

Three ways to improve your balance and reduce falls

Novant Health Employer Solutions

According to the National Safety Council, more than 8.5 million people were treated in emergency rooms for fall-related injuries in 2022. A fall can end in death or disability in a split second, but with a few simple precautions, you can stay safe at home or at work.

Failing vision and hearing loss increase your risk of falls. Lower body weakness, balance and walking difficulties, and certain medications can also be factors.

Here are three ways to improve your balance and reduce the risk of injury from falls.

Strength and stability

For improved strength and stability, it's important to strength train your muscles twice a week. For example, squat using a sturdy chair 10 to 20 times to improve leg strength. You can also maintain strength by doing push-ups against a wall or a stable counter.

Balance exercises can be done daily. Stand next to a sturdy chair or counter and evenly distribute weight on all four corners of one foot. Start with your weight on the right leg and balance for 10 seconds; then shift your weight to the other side. Once this becomes easy, try to repeat the balance exercise with your eyes closed.

Vision awareness: The senses matter.

Vision and balance are interconnected and play crucial roles in maintaining our overall stability and coordination.

- Regular eye exams:

Get your eyes examined regularly to detect and treat any eye conditions that may affect balance.

- Vestibular function tests:

If you experience balance problems, consult a healthcare professional for vestibular function tests.

- Proper lighting:

Always use proper lighting, even in areas you walk through often.

Footwear and flooring

Footwear: The type of shoe you wear can impact your balance and stability. To improve your balance, choose shoes that are supportive, well-fitting, and have a firm sole. Flip flops, platforms and heels pose a higher risk to falling or injuring your feet. Always wear properly fitting shoes that protect your feet.

Flooring Be aware of uneven floor surfaces, unsuitable floor coverings like rugs or mats that move, bulge or curl on the edges. Floors that are wet/slippery are dangerous, along with exposed cables and cords. Leaving toys, cups and other objects on the floor can also be a potential fall hazard.

Convenient injury care when you need it:
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