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Preventing Falls With Physical Therapy

Health & Wellness Newsletter

Have you noticed you don't seem to be quite as steady on your feet? Did you know that you can get your balance checked? At Therapy West Physical Therapy & Sports Medicine, our physical therapists are movement specialists. We can help you figure out why your balance is off and, more importantly, how to get it back!

No matter what age you are, you can always improve your balance. According to the CDC, about one in four adults age 65 and older report falling each year. Even those who do not live with a balance or gait disorder can still suffer from a fall.

People who notice they feel imbalanced, dizzy, or unsteady may live with a balance or gait disorder. Although balance disorders often stem from the vestibular system, other factors may be affecting your balance as well. Fortunately, physical therapists have the expertise to determine what is causing your limitations and how to resolve them!

If you have noticed issues with your balance, contact Therapy West Physical Therapy & Sports Medicine today. We can help you figure out the root of your problem and treat it accordingly.

What Are The Main Causes Of Falling?

In older adults, falls are the leading cause of fatal and nonfatal injuries. Most people don't think about keeping their balance in shape until it is too late and suffer a harsh fall. The good news is that most falls can easily be prevented

simply by regularly exercising your balance systems.

The most common reasons for falls include:

- Disorders of the vestibular system
- Muscle weakness (i.e., core and lower extremities)
- Vision loss
- Long-term health conditions like heart disease, dementia, or neurological disorders like Parkinson's or MS

If you have recently sustained a balance-related injury, it is important to seek the help of a physical therapist immediately to avoid additional injuries in the future.

It is also important to contact a physical therapist if you have any of the following vestibular related symptoms:

- Dizziness or vertigo ("spinning" sensations, even when remaining still).
- Inability to focus or stay alert.
- Double vision or tunnel vision.
- Nausea or vomiting.
- Arm or leg weakness.
- Abnormal eye movements.

The vestibular system is a delicate set of fluid-filled chambers and sensory nerves located in the inner ear. Your vestibular system helps manage your sense of position (aka proprioception) and keep yourself steady.

The good news is that you can prevent most falls, and our therapists can show you how!



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How Physical Therapy Can Help Your Balance

The natural aging process increases the risk of falling, but that doesn't mean we should accept falls as a regular part of getting older. Falls are caused by several risk factors that can be reduced or eliminated with physical therapy.

For example, your therapists can help you identify hazards within the home that often contribute to a fall, such as:

- Wet floors, such as in the kitchen or bathroom
- Poor lighting
- Rugs or carpets are not properly secured
- Reaching outside abilities, such as a cupboard or cabinet
- Going down stairs without railings
- The person is rushing
- Falling from a ladder or step stool while doing home maintenance work
- Improper medication
- Drinking alcohol

Risk factors relating to your health and wellbeing or your activities and surroundings can contribute to a fall. Our team will take a holistic perspective to determine the origin of your balance issues and the make-up of your treatment plan.

When you arrive at Therapy West Physical Therapy &

Sports Medicine, your physical therapist will walk you through a comprehensive exam to gauge the nature of your condition and figure out the best course of treatment for your needs.

We will start with an injury evaluation, mobility, strength, and a balance assessment to identify all the factors contributing to the injury. In addition, we will include a review of your fall history and fear of falling, as well as identifying any home hazards/environmental factors that may contribute to your fall risk.

Whatever the case may be, all treatment plans will contain targeted balance exercises, treatment of your vestibular system, and strengthening to help improve your core and lower extremities. Specific gait and coordination drills may also be included in your treatment plan, depending on your condition.

Call Today To Schedule An Appointment

Are you ready to get back on your feet and decrease your risk of sustaining a balance-related fall? Contact Therapy West Physical Therapy & Sports Medicine to schedule a consultation and get started today!

Sources:
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How EMG Testing Can Help Your Posture

EMG, or electromyography, is a diagnostic test that is ordered by your physician to measure the electrical activity of muscles. Our board-certified therapists at Therapy West Physical Therapy & Sports Medicine use EMGs to identify neuromuscular conditions, such as muscle weakness, nerve damage, and muscle disorders.

Nerve conduction studies (NCV) are often used in conjunction with EMG to provide more information about how your body is functioning. We use NCV testing to further evaluate nerve function by measuring the speed and strength of electrical signals as they travel through nerves.

Once your physician interprets these tests, we use your results to help us identify and treat muscle imbalances, which can contribute to poor postural habits and improper movement patterns. Our therapists will then tailor your treatment plan to include exercises that specifically target muscle groups that are not working correctly or are compensating due to an injury you are dealing with.

With the help of EMG and NCV testing, our physical therapists will tailor their treatments to address each individual patient's specific needs and goals. This can help to improve your posture and overall function so you can get back to doing what you love most!

Call today to request an appointment and learn more about our EMG testing to see if it's right for you!



Staff Spotlight: Jace Anderson

Jace Anderson had the opportunity to return back to central Utah to work as an Occupational Therapist after completing his education at Snow College, Southern Utah University and Touro University Nevada. He has been working for 5 years with Therapy West and enjoys providing patients with treatment to help them develop skills and improve their ability to complete everyday tasks. Working at hospitals, skilled nursing facilities and home health, he is able to help patients dealing with illness, injury or disabilities to live life to the fullest.

In his downtime, Jace spends time with his wife and kids outdoors and working on various projects. He recently picked up mountain biking and fly fishing to avoid household chores on the weekends.

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