

Helen to the Rescue

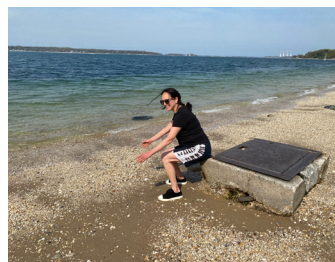
Proprioception (pro·pri·o·cep·tion)

Balance and Proprioception are defined as the sense of knowing where a body part is in space at any one time. Proprioception occurs subconsciously, and as a result, is sometimes a difficult concept to grasp! Try closing your eyes and touch your nose with your index finger. If this is hard, your balance may be compromised!

Here's the Scoop!

Our brain needs constant input from proprioceptive receptors located within our muscles, joints and skin. These receptors enable the brain to monitor our position and make corrections when necessary. This important network influences our senses of effort, force, and heaviness.

Balance will start to decline somewhere between 40 and 50 years of age. According to the National Institute of Health, one out of three people over 65 will experience a fall each year.



Move into Action!

You can start improving your personal balance with simple exercises that can be done anywhere! For an added challenge, try these exercises at the beach! The soft, uneven surface of sand is perfect. At the north end of Vineyard road is one of my favorite beaches in Huntington Bay.



Try these:

- 1) Stand with your weight on one leg and raise the other leg to the side or behind you. Try to work your way to a 30-second hold on each side.
- 2) Put your heel right in front of your toe, like you are walking on a tightrope. Do 3 sets of ten steps.
- 3) Stand up and sit down from a chair without using your hands.
- 4) Walk while alternating knee lifts with each step.

Balance training also has many great fitness benefits. It burns more calories by making the body work harder and it creates muscular balance in the body. Balance training also improves neuromuscular coordination by getting the brain to talk to the muscles, and it teaches your body to use your core for stabilization.

Incorporating simple balance training into your life can be fun

- If you drop your keys or wallet, reach over to pick them up on one leg with the other leg lifting straight into the air behind you and engage your abs.
- Sit on a stability ball at work, school, or while watching TV.
- Stand on one foot while brushing your teeth; alternate feet halfway through

Remember Life is just a Balancing act!

Yours in Fitness,
Helen Pufahl



Helen Pufahl MS, NASM-CPT

Helen's love of fitness began at an early age. She practiced dance, gymnastics, as well as, track and field. She's an Exercise Physiologist with over 35 years of experience. She is also a certified personal trainer, corrective exercise specialist, nutrition consultant, and Senior fitness specialist. Owner: Unique Health & Fitness

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