as your ability to safely control your body position.

Balance helps you stand, walk, run, ride a bicycle, go up or down stairs or however you move... without falling over.

Balance is one of those things you can improve at any age. Having better balance can help you prevent a fall or an injury.

It's a good idea to include balance training as a part of your overall fitness routine.

And it can start now, right where you are. For example, try standing on one foot. See how long you can stand on one foot or try standing on each side for 10 seconds. At first, you may want to hold on to a sturdy chair or use a wall to keep steady.

Walk heel to toe around the house or office.

Or walk normally in a straight line.

People may use yoga, tai chi and qi gong to improve posture, balance, coordination, endurance, and flexibility.

As with any exercise, start out slowly. Over time, you can gradually try to do the exercise for a longer time or do more repetitions.

When you first begin, it is important to have someone with you in case you feel you are going to fall. As you progress, you may be able to do some of the exercises on your own.

Here's something to think about, as people age, they lose muscle strength. This loss of strength can make them more likely to fall.

Also, their reflexes slow down. This makes it harder for them to regain their balance if they start to fall. That's why it's so important to include balance training throughout your lifetime of fitness.

No matter what moves you, keeping your balance helps you stand strong.