

# Services

## Balance Problems & Gait Training

Are you having balance problems? Have you noticed you have been losing your balance more? Almost rolling an ankle from stepping off a curb? Or just find moving quickly side to side or forward throws you off balance more than it did when you were young?

Balance problems and bad falls are not just a worry for seniors and others who have physical challenges. Balance can deteriorate at any age for a variety of reasons and some of these reasons are very fixable with specific exercises. Falls can lead to multiple injuries including wrist fractures, broken arms, herniated discs, knee pain, and ankle sprains.

Improving your walking skills — technically known as your “gait” — and your balance are interrelated challenges. Physical therapy helps you master these skills to decrease your risk of injury, while at the same time increasing your confidence with higher level activities involving quick movements or uneven surfaces.

## What are the benefits of balance and proprioception training?

Balance and proprioception are inextricably linked because they tend to impact one another. Even if you don't think you're in danger of falling over, that “wobbliness” while walking that you're attributing to aging muscles or just being busy, could be something else. The problem might actually be slowing reflexes, which make moving around seem more unstable than it should be. By the same token, poor posture and weakness in the lower extremities can throw off those reflexes.

In fact, the balance and proprioception systems both rely to some extent on a complex number of body systems that include the inner ear, the eyes, the joint-muscle-nerve system, and of course cognitive functions. Physical therapy that improves gait, proprioception and balance works with all of these systems to keep them functioning in harmony.

Gait, proprioception and balance training has a range of benefits, with avoiding injuries being at the top of the list. Beyond lessening your chances of falling, you're also more likely to feel confident with your footing. In addition, those aches and pains from poor posture are likely to decrease as well.

## What does balance, proprioception and gait training entail?

First, we'll evaluate your gait to determine potential problems with strength and posture. Simple movements to test balance are also part of the assessment. Together, these basic evaluations point us in the direction of what to focus on in terms of physical therapy.

Hip and ankle weakness often leads to balance problems, as does poor posture. Strength and flexibility movements can help counteract these problems. These are often as simple as leg lifts while seated in a chair, or “knee marching.” We may also practice standing on one leg, walking heel-to-toe, or tracking the movement of your thumb with your eyes as you move it in various positions.

## Ready to “balance” your life again?

With our dedicated **physical therapist** here in Avon, CT, you’ll regain confidence in navigating challenging terrain and learn how to avoid those clumsy spills.

**Contact us** today for a consultation so you can regain your confidence with sports and uneven surface activities as soon as possible.