



THE AGESTRONG BALANCE GUIDE

Understand Your Balance. Train What Matters. Move With Greater Confidence.



Balance for real life - not just standing still.

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MOVE BETTER. STAY STRONG. LIVE INDEPENDENTLY.

BALANCE IS MORE THAN STANDING STILL

When most people think about balance, they picture standing on one leg and trying not to wobble. But everyday balance rarely looks like that. You use balance when you get out of a chair, walk across uneven ground, step off a pavement, turn around, climb stairs, reach for something, carry your shopping or suddenly have to catch yourself when you lose your footing.



Balance is constantly changing because **you are constantly changing position.**

As we get older, changes in strength, reaction time, vision, sensation, mobility and confidence can all influence how we balance. Often these changes happen gradually. We may take smaller steps, hold onto furniture, avoid uneven ground, turn more slowly or become cautious on stairs.

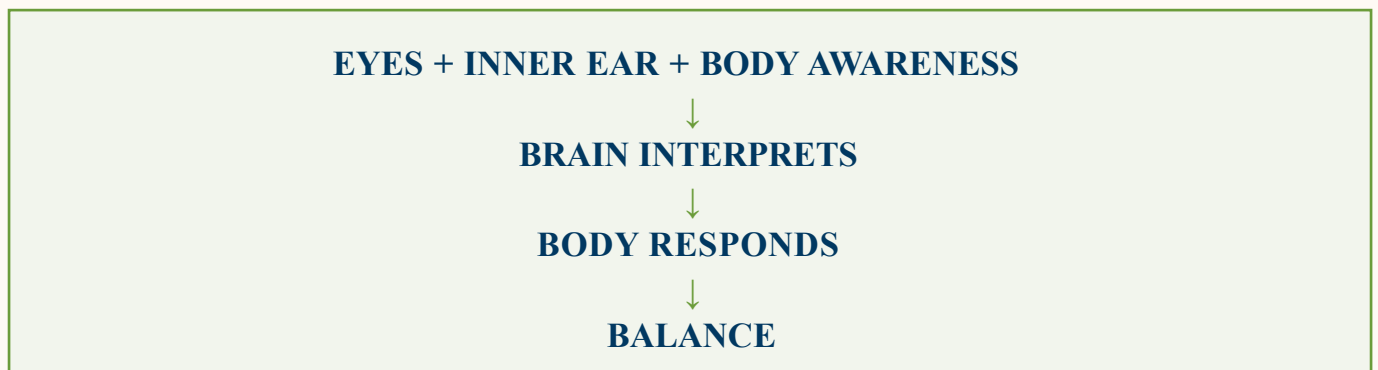
The purpose of this guide isn't to give you a score or tell you that you have good or bad balance. It is to help you understand your balance, recognise where you may need more confidence or capacity, and show you how balance can be trained progressively.

Good balance isn't simply the ability to stand still. It's the ability to stay in control while life keeps moving.

HOW DOES YOUR BODY BALANCE?

Balance isn't controlled by one muscle. It is a remarkable conversation taking place between your body, your senses and your brain.

YOUR EYES - VISION	Your eyes tell your brain where you are in relation to your surroundings.
YOUR INNER EAR - VESTIBULAR SYSTEM	Structures within your inner ear detect movement and changes in the position of your head.
YOUR BODY - PROPRIOCEPTION	Sensors in muscles, joints and tissues provide information about where different parts of your body are positioned.



The important thing to understand is that balance isn't simply something you have. It's something your nervous system is continually doing. And like many other movement abilities, it can be challenged, practised and improved.

THERE IS MORE THAN ONE KIND OF BALANCE

If you only practise standing still, you are only training one part of balance.

STATIC BALANCE	Staying controlled while your body is relatively still. Feet-together, tandem or single-leg positions are examples.
DYNAMIC BALANCE	Maintaining control while your body is moving. Walking, stepping, reaching and changing direction all require it.
ANTICIPATORY BALANCE	Preparing your body for a movement you know is about to happen, such as stepping, reaching or lifting.
REACTIVE BALANCE	Responding when something unexpected disturbs your balance, often by taking a quick recovery step.

Real life requires all of them.

STRENGTH AND BALANCE WORK TOGETHER



Balance doesn't work in isolation. Your nervous system may recognise that you're losing your balance - but your muscles still have to do something about it.

Imagine catching your foot on the edge of a pavement. Your body detects the disturbance. Your brain recognises that your centre of mass is moving beyond your base of support. But knowing that you're losing balance isn't enough. Your body needs to produce a fast, appropriately placed step and enough muscular force to control your weight.

That is why strength and power become such important partners to balance as we get older.

DETECT → RESPOND → RECOVER

Balance tells you that you need to respond. Strength and power help you make the response.

