

WHAT TO KNOW BALANCE AND FALLS

HOW CAN PT HELP?

Physical therapists can help prevent falls.

Individualized Treatment Plans



Exercises to improve:



About 1/3 seniors above 65+ years fall once a year

many times with disastrous consequences

Source: National Council on Aging

Most critical action seniors can take to prevent falls:

Maintaining physical activity

Activities of any fitness level:



help improve balance & movement





A PHYSICAL THERAPIST'S PERSPECTIVE

FALLS AMONG ELDERLY

- PREVALENT & DANGEROUS
- DIMINISH ABILITY TO LEAD ACTIVE + INDEPENDENT LIFE



RISK FACTORS:

- BEING OLDER 
- DIFFICULTY WITH BALANCE/WALKING
- POOR VISION
- LEG/TRUNK WEAKNESS
- PRE-EXISTING MEDICAL CONDITIONS
- BEING ON 4+ MEDICATIONS 
- USE OF ASSISTIVE WALKING DEVICE 
- PAST HISTORY OF FALLS 

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WHAT TO KNOW BALANCE AND FALLS

Test your balance (Do not attempt to do this test alone—make sure that you have someone next to you so you do not fall.)

Exercises strengthen ankle, knee & hip muscles // improve function of vestibular (balance) system

1. Stand tall, wearing flat, closed shoes, with your arms folded across your chest. Keep your eyes open, focus on an object in front of you, raise one leg, bending the knee about 45°, and start a stopwatch.
2. Remain on one leg, stopping the watch immediately if you uncross your arms, tilt sideways more than 45°, move the leg you are standing on, or touch the raised leg to the floor.
3. Repeat this test with the other leg.
4. Repeat steps 1-3 above with your eyes closed.
5. Compare your performance with eyes closed to the norms for various ages:

20-49 years (24-28 secs)
50-59 years (21 secs)
60-69 years (10 secs)

70-79 years (4 secs)
80+ years (most cannot do this test)



HOW A PHYSICAL THERAPIST CAN HELP

Physical therapists are health care professionals who diagnose and manage individuals of all ages who have medical problems or other health-related conditions that limit their abilities to move and perform functional activities in their daily lives.

PERSONALIZED PLAN:

- WALK REGIMEN INCORPORATES BALANCE COMPONENTS
- AQUATICS CLASSES GEARED TOWARD BALANCE & COORDINATION
- SPECIFIC STRENGTHENING AND BALANCE EXERCISES PERFORMED AT HOME

WORKING WITH INDIVIDUALS:



DEVELOPING FITNESS & WELLNESS-ORIENTED PROGRAMS FOR HEALTHIER AND MORE ACTIVE LIFESTYLES



TAI CHI EMPHASIZES BALANCE, WEIGHT SHIFTING, COORDINATION, AND POSTURAL TRAINING

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