

Patty's PT Tips

Gait Improvement

November 3, 2021

Foundations of Improving Gait

Posture-tighten the buttocks, pull the belly button in, shoulder blades pulled together and down towards the pelvis

Balance-Feet together, feet apart, stagger stance-practice in all these positions. Then practice weight shifting in each position. May do it with eyes open or the more challenging eyes closed. Practice safely! In between 2 chairs or furniture and a wall or in a corner. May have walker or chair in front of you for security.

Range of motion/Flexibility-in all joints up the chain-ankles, knees, hips, pelvis, entire spine, head/neck junction

Cadence/Timing-rhythmic and smooth. Better to be a little slower and be smoother to maintain upright posture and balance. This will also allow you to tap into your sensory system more clearly and find your balance points. That allows more time to train the neural pathways.

Strength-symmetrical as possible- Important to improve the weaker muscle groups but strive for symmetry right to left. Pay attention to what you think isn't engaging and supporting you. Discuss it with your PT or exercise specialist.

Endurance-keep under consideration how far/long you can walk (or exercise in general) while maintaining quality of movement and posture. Taking breaks and resuming activity or “mixing it up” is perfectly legit. Think in terms of total minutes. Avoid just “slogging through it”. Losing quality indicates neural fatigue and you are teaching your neuromotor system to do something dumb!