

# Why Balance Exercise Is IMPORTANT FOR YOUR BRAIN

**Balance training is important because balance is required when performing all the activities that you do every day.**

For example, when walking, reaching for something on a shelf or getting in and out of a car you rely on your balance to prevent you from falling.

## **BALANCE TRAINING HAS BEEN SHOWN TO RESULT IN THE FOLLOWING:**

- Improved balance performance
- Decreased fear of falling
- Decreased incidence of falls
- Increased ability to participate in other activities which may have been limited by gait and balance difficulties

Most falls occur around the home, while people are doing their normal everyday activities.



**40%**

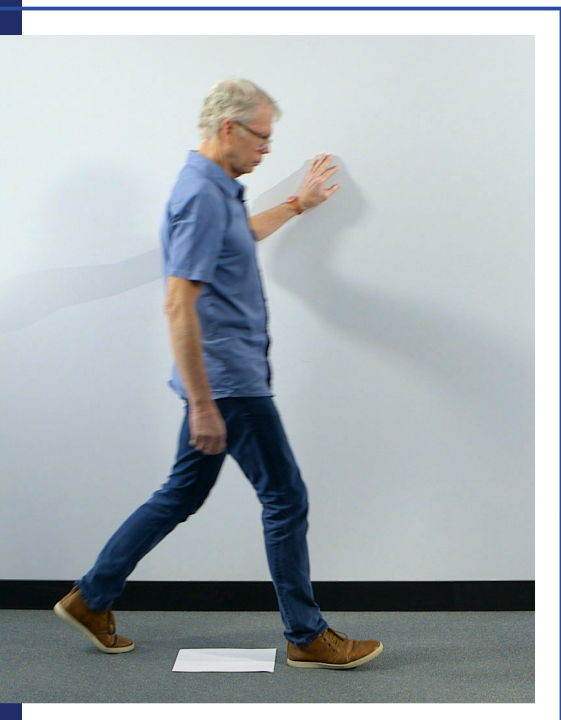
*Of falls can be prevented by performing exercises that challenge your balance!*

## **BALANCE IS A COMPLEX SKILL**

Balance depends on the brain getting and responding to messages from our muscles, joints and eyes.

Training the muscles and nerves to respond quickly to a threat to balance means that you will be better able to control those systems when you encounter an obstacle or a sudden shift in posture and you will be better able to protect yourself from falling.

In addition, your brain itself will improve in its function and ability to coordinate movements, react quickly, pay attention and make quick decision. These are all skills that will benefit other tasks beyond balance itself. Thus training for balance is actually brain training as well.



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## THE IMPACT OF AGING AND HEALTH ON BALANCE

The body systems responsible for balance can be affected by health problems, medications, or gradual changes that accompany ageing.

Limiting activity because of unsteadiness further weakens muscles and decreases balance in a downward spiral. As balance becomes increasingly impaired, simple acts, such as strolling through a grocery store or reaching overhead, become more difficult.

Performing balance exercises on a regular basis will help improve your ability to participate more fully in aerobic activities, recreational pursuits, social programs, and self-care activities, reduce sense of anxiety, and increase your confidence when doing different activities.

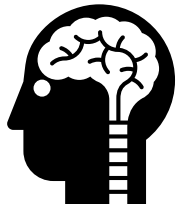
Balance training becomes particularly important as one grows older as balance exercises can help prevent falls and fractures, and maintain your independence.

## TRAIN YOUR BRAIN

Double the benefit of your workout for your brain and body by doing a mental activity at the same time that you do your balance exercise. This can be anything that is a little difficult for you to do.



*It is important that you master the exercise first, and then incorporate a cognitive or mental task.*



Examples include naming animals or capital cities, reciting a poem, doing math problems, trying to memorise a passage from a book, learning a new language, etc.

Adding the cognitive task will improve your balance faster, and the combination of mental and physical stress maximises the health of your brain and improves your thinking abilities, attention span, reaction time and coordination between different parts of your brain.