

In this Issue...

Living a Well Balanced Life

What Patients are Saying

Featured Patient

More Yoga Poses

Test Your Balance

## How is Your Balance?

*Do you ever question your balance? Have you experienced near falls or fallen in the past 6 months? Do you feel wobbly while walking, going up or down steps, or standing on one leg?*

Falls can be very harmful to your self-esteem, confidence, and physical body. Injuries that result from falls include: fractured bones, head injuries, chronic pain, functional impairment, premature nursing home admissions, and in some cases loss of life. Statistics show that in 2005-2006 there were over **530,000,000 hospitalizations & ER visits in St. Louis County** alone due to unintentional falls in seniors 65 years and older.

According to research, the top factors associated with fall risk include the following (from greatest importance to least):

1. muscle weakness
2. prior falls
3. difficulty with balance on 1 or 2 legs
4. walking deficit/use of assistive device
5. difficulty with vision/glasses/ contacts
6. arthritis
7. difficulty performing daily activities

So now the question is what to do to correct your balance and decrease your risk of falls? If you have fallen in the past 6 months and are worried about one of the above mentioned risks, you should

contact your doctor to discuss your concerns. Physical Therapy often plays a vital role in helping you to decrease your risk of falls. Physical therapy can assist with an evaluation and individualized treatment plan to address any of your weaknesses and deficits with muscular strength, walking, and balance. Treatment may include exercises to strengthen muscles, stretching to improve flexibility, specific activities to improve balance and analysis of the actual manner in which you walk.

Other factors to decrease your risk of falling include the following:

- Drink plenty of water. Good hydration has been suggested for those who struggle with postural hypotension (dizziness upon rising from a lying down position or sitting to standing).
- Evaluate hazards inside your home, for instance: area rugs, high thresholds, and proper lighting. Physical therapy can assist you with identifying environmental hazards within your home to determine modifications to maximize your safety.
- Proper foot wear. Physical therapy can also help you learn how to perform a proper foot self-examination and determine your proper foot wear.

If you or someone you know is at risk of falling or has fallen in the past, contact your doctor and ask if physical therapy is an option for you. You can also contact our office if you have any further questions.



## Living a Well-Balanced Life

A well-balanced life is essential for personal effectiveness, peace of mind and living well. Whether we work, go to school, or are retired, we all have responsibilities. There is always someone, or something, to answer to. There are things we want to do and things we must do. The challenge is to balance what we must do with what we enjoy and want to do. This is not always easy. If, however, we are unable to reduce stress and manage a well-balanced life there can be physical and/or emotional health consequences.

1. You cannot accomplish anything if you're unhealthy. Get plenty of rest, exercise and eat properly. Many people think they can burn the candle at both ends, eat junk food, get very little exercise, and still function adequately. You may be able to get away with this for a while, however, at some point this type of lifestyle will catch up with the best of us.
2. Balance doesn't mean do everything you can. Examine your values and decide what's important to you, then set your boundaries. Depending on what stage you're at in your life, your focus and energies will be different. Try not to bite off more than you can chew.
3. Be organized and plan ahead. Take time at the beginning of each week to assess what needs to be done.
4. Rather than get stressed and upset, allow yourself to roll with the punches when something you have no control over happens. If you accept that anything can happen at any time, it's less likely to throw you off your stride when it does. Be able to adjust your game plan.
5. Begin each day with the intention of making the best and most of it. It may not always go as planned, but it can go more smoothly if you put it in perspective. Part of living a well-balanced life is learning how to deal with adversity, unforeseen events and uncertainty. If you practice not letting things get to you, you will not only learn to live a well-balanced and less stressful life, you will learn to live in and savor the moment. Once you've done everything you can within your control, let your life unfold. Be prepared for the future, but don't worry about it.

While we can't anticipate and plan for everything in our lives, we can decide how, where and when to concentrate our energies. This may require some critical thinking and problem solving, but in the end it will lead to much less stress and a well-balanced life. Contact me at the Sports and Physical Therapy Center to help you create that balanced life you're searching for.

Call Today for a Complimentary Personal Training Session  
with Brian  
636-938-4065

# Yoga Poses to Help Your Balance



## Mountain

Stand with your feet hip width apart and arms along your side. Draw your shoulders back, squeezing your shoulder-blades together, and hold for 30 seconds. Return to starting position, and perform 1-2 times daily.

