

Balance Builds Fitness

The Balancing Act—*How implementing balance into your fitness program can improve your health.*

The Balancing Act

In The Gym

Off The PT Desk

The Athletes Corner

Nutrition

Exercise of the Month

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For years, the fitness industry has seen many ever changing trends into finding an optimal way to get fitness consumers into better shape. Millions of dollars are spent each year trying to invent machine after machine that will help us feel and look better. Although most of these machines might help to some degree in getting us fit, the majority of them tend to neglect one of the most fundamental aspects of our well being which is balance.

Without balance, we wouldn't be able to function normally in everyday simple tasks nor would we be able to perform complex movement patterns associated with most sports. Furthermore, as we all age, our ability to balance tends to deteriorate.

The lack of balance has shown to be the cause of many acute injuries anywhere from an athlete spraining an ankle on the playing field to an elderly person slipping and/or falling over a curb. Limited balance can also be the cause of many chronic overuse injuries as well. Nevertheless, these common injuries can be lessened if not avoided by integrating balance into your fitness regimen.

What was once considered a form of rehabilitation in physical therapy is now being regarded as a leading approach to developing proper function of our bodies. The proceeding articles give support as to how and why balance is an essential part of being physically fit.



*Good balance
equates to being
healthy*

*Our Mission is to provide
personalized
rehabilitation, fitness
training and sports
performance in an
environment that leads to
client involved,
functional improvement
from metabolic,
neuromuscular and
orthopaedic impairments.*

Sports Conditioning and Rehabilitation

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In the Gym

How Not to Have a 'Senior Moment': Avoiding Slips & Falls

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Statistics show that after the age of 65, 1 in 3 adults will experience either a slip or fall. This raises much concern for many of us living beyond the span of middle age because if a fall does occur, the body is more susceptible to sustaining a serious injury due to common diseases such as **osteoporosis** which reduces bone mineral density making the risk of fracture more likely.

One of the main reasons as to why we are increasingly at risk of falling as we age is the onset of **sarcopenia**, which is the age related loss of muscle mass, strength and subsequent function of the body. As our bodies lose the ability to function, our sense of proprioception gets compromised.

Proprioception is the body's ability to facilitate balance via the central nervous system. When these proprioceptors no longer work effectively is when we are prone to slips and falls.

Listed below are some useful tips to help prevent falls from occurring.



1) Fall-proof your home: Take a tour around your home and look for anything that might cause you to fall. Area rugs without a non slip surface as well as electrical cords are common trip hazards. Also, plugging in a night light through a hallway or your bathroom can be useful to prevent stumbling while walking in the dark or just as you awaken.

2) Daily balance exercises: Simple balance exercises can be done either around the house or at the gym. Try standing on one foot and hold this position for 10 to 20 seconds without holding onto anything. You can also try standing with one foot in front of the other as if you're on a balance beam. For both of these exercises, remember to stand in a door jam or next to something sturdy enough to support your own bodyweight (i.e. Within a door jam, against a wall, or the back of a couch) in the event that you might lose your balance.

3) Stay Active: Whether it be through yard work, walking around the block, or going to the gym, keeping the body constantly moving will help battle the effects of aging by increasing muscular strength, maintaining bone density and improving our coordination. More importantly, staying physically active helps give us the confidence needed to function properly in our daily endeavors however simple or complex they might be.



Off The Physical Therapy Desk

Method to Their Madness

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Have you ever walked past the therapy room while entering SCAR and wondered to yourself why the therapists were using marbles, agility ladders, cones, foam pads, rolls and beams? Believe it or not, there is not only a madness to their method, but more so a method to their madness. All of these tools are utilized to train and improve our patients' static and dynamic functional balance levels.

Balance is one of the fundamental movement skills and it underlies all successful human movements. Balance is an innate ability, yet it is also a skill that can be trained and improved throughout one's lifespan. If you are unable to balance properly, your movements will be awkward and can be unsafe. In order to balance and move efficiently, we utilize a combination of our ocular senses (vision), vestibular systems (inner ear), kinesthetic awareness (body positioning) and auditory senses (hearing) in a coordinated manner.

Our staff at SCAR believes that the most important aspect of balance training is building and maintaining one's core strength.

The core is the central portion of one's body. To achieve the maximal level of core strength, an individual must integrate the efforts of abdominal, gluteal, spinal and groin musculature. A strong core improves balance and will not only prevent falls and injuries but will also improve athletic performance. The staff at SCAR utilizes a variety of core and balance exercises which will challenge all the various muscles surrounding your torso. Some exercise work muscle groups better than others and are designed to improve not only strength, but endurance. Individuals need both for optimal functional balance levels.

When most people think about balance, they think about falling. In most cases we don't necessarily fall when we lose our balance. Instead we end up with a host of sprains and strain injuries which restrict our ability to work and play. The good news is that with the assistance of the staff at SCAR, your balance can be tested to establish your current ability as well as a guided approach that will help you to progress from your existing functional capacity.

We encourage all of SCAR's members to add core strengthening exercise to their routine. This is one of the most effective ways to improve functional balance. Improvements in balance can benefit us at any age and results in increased coordination, athletic performance and postural control. Doing so would help make the chance of injury much less likely.

If you have any questions, feel free to ask a SCAR employee on tips concerning core strength and guidelines regarding balance of the body.



Maintaining core strength is vital to achieving proper body balance.

The Athletes Corner

No Muscle Is An Island: Balance Tips for Shoulders

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The scapula, commonly known as the shoulder blade, is a critical link between the shoulder and the spine. Muscle imbalances in muscles that move the shoulder blade can cause neck and shoulder pain. This is especially important for overhead athletes to understand. The majority of impingement syndromes and rotator cuff tears that plague swimmers, volleyball players and throwing athletes are a result of an imbalance in the muscles that move the shoulder.