BALANCE CHANGES WITH THE TASK

You don't necessarily need a harder exercise. Sometimes you simply need to change the challenge.



WIDER



NARROWER



MORE CHALLENGING

Your balance system responds differently when you bring your feet closer together, move your centre of mass, reach farther, step in different directions, turn your head or body, change speed, carry something, reduce hand support or respond to something unexpected.

Balance training should progress from predictable to less predictable - not from safe to dangerous.



THE AGESTRONG BALANCE CHECK

Before you train your balance, observe it.



This isn't a test. There is no pass or fail, and we're not trying to compare you with somebody else. Use a chair, wall or stable surface nearby for safety and simply notice what happens when your balance is challenged.

CONTROL	Can I maintain my position?
CONFIDENCE	Do I feel comfortable or apprehensive?
SYMMETRY	Does one direction or side feel different?
STRATEGY	Do I stiffen, grab for support or make very large corrections?
MOVEMENT	Can I shift, step and turn while remaining controlled?
RECOVERY	If my balance changes, can I regain control?

Don't chase a score. Look for information.

THE AGESTRONG BALANCE PROGRESSION™

CONTROL → SHIFT → STEP → TURN → REACT



CONTROL

Maintain your position and control your centre of mass within your base of support.



SHIFT

Deliberately move your centre of mass and transfer your weight.



STEP

Change your base of support by stepping in different directions.



TURN

Maintain control while your eyes, head and body change direction.



REACT

Respond appropriately when balance is disturbed and regain control.

Balance training should prepare you for movement - because life doesn't happen standing still.

WHY REACTIVE BALANCE MATTERS



You can't always predict when you're going to lose your balance. This is one of the biggest gaps in traditional balance programmes.

We often practise movements that we know are coming: stand on one leg, walk heel-to-toe, hold a position. These can have value, but real life isn't always predictable. You might catch your shoe, miss a step, move unexpectedly or lose your footing.

When that happens, your body has to respond quickly. One of our most important strategies is often remarkably simple: **take a step**. A recovery step creates a new base of support underneath your moving body.

The goal isn't to practise falling. The goal is to improve your ability to recover.

Safety: Reactive balance work should be introduced progressively, with a stable support nearby and within your current ability. If you have a history of falls, significant dizziness or a medical condition affecting balance, seek individual guidance before attempting challenging balance work.

FIVE PRINCIPLES FOR BETTER BALANCE

1. START WITH CONTROL

Before making an exercise harder, make sure you can control the movement you already have.

2. TRAIN MOVEMENT, NOT JUST POSITIONS

Standing balance matters, but everyday life also requires shifting, stepping and turning.

3. INCLUDE DIFFERENT DIRECTIONS

Life doesn't only happen forwards. Practise moving sideways, diagonally and, where appropriate, backwards.

4. BUILD STRENGTH ALONGSIDE BALANCE

Strong legs, hips and trunk give your body greater capacity to control and recover movement.

5. PROGRESS - DON'T PROVE

Choose challenges that allow you to practise successfully and then gradually progress them.

PROGRESS, NOT PERFECTION.

Small improvements in movement confidence can make an enormous difference to everyday life.

PRACTISE WITH ME

Put What You've Learned Into Practice

Now that you understand balance a little differently, I'd like to show you how we actually train it. In my free AgeStrong balance lesson, we'll work through five practical balance exercises based on the progression you've just learned:

CONTROL → SHIFT → STEP → TURN → REACT



WATCH THE FREE BALANCE LESSON

Over 50? These 5 Exercises Train the Balance You Actually Need

<https://youtu.be/L-aEyiXkiH0>

Don't try to make every exercise difficult. Find the level where you can practise with control and build from there.

BALANCE IS CONFIDENCE IN MOTION



Better balance isn't really about becoming good at balance exercises. It's about what better balance allows you to do: walking confidently, travelling, using stairs, exploring somewhere new, playing with your grandchildren, gardening, shopping and moving through your home with greater confidence.

Balance gives us something incredibly valuable: **confidence to move**. And confidence changes behaviour. When we're confident, we're more willing to move. When we move more, we have more opportunities to maintain our strength, mobility and capacity.

We're not training balance simply so that you can stand on one leg for longer. We're training it so you can keep participating in your life.

YOUR AGESTRONG JOURNEY CONTINUES

The AgeStrong Starter Guide - understand the complete AgeStrong approach.

AgeStrong Foundations - learn how Restore → Improve → Build applies to your movement.

Movement Conversations - continue learning about strength, mobility, balance and healthy ageing.

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Educational note: This guide provides general movement education and is not a diagnosis or substitute for individual medical advice. If you have new or unexplained dizziness, repeated falls, fainting, significant neurological symptoms or concerns about your safety, seek assessment from an appropriate healthcare professional.