

Celebrate

healthy living

2018 Week 8

Improving Balance

Balance is essential to living a healthy, functional life. Many systems in your body work together so you can stand, walk, and run safely. Your muscles, joints, visual system, and vestibular system — the apparatus of the inner ear — all contribute to your body's ability to balance, both while standing or sitting still and while moving.

Ideally, four types of exercise should be included in your activity routine, including strength, endurance, flexibility, and balance. Balance exercises are often associated with older adults because they can help prevent falls. However, older adults are not the only ones who can benefit. Many adults may not be fully aware they have weak balance until they try balance exercises.

T'ai chi and yoga are both excellent forms of exercise to improve balance. T'ai chi targets all the physical components needed to stay upright, including leg strength, flexibility, range of motion, and reflexes. It requires constant movement, which benefits balance as your body learns to flow seamlessly from one move to another. Yoga emphasizes static poses and is especially beneficial to balance while you are standing still because it teaches you to distribute weight evenly across your feet, improving stability.

There are simple exercises you can do anywhere and anytime that will also improve balance.

Single Leg Stance:
Stand behind a chair or next to something stable for support. Slowly lift one leg off the ground and maintain your balance standing on one leg for 5 to 10 seconds. Return to starting

continued on page 2



In this issue:

Improving Balance
Health Quest Credit Survey
Manage Stress with Guided Imagery
Balanced Nutrition
Recipe: Tuscan Steak Salad and Baked Parmesan Tomatoes

Coming next week:

How Long Does it Take to Lose Fitness?
Make Water Your Beverage of Choice
The DASH Diet
Recipe: Refrigerator Pickles



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Balance continued

position and repeat five times, then perform with the opposite leg. As your balance improves, modify the exercise to make it more challenging. Close your eyes while standing on one foot; stand on a soft, squishy surface such as a pillow or piece of foam; or lift your leg off the ground 1 inch higher. You can practice balance throughout your day by standing on one foot while working in the kitchen, standing in line, and while brushing your teeth.

Walk Heel to Toe: Steady yourself with a wall if necessary and walk forward by placing the heel of one foot directly in front of the opposite toe. Take 20 steps. You can practice this around the house or office as well.

Walk Backwards and Sideways: Again, using a wall for support if necessary, walk backwards. Face the wall and side step one direction and then the other.

Heel to Toe Raises: Stand with feet shoulder width apart. Slowly raise your heels a few inches off the floor while you balance on your toes, then slowly lower heels to the ground. Repeat 10 times.

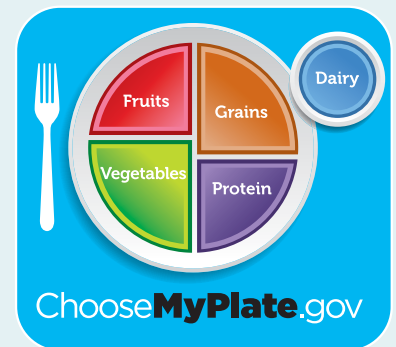
Exercise Ball: There are many exercises you can do on an exercise ball, and you can simply sit on it while you watch television or work on the computer. While you are sitting on the ball, you are also improving your balance.

Balancing Your Diet

A healthy eating style is about balance. Everything you eat and drink matters. The key is finding the right mix and balance that can help you be healthier now and in the future. Think of healthy eating as a lifelong journey that is shaped by many factors. Your nutritional needs will differ depending on your stage in life. Personal decisions you make about food are influenced by situations, preferences, access to food, culture, and tradition.

MyPlate is a reminder to find your healthy eating style and build it throughout your lifetime. At www.choosemyplate.gov you will find resources that support these recommendations:

- Focus on variety, amount, and nutrition.
- Choose foods and beverages with less saturated fat, sodium, and added sugars.
- Start with small changes to build healthier eating styles.
- Support healthy eating for everyone.



Manage Stress with Guided Imagery

Guided imagery is a simple technique that can help you reduce tension and anxiety by redirecting your thoughts and helping your body relax. Basically, you close your eyes and take your mind to a place that you find relaxing and soothing. You can practice guided imagery by using audio recordings, taking a class where you are guided through the process by an instructor, or you can tap into your inner voice and imagination by following these simple steps.