This knowledge isn't important only for overhead athletes. Anyone can develop shoulder pain or neck pain due to muscle imbalances in the shoulder. We spend most of our time at computers, doing paperwork at a desk, and behind a steering wheel.

This hunched over position pulls our shoulders forward and the muscles in front of our shoulder that pull the shoulder blade forward and up get tight. If we then add repetitive use of those same muscles for overhead sports or general fitness conditioning and those muscles in the front of the shoulder get strong while neglected muscles that pull the shoulder blade down and back get weak. This imbalance leads to postural and functional changes that result in rotator cuff dysfunction as well as neck pain and even headaches.

Exercises that involve pushing, shoulder internal rotation and flexion strengthen those muscles that are already going to be the strongest in the typical individual. Examples of these exercises include but are not limited to push-ups and bench or incline press (pushing), dumbbell raises, bicep curls, shrugs and overhead presses (flexion and upward rotation) and the cable fly across the chest (internal rotation).

It is important to balance these exercises with plenty of pulling, shoulder extension and external rotation. Doing this could prevent chronic pain within the shoulder and neck as well as help to minimize headaches. Examples of these exercises include rows, cable or theraband punches, the fly and lat pulls (pulling), Y's and T's on a swiss ball or with theraband (downward rotation) as well as theraband external rotation or wand exercises and straight arm rows for extension.



Muscle imbalances in athletes can cause injury to the shoulder.

Nutrition, The Missing Link

The Energy Balance Equation

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In order to manage your weight properly, one needs to find proper balance between calories in and calories out which is commonly referred to as **The Energy Balance Equation**:

Calories In: Various foods we consume that are broken down by the body into carbohydrates, protein, alcohol and fat.

Calories Out: The body burns calories in 3 ways:

1. **Thermic Effect of Food**—the total amount of energy your body uses to digest and absorb the food you eat. Represents 10% of calories out. The thermic effect is higher for protein and carbohydrates than it is for fat.
2. **Physical Activity**— Exercise as well as other activities that use muscle for movement. Because most physical activity is voluntary (you choose to be active or sedentary), it is the most viable part of 'calories out' in the energy equation. Physical Activity may represent less than 20% of 'calories out' for sedentary people and can represent more than 30% of 'calories burned' for those that are physically active.
3. **Resting Metabolism**—The body uses calories to sustain life. Resting metabolism provides energy to the body's vital organs over a 24 hour period. Resting metabolism is the largest component, — typically 60 to 70% of 'calories out' in the energy equation. This creates the body's ability to sustain life.

In order to manage the balance of calories in and calories out, it is very important to know your resting metabolic number.

Ask a SCAR staff member about information regarding the resting metabolic test (RMR). Also, for a proper intake of nutrients and calories being consumed, see your SCAR nutritionist for a personal well balanced nutritional plan. We'd be happy to provide a complimentary consultation.



Exercise of the Month *Single Leg Reach*

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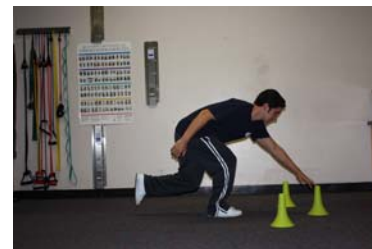
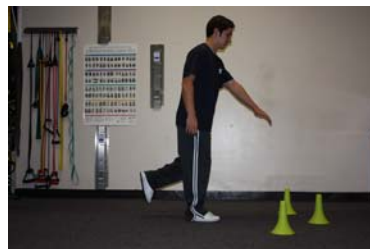
The following is a good exercise to help increase your balance. It has a nice progression that you can follow from easy to more difficult. Begin with the exercise that is easiest for you to perform ten times without losing your balance. Then progress through the exercises as you master them.

1. Start with a single foam roll upright approximately 24" in front of you. Standing on your left foot, reach forward to touch the foam roll and then stand back upright. Do this 2 sets of 20 on each foot.
2. Progress to placing 3 foam rolls in front of you. One to the right, one to the left and one right in front.
3. Progress even further to using cones which are lower to the ground.
4. Progress once again by touching your elbow to your knee prior to reaching forward. Remember to not touch the ground in between each repetition.

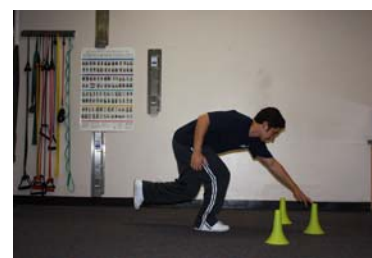
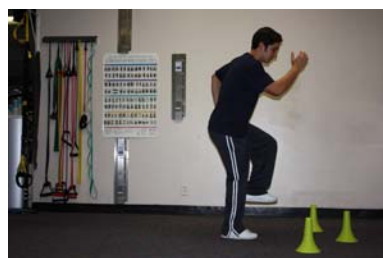
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3.



4.



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Mark your calendars!

Wednesday, March 11, 2009

6:00-7:00 pm
In the PT room

We invite all SCAR members to a seminar on
“Balance” presented by Jim Herkimer.

Jim will be give a short lecture followed by an active
lesson. Be prepared to participate in the exercise
demonstrations

Sunday, May 3, 2009

6:00 am

Irvine Spectrum

Help Us Reach for the Cure!

Join SCAR raise money for
Pediatric Cancer Research.
Join our team and raise money
yourself while training for a 5K,
10K or 1/2 marathon or just
support one of our team members.

ASK one of the SCAR staff members for details on how to
join us or support us

