

Balance and Core Strength Training Home Care

Step 1

Start by gauging your balance and chart your progress. Balance: Your body's ability to know where it is in space at any given time. In other words, known as position sense and plays an important role in spinal health and posture.



Stand up and try balancing on one foot. You should be able to maintain an upright position without a lot of wobbling, hopping or shaking for 30 seconds or use table below to compare by age. Try both left and right, one leg standing posture. If you lose your balance easily, you need to work at this and use the test as the treatment to get better. Once standing on one leg at a time is easy, try doing it with your eyes closed. Without the visual input you may find it is much more difficult to maintain an upright posture without swaying significantly.

Improving this with repeated training helps your nervous system maintain better posture and prevents future injuries that could be caused by an unexpected movement, such as stepping off a curb or tripping over a root.

*Normal time data for the one leg standing test
(RW Bohannon et al. Physical Therapy 1984)*

AGE (years)	EYES OPEN (seconds)	EYES CLOSED (seconds)
20-59	29-30	21-28.8
60-69	22.5 average	10
70-79	14.2	4.3

	Eyes open	Date	Date	Date
Right leg one foot stance	___sec. difficult or easy	/ /	___sec. / /	___sec. / /
Left leg one foot stance	___sec. difficult or easy	/ /	___sec. / /	___sec. / /
	Eyes closed	Date	Date	Date
Right leg one foot stance	___sec. difficult or easy	/ /	___sec. / /	___sec. / /
Left leg one foot stance	___sec. difficult or easy	/ /	___sec. / /	___sec. / /

You should notice improvement with practice.
Single leg stance test indicates ability and where to start for training.

Phase 1

1. Single leg stance eyes open standing in corner or using external support (touching hands if needed). 1a. Stand both feet, eyes closed, touching external support if needed.
2. Single leg stance eyes open standing
3. Single leg stance eyes closed standing

Phase 2

1. Single leg stance eyes open standing on unsteady surface, pillow or foam.
2. Single leg stance eyes closed standing on unsteady surface, pillow or foam.

Phase 3

1. Single leg stance eyes open standing on unsteady surface, pillow or foam performing arm movements reaching: over head, out in front and to sides, 1.a add small hand weights.
2. Single leg stance eyes closed standing on unsteady surface, pillow or foam performing arm movements reaching: over head, out in front and to sides, 1.a add small hand weights.

Phase 3 Starting barefooted on foam, pillow, or the Rocker or Wobble board is preferred, but you may wear athletic or “tennis shoes.” Try to maintain a high arch in your feet while performing the exercises. With both feet positioned straight ahead, turning the knees out slightly without moving the feet will “lift” the arches and provide good foot posture for training balance. This enhances the effectiveness of the exercises.



Depending on your ability, you should use good judgment about having nearby support or a person to spot your activity. You will fall off. Make sure you have a cleared area to step off and regain your balance without striking or tripping over anything.

Start by stepping on carefully, placing each foot centered over a Rocker rail. Explore the full range of the rocking motion back and forth. Try to control the speed of the rocking motion and then try to “balance” holding the board still in the middle of the rocker curve.

1. Rocker and Wobble board or tall foam allowing forward and back foot/ankle rocking motion, side to side rocking motion standing on both feet.

This can be done in several planes of movement:

Foot Positions



Straight



Right Angle



Left Angle



Side ways



Once you feel comfortable, you can try 1 foot at a time:

2. Rocker and Wobble board or tall foam allowing forward and back foot/ankle rocking motion, side to side rocking motion standing on one foot.
3. Rocker and Wobble board or tall foam allowing forward and back foot/ankle rocking motion, side to side rocking motion standing on both feet with eyes closed.



Ideally, step on
at the balance point



not with the
board against the floor

Get comfortable on the Rocking device before moving on to the round base, “wobble.” The wobble is much more difficult to balance on. You can mount the wobble by having the platform rail against the floor, then inch your feet forward to the balance point.



Again, explore the full range of the wobble in a circular motion; slowly trying to reduce sway and gain “control” of the movement. Change direction of your movement, clockwise and counter-clockwise periodically.

This is therapeutic for feet, ankles, and knee joints, builds strength in the legs, hips and back as well as improves balance and coordination with repetitive practice.