

## Improving Balance

Improving our balance increases our co-ordination and strength allowing us to move more freely and steadily, it reduces the risk of falling and helps us to feel more confident.

Enhanced stability, mobility and flexibility make it easier to perform daily tasks.

Focusing on our balance may also help us clear our mind for those few moments.

When we experience persistent pain we can find that our balance ability reduces. There may be a number of reasons for this such as; reduced body awareness, altered movement quality, and reduced mobility and activity.

If we do not do activity which requires our brain and body to work together to help us balance, our ability to balance will reduce. Sometimes if we are not feeling steady we avoid activities which require balance and therefore our balance actually gets worse (as we are not practising).

Balance exercises tend to work our core muscles, lower back and legs, so lower body strength training exercises will also improve our balance.

Whilst balance exercises can be challenging at times, practice will make them easier, and small amounts done regularly will start to really improve balance. Make sure you have something you can reach out towards (or hold onto) to steady yourself – particularly when you first start.

We can incorporate simple balance exercises into our normal daily activity and routine.

Try these ideas:

- Standing and reaching out with one arm (forwards, backwards, sideways) as you feel steadier try two arms, or move them more quickly.
- Try balancing on one leg, (you could just touch the toes to the floor of the raised leg if you need to), you could do this whilst brushing your teeth!
- Balance a bean bag (or similar) on your head whilst you walk between rooms.
- Play musical statues (with the children or grandchildren)

There are some great balance exercise resources online

Try this link:

- NHS Choices

<https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/exercise/balance-exercises/>

Remember other activities will also help our balance; dancing, yoga, Tai Chi and many more.