



Stay On Your Feet...

Step 3: Improve Your Balance

Balance sensors are found in your inner ears, eyes, joints and muscles. Any disruption to these organs and pathways can upset your balance, increasing your risk of falling.

Factors that can affect your balance are:

- loss of muscle strength
- reduced joint movement and stability
- the side effects of some medications
- ear problems, including wax buildup
- sudden movements, especially rising quickly from a sitting, kneeling or lying position
- the short-term effects of a hip or knee replacement
- foot problems such as corns, calluses or ingrown toenails
- wearing improper footwear
- poor eyesight and hearing loss

How to improve your balance

- Be active. Take part in physical activity that improves your strength, balance and flexibility, such as tai chi, yoga or pilates.
- Think about using a walking aid. Talk with your health care provider, physiotherapist or occupational therapist about what options would be best for you. Call your local Community Care Access Centre to see if you qualify for a physiotherapy or an occupational therapy assessment.
- Manage your medications.
- Wear proper footwear, and see a foot specialist if you are having foot pain.
- Get your eyesight tested every year. Have your hearing tested if you are having trouble hearing.

What can I do to improve my balance?

Review what you are doing to improve your balance and complete the table below. An example is given to help.

What positive steps am I already taking?	What changes might help me stay on my feet?	How will I make these changes? Is there anyone I need to contact?	When will I make these changes?
I participate in tai chi classes once per week.	I may need a walking aid to help steady me while walking.	I will talk with my health care provider about whether I need a walking aid.	I will talk with my health care provider at my next appointment.

Who else do you know who would benefit from this information?

Stay Active, Stay Independent and Stay On Your Feet!

For more information about risk factors for falls or local falls prevention programs, contact: **Stay On Your Feet Sudbury Manitoulin**

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