

Balance as a suite of skills, is foundational to *all* movement, encompassing far more than standing on one leg or wobble board or bosu ball (I would define/delineate such measures as stability/proprioception training more than holistic balance). Apropos of this, we touch on the important the SAID principle: Specific Adaptation for Imposed Demand. How does this relate to balance? Generally in life we are not navigating surfaces like wobble boards but we *are* dealing with the ever present challenge of gravity (taken very much for granted) and unexpected surfaces such as loose gravel or ice, curbs or any number of surprises in our path. Walking alone provides a kind of shock-wave to the body it must adjust to with every step and so much of what and how we move happens involuntarily, reflexively, automatically.

Expert athletes and skilled movers of any sort exemplify fast reflexes and responsiveness to whatever variables life and sport throws at them. In fact, some of the most important measures you can incorporate into your life to reduce the risk of falling and improve your ability to respond to the world in functional ways, in addition to improving performance and skill acquisition, is to walk on uneven natural terrain, go barefoot when possible and/or wear shoes that provide ground-feel and mobility for your feet. Variety is the spice of life and physical wellness!

I consider getting up and down off of the floor a foundational skill many people stop enjoying, not giving it a second thought until the ground begins to feel uncomfortably far away and unwelcoming. Living in a culture of chairs and uniformly raised surfaces (cars, beds, toilets, counters and again chairs) discourages the need to go all the way up and down which in addition to being critical for ankle, knee, hip and spine mobility, also exercises the inner ear organs, crucial for orientation.

The vestibular system is our on-board balance system sensing rotational and translational movement of the head, relying on it to answer questions below the surface of conscious perception critical for any and all movement: *which way is up and where am I going?* When we stop getting up and down, swinging, spinning and rolling, we may unwittingly allow these organs to degrade, leading to restrictions in mobility and strength and even manifesting as pain and dysfunction in other ways and places. Everything-is-connected and use-it-or-lose-it are indeed mantras of functional movement training.

Standing poses such as tree pose in yoga do not provide as many of the factors we need to holistically exercise our mechanisms of balance. When we stand perfectly still in such a pose, not moving head or eyes and resting one foot on the standing leg, we miss the vital head movement and dynamic/responsive qualities every day functional balance requires.

This course teaches you about the important components of balance and provides many examples of how to train them including seated, floor-based and standing/dynamic movement options.

If you enjoy this complimentary course, consider enrolling in some of my other offerings as this is a good example of the content I offer!

Thank you for being here and let me know how it goes.

XO Erin