

# The Road Ahead

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## PT with Patty's Balance and Falling Event

March 12, 2022

- I. Why is it important to work on balance-even if you think you're pretty good?
  - A. It's used **every day** for almost **everything** but sleeping. i.e. getting out of bed, getting dressed, taking a bath or shower, getting in and out of a chair, cooking, shopping, reaching into closets and drawers, walking or hurrying to the phone
  - B. What are the requirements for the body to maintain balance and function?
    - a. Flexibility/range of motion (influences posture)
    - b. Weight shifting
    - c. Strength-in all muscle groups
    - d. Endurance-better balance leads to decreased fatigue
    - e. Visual awareness-field of vision
    - f. Vestibular/Inner Ear Function
    - g. Best muscle tone possible-decreased spasticity
    - h. Sensation
    - i. Good physical environment-no clutter, no electrical cords, no loose throw rugs, adequate lighting, railings, floor coverings, non-skid shower/tub surfaces
  - C. How much time and effort do I need to devote to improving my balance?
    - a. Ideally 45 to 60 minutes/day. It does not need to be done all at once
    - b. Consistency-think of things you can do every day-throughout the day. Mix it up. Improving balance requires novel challenges.
    - c. Give yourself visual cues to remind you to practice-i.e. note on kitchen cabinet, bathroom mirror, sign by TV or phone
    - d. Pay attention to pain but ask if it seems like a tangible pain to take heed of or is it a discomfort that can be modified by relaxing a muscle or changing your position. Breathe into the area. Dampen the "fear factor". Fear will diminish your balance capabilities.

- e. Sprinkle mindfulness of your posture and balance throughout your day and try to ramp up challenges slowly and safely.

**D. Today's Practice:**

Choose a position that will challenge you. Sitting erect on a firm seat or soft seat, sitting on the edge of your seat, standing with a walker or between 2 chair backs, standing in a corner. **Safety first!**

First try these tasks with eyes open:

- a. Head balanced over shoulders
- b. Shoulders down and back over pelvis
- c. Belly button in and pelvic floor lifted
- d. Buttocks tight and under the shoulder girdles or have your weight equally on buttocks in sitting with pelvis level. Check this by putting your hands on your hips
- e. Knees and ankle slightly relaxed
- f. Feet flat and relaxed

Now-if you feel stable with minimal sway go through these points with eyes closed. If you already feel challenged slowly go through these points again with eyes open