



## Health & Wellness

The Newsletter About Your Health And  
Caring For Your Body

# IS YOUR BALANCE SETTING YOU UP FOR AN INJURY?

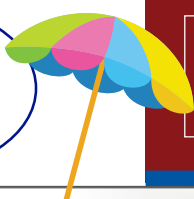
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**Priority  
Physical  
Therapy**



# Health & Wellness

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## HOW'S YOUR BALANCE?

***Are You at Risk of Sustaining a Fall-Related Injury? Get Back on Your Feet with Physical Therapy.***



Most people don't think about keeping their balance in shape until it is too late and they suffer a harsh fall. Did you know that 1/3 of the population over 65 falls each year? Every 11 seconds, an older adult is rushed to the emergency room for a fall. Every 19 minutes, an older adult dies from a fall.

Although this statistic is worrisome, the good news is that falls can easily be prevented, simply by the regular exercising of your balance system. If you have recently sustained a balance-related injury, it is important to seek the help of a physical therapist immediately, in order to avoid additional injuries in the future.

It is important to note that you should also contact a physical therapist if you have any of the following symptoms:

- Dizziness or vertigo ("spinning" sensations, even when remaining still).
- Inability to focus or remain alert.
- Double vision or tunnel vision.
- Nausea or vomiting.

- Arm or leg weakness.
- Abnormal eye movements.
- Difficulty standing up from a seated position or standing for prolonged periods of time.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Priority Physical Therapy has begun to see many patients who have found that after contracting the virus, their balance has been thrown off, putting them at a higher risk for fall-related injuries. If you frequently notice an imbalance, dizziness, or unsteadiness that makes you feel as if you may fall over at any given time, you've suffered from a fall in the past, or you've had difficulty regaining your balance during recovery from COVID-19, contact Priority Physical Therapy today so we can help you figure out the root of your problem and treat it accordingly.

### **Am I at risk of falling?**

Some people have a higher risk of falling than others. Certain risk factors include:

- Advanced age.
- Being female.

- Living a sedentary life.
- Previous history of falls.
- Vertigo or dizziness.
- Parkinson's disease.
- Alzheimer's disease.
- Heart disease.
- Diabetes.
- Previous stroke or heart attack.
- Arthritis or alternative joint pain.
- Problems with vision.
- Problems with walking or staying balanced.
- Fatigue.
- Overall poor health.

Your physical therapist will assess your medical history to determine how many risk factors toward falling you may have. They will educate you on what these factors mean, as well as steps you can take to decrease your risk. After this, they will perform a thorough physical evaluation to figure out what the best treatment plan for you will be.



**DID YOU  
KNOW...**

***Balance affects long-term health - A study of people in their fifties showed that those who could stand on one leg for 10 seconds with their eyes closed were the most likely to be fit and well over the next 13 years.***

# HOW WILL PHYSICAL THERAPY HELP REDUCE MY FALL RISK?

A recently published systematic review by Cochrane, comprised of over 100 randomized controlled trials, supports exercise interventions as an effective treatment method for patients with an increased risk of falling. The average age of patients in this review was 76, and 77% of the patients were women.

Results concluded that those who participated in exercise interventions had a 23% decrease in falls as compared to the control group. Fall risk was also reduced at 21-24%, depending on if treatments were done in individual or group settings. The risk of fall-related fractures was decreased by 27% and the number of falls that required medical attention was decreased by 39%. Concluding statements from the authors demonstrated how overall, "Exercise reduces both the rate of falls...and the number of people experiencing falls."

At Priority Physical Therapy, your initial physical evaluation may consist of several parts to better determine what your most problematic factors are. These may include vision tests, thinking tests, resting heart rate checks, active heart rate checks, and evaluations of your gait, balance, range of motion, and strength. These tests may vary depending on whether or not you have experienced COVID-19.

Based on the results of this evaluation, your physical therapist will design a treatment plan around your specific needs.

