

Ten Tips to Better Balance

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Physical activity is a cornerstone of a healthy lifestyle. Yet as we age, being active comes with a higher risk of falling. Strength, agility, decision-making and reaction time are some of the factors in balance that tend to weaken and slow down with age.

These and other factors contribute to an increased risk of falling.

But there is good news! You can mitigate the effects of aging by choosing a healthy lifestyle that includes exercise and activity on a regular basis.

Balance is a skill that needs to be practiced. The familiar adage "use it or lose it" definitely applies to balance. Unfortunately, as we age we tend to be less active, which makes us more prone to falling.

While we can't prevent all types of age-related decline, we are able to lessen the impact that age-related decline has on our balance skills by doing specialized strength and balance training.

Ten Tips

1. Strength Exercises

Anti-gravity muscles + core

2. Flexibility/ROM

Maintain a good range of motion

3. Balance Exercises

Exercises should be movements that specifically challenge your ability to balance.

Movements that include the 3 planes of motion; mobility and agility; static and dynamic

4. Posture & Gait

Practice good posture; be aware of how you carry yourself

5. Sensory Check: vestibular, vision, proprioceptive

Regular check-ups

6. Meds Check

Talk to your health care practitioner

7. AAA: Alert, Aware, Attentive

Alert to changes in surroundings; aware of your environment/abilities/limitations; pay attention to how you feel, what your body is telling you: be in the moment (avoid distractions)

8. Safely Challenge Yourself

Your body will adapt to the specific demands placed upon it

9. Change & Diversify

Try something different, vary the routine, use new equipment

10. Overall Health

Weight management, diet, sleep, stress, social engagement, etc.

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