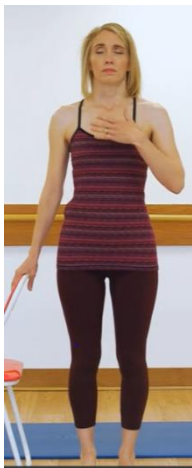




## hEDS/HSD Exercise: Balance

**Class 5** invites you to become aware of the sensation of balance. ***Balance in the body*** is essential for effortless mechanics; sharing the load through the body in a balanced way protects tissues from being overloaded. ***Balance of the body*** relates to your safety and protection from accidental trips, slips and injuries. With the potential for decreased proprioception (knowledge of your body's position in space), the guarding which can accompany pain, and postural changes as a result of pain/fatigue you can find yourself in a position of being at greater risk of sprains, strains and falls; therefore being able to balance your body is an important part of your health protection and prevention.

1. UNWIND: In **standing** - tune into your posture and alignment, become aware of the



core of the body starting at the arches of feet and moving up through the entire body. Use the 1,2,3, breaths to feel the body, and provide the cues for letting go of any faulty bracing patterns.

Ensure your knees remain in neutral (no locking them back), arms should be draped by your sides, and keep the buttocks soft.

Turn your head to left and right to become aware of your neutral alignment.

Return to focusing again on your core, settle into the bones, notice, and let go of any tension, don't allow the body to collapse; use your core to provide lift to hold you up.

2. **Rock and sway**: gently take your weight forwards and back, transferring your weight more through the front of the feet and then back through the heels. Maintain a straight upright posture, don't go so far as to lose balance, build your sense of control over your body's movement.

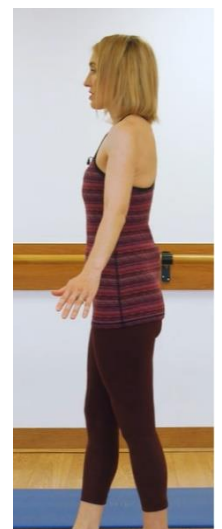


**AVOID** tensioning the toes

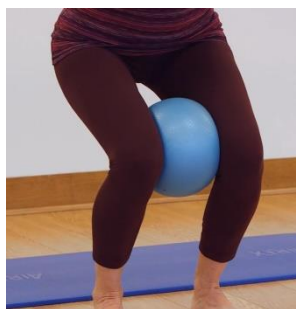
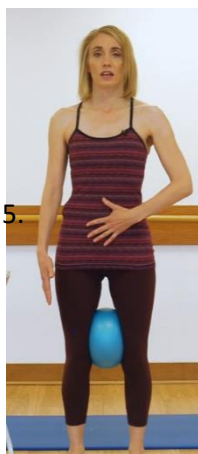
**AVOID** hinging at the back

3. **Tight rope walking**: take a few steps as if on an imaginary tight rope, the heel of one foot placed directly in front of the toes of the other. Try to keep your gaze up ahead (looking down makes you more wobbly). Lift your arms out to the sides for additional help with balance if necessary.

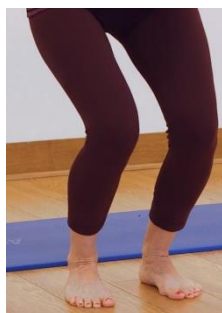
Feel the support from your feet on the floor, feel your control and centre your body through the core. Expect to wobble, it is using your balance skills to keep upright that matters.



4. **Squat:** use your ball/pillow between your knees to give you proprioceptive information about your leg position. Let your hips slide back, and allow your knees to come forwards, return to upright by pushing your feet fully down into the ground. Reaching your arms forward as you squat can provide some extra balance.

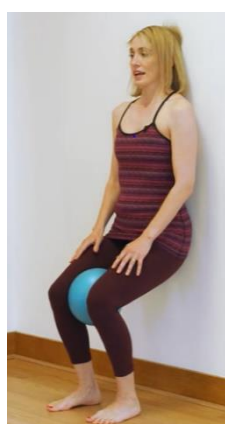
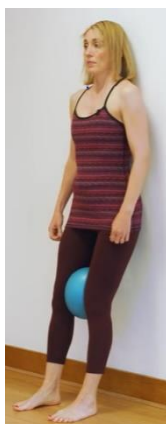


6. **Skier's feet:** Without the ball, but remembering to feel for, and control for leg position, bend the knees into a squat position. Lift your heels from the ground and maintain balance as you straighten your knees back to full standing. You can reverse the order, by lifting heels, dropping into a squat, replacing heels and returning to standing.



Again, expect to wobble; in controlling the wobble you will be improving joint control and protection.

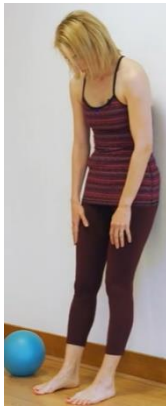
7. **Wall slide:** Use the ball to support your proprioceptive awareness of leg and knee position, lean back against a firm surface and slide your back down towards a sitting position with the leg. Hold the position for a few seconds if you can. On an out breath push your foot into the floor to slide back up to full standing.



**AVOID** locking out your knees on returning to a full stand.



8. Forward roll with wall support: slowly peel away from wall, starting with your upper



body and moving down, allowing your knees to bend. As you return to standing fully at the wall, notice the sensations on your back, and the support the wall offers you as you straighten your neck and head.

9. Relaxation: In a position of your choice, standing, sitting, lying, return your attention to your body as you breath. Allow each exhalation to be an opportunity to let go of unnecessary tension, and every inhale to be an opportunity to feel your bodily balance and alignment.



Photos with permission from Jeannie Di Bon - Strengthen your hypermobile core.