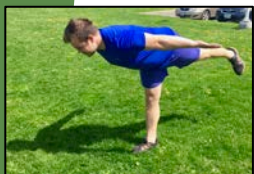


15 Minute
Activity
For
Everyone

Increasing Balance

From learning how to run, riding a bicycle or maintaining an upright posture in a chair, almost everything we do requires balance. Though increasing our balance skills are an inherit part of growing up, if we don't take time to practice and strengthen these skills, they can quickly deplete. Here are a few exercises for you and your family to improve your balance skills, increasing core strength and overall body well-being.



- **Airplane Exercise**

From standing position, lift one leg off the ground, hinge forward at the hips while extending your hands and arms back, creating wings like a plane. The further forward you bend, the harder the pose. Hold for 5 breaths then switch legs.



- **Cat Exercise**

Come to all fours, placing your hands underneath your shoulders and your knees underneath your hips. Extend your right leg and left arm out and hold for 5 breaths then switch sides.



- **Tree Exercise**

From a standing position, balance on one foot while lifting the other leg up. Place the lifted foot onto your shin or thigh, avoiding the knee. Stretch your arms high to the sky and hold for 5 breaths, then switch sides.



- **Sailboat Exercise**

Start in a lunge position, with your right leg in front of you and your left leg back. Lean your right arm on your thigh and extend your left-hand to the sky. Hold for 5 breaths then switch.

Discussion Questions:

- Which exercise was the hardest? Why?
- What benefits can come from increased flexibility?
- How does having good balance effect other parts of your life?
- What other exercises or activities increase balance?

Note: Please make sure to warm-up and stretch before doing any physical activity. If you are experiencing discomfort at any time, stop the activity and modify it to meet your level of ability.

How Balance Works:

Along with what we see and what we feel, the canals of the inner ear are the command center in monitoring our balance. Our three inner ear canals are lined with hair cells that contain fluid inside. When we move, so does the fluid in our ears. One canal senses up-and-down movement, another senses side-to-side movement with the third sensing tilting movements. With every movement, the hair cells send signals to our brain which are used to interpret our balance.

Materials Needed:

- Open Space, Appropriate Attire

Balance Tips:

- Use a chair or wall as an additional support if you're feeling off balance.
- Focus and look at on an object in the room that isn't moving. This can help center yourself.