

THE BENEFITS OF BALANCE TRAINING

from Harvard Health Publishing

Ways to work balance exercise into everyday life. It may be easier than you think to fit balance training into your daily routine. Try some of the following activities:

Stand on one leg whenever you're waiting in line at the theater, bank, or grocery store. Stand on one leg while brushing your teeth: one minute on one leg while brushing the upper teeth, and another minute on the other leg while brushing the lower teeth. Keep a wobble board in your office; stand on it during a break or whenever you're on the phone. Ask someone to toss you a Frisbee or beach ball while you balance on one leg and then on the other. Practice sitting down and getting up from a chair without using your hands. Practice walking heel to toe that is, like a tightrope walker, placing the heel of one foot just in front of the toes of the opposite foot each time you take a step.

Visit a fitness center and find out if it offers balance classes or the use of (and training on) balance or wobble boards.

Balance training helps reduce the risk of falls in older adults with balance problems and women with low bone mass. It also improves postural stability after a stroke. More research is needed to identify which components of balance training do the most good and to test them for preventing falls and injuries in healthy adults. So far, the evidence hasn't been sufficient for an official recommendation, such as the one for physical activity that most of us know (by heart!): To reduce your risk for chronic disease and preserve function, get at least 30 minutes of moderate-intensity activity (such as brisk walking) on all or most days of the week, plus resistance and flexibility exercise a couple of times a week.

Though not included in official exercise guidelines, balance training can do a lot to help keep us on our feet and active.

With ankle sprains, it is important to restore ankle function as soon as possible after an injury. One important goal is to prevent the ankle from giving way recurrently during weight-bearing activity, such as running, walking, or even standing. This chronic ankle instability, often caused by inadequate healing or rehabilitation after a sprain, can result in increasingly injurious sprains, arthritis, or tendon problems.

Experts in sports medicine and physical therapy say that in addition to the usual range of motion, flexibility, and strengthening exercises, rehabilitation should include exercises aimed at training (or retraining) the body's sense of its position in space in particular, its sensation of limb and joint movement. This is a largely unconscious capacity the medical term for is "proprioception" it is what allows us, for example, to walk in the dark without losing our balance or to distinguish the brake from the accelerator without looking at our feet. Aging and injury to muscles and ligaments can take a toll on proprioception.

One form of proprioceptive exercise balance training has been shown to prevent ankle re-injury and reduce the risk of ligament problems in athletes. It's also under study for wider use to improve mobility and prevent falls and injury.

Pyour core classes are created with balance training in mind. Our Pyour strength and Pyour Shred classes are great classes to really challenge your balance, build core strength all while getting an amazing workout!