1. Find a quiet place free from distractions and get comfortable.
2. Close your eyes and breathe deeply. Let your belly expand as you breathe in and relax your shoulders. As you exhale, think about breathing out stress.
3. Now, envision yourself in a relaxing environment. Perhaps you are: floating on the water off of a tropical island; wrapped up in a blanket, sitting by a fire while snow falls outside; remembering a time and place when you felt wonderful and relaxed — maybe a scene from

your childhood — a “happy place” in your memory.

4. Involve all of your senses as you imagine this scene. What does it look like? How does it feel? What sounds do you hear? Make your vision as real as possible.
5. Stay in this place as long as you like. When you are ready, slowly count backward from 10. You will return to your surroundings, but in a calmer state and feeling refreshed. Try to translate this calmness to the rest of your day.



Health Quest Credit for Walk Kansas

If you have the state employee health plan (SEHP) benefits, you are eligible to receive Health Quest rewards for participating in Walk Kansas. This program is considered a "Wellness Challenge" and worth four Health Quest credits.

Please provide your legal first/last name and Employee ID# [through this survey](#).

You can also submit information for a spouse that is participating. If you are not able to submit information through the survey link or have questions, please contact Sharolyn Jackson, sharolyn@ksu.edu, 785-532-2273.

Stretching for Better Balance

Lower body stretches are helpful for balance. Try a calf stretch, hamstring, and hip flexor stretches as described in previous Walk Kansas newsletters. This quad stretch is especially helpful as it also tests your balance. If you need to, hold on to a wall or stable surface while you do this stretch.

Stand with your legs hip-distance apart, bend your left leg at the knee behind you and grab your ankle with your left hand. Hold here for 15 to 20 seconds. Try to balance without holding on to anything for support. To challenge your balance even more, close your eyes while you do this stretch. Switch sides and repeat.



Balance Stretch

Tuscan Steak Salad and Baked Parmesan Tomatoes

Makes 2 servings

Ingredients:

- 1 clove garlic
- ½ teaspoon salt
- 2 tablespoons olive oil, divided
- 1 teaspoon minced fresh rosemary, or ½ teaspoon dried
- ½ teaspoon grated lemon zest
- ½ teaspoon black pepper, divided
- 1 (8 ounces) boneless strip steak
- 2 teaspoons balsamic vinegar
- 1 teaspoon Dijon mustard
- 3 cups mixed salad greens and vegetables (yellow pepper, red onion, etc.)
- 2 tablespoons shaved Parmesan cheese

Ingredients for tomatoes:

- 1 medium tomato, halved
- ½ teaspoon dried basil or Italian herb blend (can also use 1 teaspoon pesto)
- 1 tablespoon shaved Parmesan cheese



Directions:

1. Mince garlic on a cutting board. Sprinkle garlic with salt and mash with the side of a knife to form a paste. Combine garlic paste, 1 tablespoon oil, rosemary, lemon zest, and ¼ teaspoon pepper on a bowl. Rub garlic mixture evenly over steak and let stand 15 minutes.
2. Preheat oven to 400° F. Arrange tomato halves in a baking dish or tray and top each with ¼ teaspoon herbs or ½ teaspoon pesto and ½ tablespoon Parmesan cheese.
3. Roast the tomatoes until the Parmesan cheese is slightly browned and melted, about 18 to 20 minutes.
4. While the tomatoes are roasting, cook the steak. Heat a grill pan over medium-high heat. Coat pan with cooking spray. Add steak to pan and grill 5 minutes on each side or until desired degree of doneness. Place steak on a cutting board and let stand 5 minutes. Cut across the grain into thin slices.
5. Combine remaining 1 tablespoon oil, remaining ¼ teaspoon pepper, vinegar, and Dijon mustard in a bowl and stir with a whisk. Add greens and vegetables, toss to coat. Place half of the salad on each of two plates. Top each serving with half of the sliced steak and 1 tablespoon Parmesan cheese; serve with Parmesan tomato and crusty whole grain bread.

Nutrition Information per serving of salad and tomato:

350 calories; 21 g fat (5 g saturated fat, 0 trans fat); 13 g carbohydrates; 26 g protein; 3 g fiber; 820 mg sodium