

Balance

According to the Balance Component by the National Health and Nutrition Examination survey, the ability to maintain balance is essential to nearly all activities associated with daily living. The balance system enables us to sense where we are in space and to maintain our posture and equilibrium while we are in movement.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/nhanes/ba.pdf)

Improving with balance requires challenging yourself. Do the “Stand on One Foot” and “Squat” exercises while increasing your challenge level. Remember, **your safety is key**, so stay at the level you are most comfortable.

Challenge Levels

- 1) Hold on to a chair with two hands.
- 2) Hold on to a chair with one hand.
- 3) Hold on to a chair with one finger.
- 4) Don't hold on to anything.
- 5) Perform the exercise with your eyes closed.



Stand on One Foot

- 1) Stand on one foot behind a chair.
- 2) Hold position for up to 10 seconds or longer.
- 3) Repeat 10-15 times.
- 4) Repeat 10-15 times with other leg.
- 5) Repeat 10-15 more times with each leg.

Squat

- 1) Stand in front of a sturdy chair (preferably with no arm rest.)
- 2) Raise arms out in front of your body, shoulder width apart.
- 3) Squat down like you are going to sit in the chair, but barely let your bottom touch the seat, then stand back up straight.
- 4) Repeat 10-15 times.
- 5) Do multiple times for better results.



Figure 1

The amazing three ways we keep upright are:

Visual Cues

Visual cues come from our eyes and tell us all sorts of information about our environment.

Our eyes help us see and prepare for potential dangers and obstacles, which can prevent falls.



The Inner Ear

The inner ear also contains a fluid-filled semi-circular canal, which gives us important information on the position of our head and its movement in space in relation to gravity.

Internal Spatial Orientation

Internal spatial orientation tells us where our arms and legs are positioned in space.

For example, if you close your eyes and then lift your arm and wave it about your head, you know where your arm is because of this inner sense of feedback.



Eldergym (2014). <http://www.eldergym.com/elderly-balance.html>.

Maintain a Positive Attitude:

- Believe it or not, your attitude will make a difference. It will likely direct your energies into a positive outcome.
- Be flexible and open to things that can help you.
- Find new ways to continue to enjoy your favorite activities.
- Be positive.
- Communicate openly and encourage others to do the same.
- Remember it's OK to ask for help.
- Keep your sense of humor.
- Don't feel guilty about asking your family, friends, and colleagues for the support you need to get your rest, exercise, and medical care.

A division of the American College of Rheumatology provided the information above, from the article *Living Well with a Rheumatic Condition*.

Helpful Websites

www.cdc.gov

www.moarthrititis.org

www.nof.org

www.niams.nih.gov

www.go4life.nia.nih.gov

www.arthritis.about.com

www.eldergym.com

www.fitnessblender.com

www.whyexercise.com