## Warrior 2

Stand with feet at hips width. Step forward with your right leg into a lunge stance. Raise your arms overhead, keeping your abdominal muscles tight. The deeper you bend your front knee, the more challenging the exercise becomes. Hold for 30 seconds. Return to starting position and perform with opposite leg. Repeat 1-2 times daily.



## Warrior 1

To start this position, stand with your feet together. Turn your right foot out 90 degrees so your feet are in the shape of a "T". Step out with your right foot into a lunge stance as pictured. Hold your abdominal muscles tight and raise your arms to shoulder height. The more you bend your knees the more challenging the exercise becomes. Hold for 30 seconds.

Return to starting position and perform with opposite leg. Repeat 1-2 times daily.





## What Patients are Saying...

"When I started therapy I was having severe muscle spasms from my left hip down my leg into my foot to the point where walking was extremely painful and limited. Sleep was disturbed; I spent a lot of time lying on a cold pack and taking pain pills and muscle relaxers. Now that PT is ending I am spasm free, much more flexible, energized, and I have learned many exercises and tricks to help in the future. I am exercising faithfully. **I am 100% better than when I started and will not stop implementing all I have learned.**" B. H.

"Prior to beginning physical therapy, I was so limited in what we consider normal activities of daily living-walking through a grocery store, working on a computer, running up and down stairs, standing in the kitchen baking or preparing meals, lifting mixers, running a vacuum, etc. I wasn't able to do any of these things without significant pain or discomfort. I hadn't slept through the night for several years. I would awaken at least 3 times each night from pain and would try to find a comfortable position. I was pretty much relegated to my couch and believed this was my life. ***My life has changed dramatically since beginning physical therapy. I feel like I've gotten my life back.*** I'm able to walk 30 minutes per day on a treadmill. I rarely have a night when I don't sleep uninterrupted. I grocery shop, bake, and prepare meals. I'm now working with a personal trainer and do weights and exercises. While I still have some pain and discomfort it is so minimal that it doesn't limit me at all! V. B.

## Featured Patient



Every month we will feature the successes that our patients achieve with the help of our therapists. This month one of Jenn's patients, Abby R., was chosen.

"Before I started physical therapy I had a lot of back pain. Since I started working with Jen, it has almost completely gone away. I've also gotten a lot stronger. I look forward to going to therapy every week because Jen makes it more like fun than work."-- A.R.



# Care Enough to Share

*... helping your family & friends*

## Do you know anyone who is in pain or struggling to complete their daily activities?

We want to help people live a pain-free life and participate in any activity they desire!

If you know someone that needs our help please share this information with them. For more information about the help The Sports and Physical Therapy Center can provide please share this newsletter, call us at 636-938-4065, or visit our website at [www.ptstl.com](http://www.ptstl.com)

There is nothing more rewarding than helping someone you know.

## *What is your balance-based Real Age?*

How long can you stand on one leg, with your eyes closed, before losing your balance?

1. **Find a partner and a watch.** Enlist the help of a friend or family member who has a watch with second hand and five minutes to spare.
2. **Take off your shoes.** Stand barefoot on a flat, hard surface. Ask your partner to hold the watch and stand close by to catch you in case you start to fall.
3. **Close your eyes.**
4. **Lift your foot.** Lift one foot (left foot if you're right-handed, right foot if you are left-handed) about 6 inches off the floor, bending your knee at a 45-degree angle. Ask your partner to start timing.
5. **Hold this position.** Keep still as long as you can without jiggling or teetering, falling, or opening your eyes.
6. **Stop the clock.** Stop timing if the raised foot begins to lower or touch the ground, if you begin to sway, or if you open your eyes.
7. **Repeat the test three times.** Note the time for each test, and calculate the average of the three by adding them together and dividing by 3.
8. Check your average against this results chart.

Balance Time	Balance-Based Real Age	Balance Time	Balanced-Based Real Age
4 seconds	70 years	12 seconds	45 years
5 seconds	65 years	16 seconds	40 years
7 seconds	60 years	22 seconds	30-35 years
8 seconds	55 years	28 seconds	25-30 years
9 seconds	50 years		

\*Test from [www.realage.com/shape-up-slim-down/workout-center/improve-your-balance](http://www.realage.com/shape-up-slim-down/workout-center/improve-your-balance)