

# FOREVER ACTIVE

PERSONALIZED FITNESS AND WELLNESS FOR MEN 50+



## Balance Training

Balance training is not just for older adults who are the most vulnerable to falls. Recent research has indicated that balance training has positive benefits for all age groups including the competitive and recreational athlete.

In older age groups, there is a gradual decline, as a function of aging, in sensory (eyes and ears), motor (muscles, tendons and joints), and cognitive (reasoning, memory) function which affects this population's ability to maintain good balance as they move and change position. As a result, falls resulting in fractured wrist, shoulders and hips are a frequent occurrence. However, in the general population, because of previous injury to joints such as ankles, hips and lower back and shoulders, a lack of muscle strength and endurance due to a lack of physical activity and men-

tal fatigue and emotional stress from work and family life falls can have a big effect on a younger person's ability to maintain balance control in activities of daily living as in athletic performance.

Interestingly, research has shown that high intensity, highly specific agility and balance training is not necessary to have a positive impact on improving someone's balance. Research suggests that a minimum of 10 minutes of training three days per week for 4 weeks is sufficient to improve static and dynamic (your centre of gravity is moving) balance.

Good muscular strength in the core (abdominal area and back), hips and buttocks, and legs (quads, hamstrings and calves) is important for good balance. So muscular resistance exercises such as abdominal crunches, back extensions, leg exten-

sions and leg curls, squats, and lunges are important. These exercises can be done on either a stable surface such as a floor or on unstable surface like a wobble board. Agility exercises using an agility ladder is also an excellent way to improve leg strength and balance.

The most important point to remember is that good balance is necessary for people of all ages and fitness levels for injury prevention, the ability to effectively carry out activities of daily living such as stair climbing, bending and lifting, and to enjoy participating in physical activities such as golf, bike riding, skating, gardening and walking.

Simple, non strenuous exercises focusing on leg strength and balance 3x's / week can have tremendous effect on improving this component of your fitness and health.

### DID YOU KNOW

1. There is increasing support in research literature for balance training in older populations since this has positive effects on falls prevention and quality of life.
2. T'ai chi, Yoga, Pilates, muscular resistance exercises for the core, hips and legs has been shown to be useful for balance training.
3. Balance training appears to offer advantages for all age groups and populations, particularly in terms of injury prevention, doing activities of daily living and enhancing recreational and competitive athletic performance.
4. Unstable surface training is not necessary for effective balance training and many body weight and free-weight exercises can be used to challenge one's balance and control; of posture.
5. It is important to start agility, balance and coordination exercises slowly, introducing one or two new exercises initially and then more as you show improvement. Initially you may feel awkward performing some of these exercises but with practise your performance and confidence will improve.



### Don't Forget

Hogg's Hollow Run and Walk Club  
Starts Monday June 4th



Join your neighbours in a relaxed environment twice a week, Mondays at 6:30 and Saturday mornings at 8:30, to run or walk for fun and fitness. We have 7 signed up already, lets try to make it 10.

Contact Mike at 416-487-5174 or [mike@forever-active.com](mailto:mike@forever-active.com)

## Balance Exercises do not have to be Difficult to be Effective



Balance exercises can help you avoid potentially disabling falls and improve your quality of life. Two factors that contribute to balance are;

1. Lower body muscle strength. Exercises that strengthen your legs will improve balance by giving you the strength to maintain balance and make corrections when you fall off balance.

2. Timeliness of neurological signals to the muscles. Agility drills can help train your brain to signal your muscles more quickly to make balance corrections and avoid falls.

### Muscle Strengthening Exercises;

(Start with 5 reps and progress to 15 reps for each exercise).

#### 1. Squats

Steps:

1. Stand with your head facing forward and your chest held up and out.



2. Place your feet shoulder-width apart or slightly wider. Extend your hands straight out in front of you to help keep your balance.

3. Sit back and down like you're sitting into an imaginary chair. Keep your head facing forward as your upper body bends forward a bit. Rather than allowing your back to round, let your lower back arch slightly as you descend.

4. Lower down so your thighs are as parallel to the floor as possible, with your knees over your ankles. Press your weight back into your heels.

Keep your body tight and push through your heels to bring yourself back to the starting position.

#### 2. Forward Lunges

Steps:

1. Keep your upper body straight, with your shoulders back and relaxed and chin up (pick a point to stare at in front of you so you don't



keep looking down).

2. Always engage your core (Tighten up belly).

3. Step forward with one leg, lowering your hips until both knees are bent at about a 90-degree angle. Make sure your front knee is directly above your ankle, not pushed out too far, and make sure your other knee doesn't touch the floor. Keep the weight in your heels as you push back up to the starting position.

### **Additional Lunge exercises that require more strength and balance;**

#### 1. Walk forward Lunge -

with each step forward you do a forward lunge.

2. Reverse Lunge - you step backwards and lower your hips and knee.

3. Side Lunge - Stand with your feet and knees together, hands on your hips. Take a large step with your right foot to the right side and lunge toward the floor. Make sure your right knee does not extend past your toes and keep your left leg relatively

straight. Push off through your right foot to return to the start to complete one.

### **Agility Drills;**

These drills will strengthen the legs as well as improve balance by helping to train the brain to send signals to your muscle more quickly.

1. Forward Scissors - Stay in place or move forward, swing your arms and do scissors movement with the legs. Pause for 1 sec after each scissors movement to hold for balance.

2. Hop Scotch - Start with feet together and then hop forward with legs going wide and then hop forward again with feet coming back together. Pause for 1 sec after reach hop to maintain balance.

3. Carioca - Stand sideways with feet shoulder width apart. Step sideways by crossing Left leg in front of the other. Then move the Right foot to the side of the Left foot and then cross left leg behind the right leg and right leg then moves to side of Left foot and continue this pattern for 10 steps.

**“Small Steps Leads to Big Differences”**

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**50% off your first 6 Exercise Sessions**  
**(\$225.00 savings)**

**A great way to step into summer**

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