

Balance comes from the fine interaction of 3 different systems. The first is made up of sensors located in the joints and muscles all over the body called proprioceptors.

The second system is located in the inner ears and is a series of fluid filled canals. The fluid moves tiny hair cells which send information to the brain about head position and movement.

The final system is vision.

Difficulties with balance tend to occur when there is a problem with the information being sent to the brain from any of the 3 systems. Balance also declines with age. The good news is that challenging balance with certain exercises can really help, though this can take up to 6 months.

Keeping active is also important, and swimming has been found to be particularly effective in maintaining balance.

Use it or lose it!

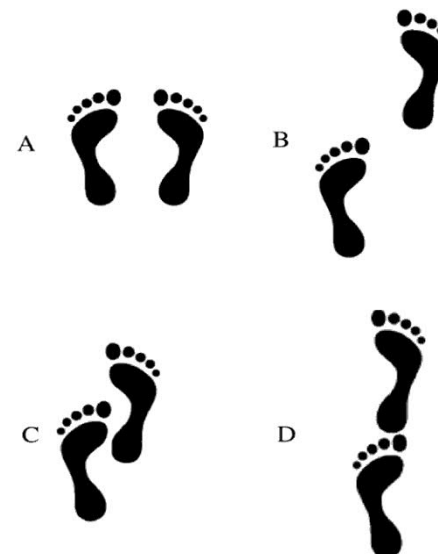
Exercises

If you feel at risk of falling make sure someone is there to assist you. Standing with your back to a corner might help, or use a table for support.

Try to repeat the exercises at least 2 – 3 times/week. Keep your shoulders, upper body and knees relaxed. Do not hold your breath.

1. Stand with your feet as close together as possible. Try to keep your weight even between heels and toes. Relax your knees.

Try standing with your feet in the positions illustrated. Continue for 1 minute. Repeat with the other foot in front.



2. Repeat exercise (1) with eyes closed.

PATIENT INFORMATION

Balance

This leaflet is part of a series of exercise's to help vertigo and imbalance

3. Stand feet apart and slowly turn your head side to side, 5 times in each direction. Rest and repeat twice more. When this becomes easier move your head faster and/or your feet closer together.

4. Stand on one leg. Don't let the legs touch.

5. Walk with one foot in front of the other as if on a tightrope. Use a wall to steady yourself.

6. Walk close to a wall slowly turning your head side to side.

7. Walk in a large figure of "8". Continue for 2-3 minutes.

8. Step on and off the bottom stair, without holding on if possible. Repeat 10 times, leading with the right leg, and 10 times leading with the left.

9. Stand on a soft surface such as a thick piece of foam or cushion. Try to balance with eyes open and then with eyes closed.

11. March on the spot for 1-2 mins turning head slowly side to side.

12. Hold onto a table (if necessary). Rise up on to your toes, hold for 5 secs and lower. Repeat 10 times.

13. Sit on a dining chair. Stand up without using your arms to push. Sit down and repeat this 10 times.

A video of these exercises is available, please follow this link:

<http://www.torbayandsouthdevon.nhs.uk/vertigo>

For further assistance or to receive this information in a different format, please contact the department which created this leaflet.

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If you need to get in touch please contact us on **01803 656325** (Audiology)