

Build Balance and Boost Confidence!

Women's Health Initiative Webinar
01/15/25

Corey Rovzar, PhD, DPT
Postdoctoral Fellow
Stanford Prevention Research Center



Why do you care about your balance?

OLDER ADULT FALLS

Startling Statistics



1 second

An older adult falls every second of every day.



1 in 4

One in four older adults reported a fall in 2014.



#1 cause

Falls are the #1 cause of hip fractures.



Stopping Elderly
Accidents, Deaths & Injuries

www.cdc.gov/steady



How does balance relate to falls?

- A fall happens when we lose our balance
- Why do we lose our balance?
 - Age (starting at 50)
 - Weak muscles
 - Poor vision
 - Orthopedic issues (e.g. arthritis)
 - Balance problems
 - Problems with cognition
 - Problems with sensation
 - Low blood pressure when standing
 - Certain medications
 - Alcohol use
 - Our environment!





True or False?

Poor balance is an unavoidable consequence of aging



FALSE!

Balance exercise training can reduce falls by 23%

Tai Chi can reduce falls by 19%

What is balance?

- the ability to distribute your weight in a way that lets you stand or move without falling, or recover if you trip
- 3 systems that send messages to your brain → activate muscles to keep you upright



Vision



Proprioception



Vestibular



Which one is more difficult for balance – walking on the sidewalk or walking on sand?

How can I improve my balance today?

- To improve, you need to challenge the system!
 - Should incorporate balance training **2-3 times per week**
 - **What do I do already that works on my balance?**
 - Tai chi
 - Yoga
 - Exercise class that includes balance training
 - Walking on an uneven surface like the beach, grass, or a trail
- ... Enter more ideas in the chat!
- **What can I reasonably add to my life?**



3 Exercises to Improve Balance

1. Sit-to-stand (3 sets x 10 repetitions)

Too easy? Use a lower chair, perform a squat

Too hard? Use pillows to make the chair higher, use arm rests on chair



2. Double leg or single leg balance (3 x 30 seconds)

Too easy? Close your eyes, stand on a yoga mat, stand on one leg

Too hard? Stand with a wider base of support



3. Walking heel-to-toe (3 x 30 seconds)

Too easy? Close your eyes, walk backwards

Too hard? Walk with you feet wider apart



The best exercise is the one that you do!

Thank you! Questions?