These plans are aimed first and foremost at reducing your risk of falling, but they will also aid you in improving balance, strength, flexibility, endurance, and overall movement. Some common forms of treatment include:

- **Pain management.** If you are feeling pain anywhere, it will be one of the first things addressed in your treatment plan. Your physical therapist will want to make sure that your treatment is as comfortable as possible, so you will work together on relieving pain first, before continuing into any other forms of physical activity that may bring you discomfort.
- **Walking and moving programs.** This part of your treatment plan is aimed at getting you back to your normal physical function when walking and/or moving. Your physical therapist may ask you to perform certain activities, such as walking in a circle or completing an obstacle course.
- **Balance training.** Balance is a large part of fall prevention, as lack of stability is one of the main reasons why falls occur. Your physical therapist will design a balanced training plan for you as part of your treatment and may ask you to perform certain balance-based activities, such as standing on one leg or holding your balance while performing a mentally stimulating task (such as reciting the alphabet or reading a page from a book.)



- **Strength training.** Strength training is typically paired with your balance training. Your physical therapist will design a strength training plan for you, which will focus on specific muscle groups in need of improvement. The goal of this will be to improve your standing and walking balance, as well as your ability to recover from a loss of balance.
- **Endurance training.** Endurance training is all about working up to more advanced levels of the same form of treatment. Your physical therapist will provide you with an aerobic exercise program and will slowly add on time to those exercises as your endurance improves. For example, your endurance training may begin at 10-minute sessions and then may progress to 30-minute sessions.

**CALL US TODAY! MISSOURI 573.769.6166 SOUTH CAROLINA 843.536.4888**

## EXERCISE ESSENTIAL

### SINGLE LEG STANCE

Stand tall. Be close to a support, both at your sides and behind in case you lose your balance. Balance on one leg then switch to the other leg. Repeat 3 times on both legs.

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**MISSOURI**  
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843.536.4888

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# FREE WORKSHOPS

## Knee Pain Workshop

July 20<sup>th</sup>, 2021

6:30 PM | Palmyra, MO

1219 S. Main St.  
Palmyra, MO 63461  
P: 573.769.6166



## Shoulder Pain Workshop

July 20<sup>th</sup>, 2021

6:30 PM | Florence, SC

2521 S. Cashua Drive  
Florence, SC 29501  
P: 843.536.4888



## How Much Is It To Attend These Workshops?

Nothing... the event is absolutely FREE but call Missouri 573-769-6166 • South Carolina 843-536-4888 now to register as we are taking only 25 attendees.

[WWW.PRIORITYPT.NET](http://WWW.PRIORITYPT.NET)

## Patient Success Story



"After an 8-month period of a down-hill physical slide following 2 hard falls (on my head), 2 cataract surgeries, a car wreck (rear-ended and totaled car), followed by a hip joint replacement, I was light-headed with extreme fatigue and back pain. After any physical, slight activity I required a 2 hour daytime nap, plus 8 hours sleep at night. Following a hospitalization from stroke symptoms, multiple x-rays, c-scans and MRI's -- with no diagnosis by a neurologist, urologist and ophthalmologist I needed help! That is where Kim and Lesley came to my aid. At this point, I now have resumed my housework and gardening. My back pain has lessened and they have worked on my strengthening and balance. They have truly been a Godsend to help get me back to functioning! Thank you!"



# HOW DOES COVID-19 AFFECT BALANCE?

COVID-19 places a lot of physical and emotional stress on a person, and as your body fights the virus and begins to heal itself, you might be left feeling as if you really have just sustained an injury.

COVID-19 side effects should be treated just like any other kind of physical trauma that results in pain or impaired balancing abilities. We have found that many of our patients who experienced this illness reported feelings of dizziness and vertigo long after they had recovered and tested negative for the virus.

Regaining your abilities to function independently after a bout of COVID-19 is a long process, but

physical therapy can help. Our skilled therapists at Priority Physical Therapy can help patients get their muscle strength, stamina, energy, and footing back during recovery through the following types of training and exercise programs:

- Upper and lower body strengthening exercises
- Breathing exercises to increase lung function and capacity
- Balance and gait training
- Aerobic exercise and for improved pulmonary health

- Stretching
- Endurance training
- Manual therapy

Your physical therapist will complete a full assessment of your condition, ask you health-related questions regarding your experience with COVID-19, and pinpoint the exact areas on your body that may be causing you pain. From there, he or she will create a customized treatment plan specific to your needs for optimizing your levels of function and restoring your health to what it was previous to contracting the virus.