



FYZICAL Therapy News

From your friends at **Northshore FYZICAL Therapy & Balance Centers**

PHYSICAL THERAPY FOR GAIT AND BALANCE IMPAIRMENT



The risk of falling increases with age. A reduction in balance and an increase in reaction time increases the likelihood of falls. In most cases, there is an underlying factor or a risk factor that results in a fall. Reducing the number of risk factors and improving balance with regular exercise are key components of fall prevention.

Falls may be linked to a person's physical condition (failure to exercise regularly results in poor muscle tone, decreased bone mass and reduced flexibility). Chronic diseases such as arthritis or Parkinson's disease severely limit mobility. A large percentage of falls in the elderly population involve hazards at home (poor lighting, loose carpets and lack of safety equipment). Inner ear problems and similar clinical conditions can also lead to balance issues and difficulty walking.

While treatment for each of these conditions varies, the common denominator for rehabilitation after a fall is physical therapy. In this article, we shall briefly discuss the role of physical therapists in fall prevention and the treatment of gait and balance impairments.

EVERY LITTLE THING MATTERS

Once a diagnosis of gait and/or balance impairment has been made and the underlying cause identified, the physical therapist conducts a detailed assessment of gait, balance, and mobility levels and lower extremity joint function. This helps the therapist identify gait requirements and balance abnormalities.



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Exercise is the treatment of choice for patients with balance and gait abnormalities. Usually, a precise exercise program incorporating balance, gait, strength training, endurance and flexibility training is designed and implemented.

For example, a physical therapist might teach gait training. The patient is encouraged to walk with the help of a walker or other assistive devices, which are gradually withdrawn as independence improves. Strengthening of the upper body, trunk, and pelvic region establishes the foundation for long-term safety. Biomechanical analysis of gait will ensure that gait deviations are minimized or removed. The physical therapist will pay attention to every minute detail of gait including, but not limited to, the correct striking of the heel on the floor while walking.



THE BIG PICTURE - FOCUS ON PREVENTION

Exercise is one part of fall prevention and treatment. An analysis of risk factors at home is a key aspect of long-term treatment. Also, a physical therapist can help seniors regain the confidence and motivation needed to be independent and mobile. A physical therapist will guide, inspire and empower every patient to achieve full mobility and function while helping overcome the fear of falling.

If you or someone you know has balance and gait abnormalities, ask them to call a physical therapist. Therapists are trained to identify and assess fall risk, design programs to reduce the risk of future falls, recommend assistive devices, design exercise programs, and complete home evaluations to reduce hazards in the home.

Physical therapists go through years of training to be able to complete comprehensive balance assessments and establish fall prevention strategies in older adults who are at risk for falls. Call our office today and take proactive steps towards fall prevention. We are here for you and look forward to working with you.

Let's Play Sudoku

	1			2			4	
					7		1	
		6	5	8				
1		9					5	4
8	4			9			6	3
3	6						9	8
			3		1	5		
	7		6					
	8			4			7	

TESTIMONIALS

"I'd been suffering what turned out to be a rotator cuff tear for several months, thinking it would get better. I finally saw my doctor and he recommended PT with Northshore. As a result of PT I have gained back the strength and mobility in my shoulder and arm. I will continue to improve as I will follow the program outlined for me. I'm very happy as a result of my therapy."

-Ellen L.

"I specifically liked the flexible schedule and friendly staff."

-Dawn K.

"Staff was very personable, friendly and welcoming."

-Steve M.

Please tell others about us!



LOVE YOUR LIFE

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