

Preventing Pain & Injury

DURING BALANCE TRAINING



INJURY PREVENTION

The only real risk of balance training is loss of balance, possibly resulting in a fall, injury or increased fear of falling. The benefits of balance exercise are many, and the risks are few.

This is largely avoidable with attention to the factors governing progression and intensity. However, there are a few things we recommend you consider to maximise your safety while exercising.

EXTRA SUPPORT

If you have very poor balance and have had several falls, you should perform balance training with someone near you for support in the initial stages until you feel safe.

VISUAL OR HEARING AIDS

If you use glasses and/or a hearing aid, have these on while you perform your balance exercises, and exercise in good lighting. Later, you may close your eyes, but in the beginning, good vision is essential for good balance.

ILLNESS OR MEDICAL CONCERNS

If you are acutely ill with an infection, fever, or any new medical problem, or have recently left hospital, don't do your balance exercises until you recover. Dehydration can cause your blood pressure to drop when standing and make you lose your balance if you challenge it.

NEW MEDICATIONS

If you have started a new medication and find that you have symptoms such as clouded thinking or dizziness, ask your GP if these could be side effects of this medication, and you may need to stop your balance program until things have settled.

ENVIRONMENT

Make sure the area where you exercise is free of trip hazards (e.g., power cords, edge of the carpet) and the surface is not slippery.

Have a sturdy chair next to you for support so that you can catch yourself if you feel unsteady at any point.

CLOTHING

We recommend you wear fitted clothing and enclosed shoes with rubber soles to prevent getting your feet caught and tripping or slipping.

TIME OF DAY

Pick a time during the day when you are not too tired, as this could increase your risk of losing your balance while exercising.



WHAT TO BE AWARE OF

There are some sensations that are normal to experience when starting balance exercises.

EXERCISE SHOULD NEVER BE PAINFUL

If you find an exercise is painful or 'feels wrong', simply stop, sit down on the nearby chair and rest. If the pain or discomfort continues after resting, please consult a health care professional, as the exercises you are performing may need to be reviewed.

PRE-EXISTING PAIN

There could be worsening of pre-existing arthritic pain or inflammation of the knee during prolonged one- legged standing. Some positions may have to be adapted or avoided if you have significant pain in a joint with standing. However, once muscle strength improves with appropriate strengthening exercises, these kinds of positions should be quite tolerable.

DIZZINESS

If you feel very dizzy with an exercise such as turning for example, then don't perform this exercise, and you may need to modify exercises to avoid this feeling. If you are not sure, stop.

REMEMBER R.I.C.E.D

If you suffer an injury follow 'R.I.C.E.D' for quick recovery.

REST

Stop that specific exercise until the pain is gone.

ICE

Apply a cold pack immediately for 20 minutes of each hour, until the symptoms are reduced.

COMPRESSION

Wrapping the affected joint with an elastic bandage may help to decrease swelling.

ELEVATION

Lifting the joint above the heart reduces swelling and pain, and is particularly helpful for the ankle joints.

DIAGNOSIS

If pain persists, please see your doctor for diagnosis or further treatment.

STOP EXERCISING AND CONTACT YOUR G.P. IF YOU EXPERIENCE:

- Chest pain
- Dizziness
- Severe shortness of breath
- Significant change in musculoskeletal pain
- Any other severe symptoms

PLEASE REFER TO YOUR HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONAL PRIOR TO EXERCISE

If you currently have any chronic illnesses, injuries or conditions, please consult your healthcare practitioner for appropriate exercises.

Please also refer to "Preventing Pain & Injury" section of this site prior to starting.

BE MINDFUL

Move with awareness. Keep your mind focused on breathing and the task or exercise that you are doing in the moment.