

BALANCE AND FALLS

CHRONIC DISEASE AND MOVEMENT DISORDERS

Identifying Risks | Preventing Problems | Quality of Life

Movement Disorders

Many diseases can make it difficult to move. Quality of movement is the primary factor for independence for all creatures.

Chronic Diseases that effect movement include Parkinson's Disease, Multiple Sclerosis, Muscular Dystrophy, Arthritis and many more.

Falls

Falling over can hurt! common serious injuries of falling over include Hip Fracture and Head Injury.

Falls Risks include weak muscles, poor joint stability poor balance and abnormal posture.

Footwear

- shoes are ultimately required for protection. Important features of shoes include cushioning, grip, support and correct fit.

- Activity or purpose specific features include the amount of cushioning, protection (i.e. steel toe), materials (i.e. waterproof)

How can I improve my Balance and Strength???

Balance and Strength are crucial for maintaing effective mobility and therefore independence and good health.

Poor balance and then increased risk of falls has been linked to weak muscles responsible for keeping us upright. Muscle groups to target to improve balance include:

- Gluteals, Hamstrings, Core Stability muscles

Any exercise program for a person with a chronic disease or movement disorder should be designed by an exercise professional - Physiotherapist, Exercise Physiologist, Personal Trainer or Group Fitness instructor.

Distraction and complex activities increase risk of injury so it is best to have a detailed program written or to participate in group exercise classes.





Podiatry and Health

It is very difficult to do anything, especially walking and exercising if you have sore feet. Common foot pain includes:

- Heel Pain - Plantar Fascia, Achilles Tendon issues
- Forefoot Pain - toe deformity, neuroma
- Bunions - pain, poor balance

Many common foot disorders can be managed with footwear modification, exercises and strapping and/or orthotic therapy.

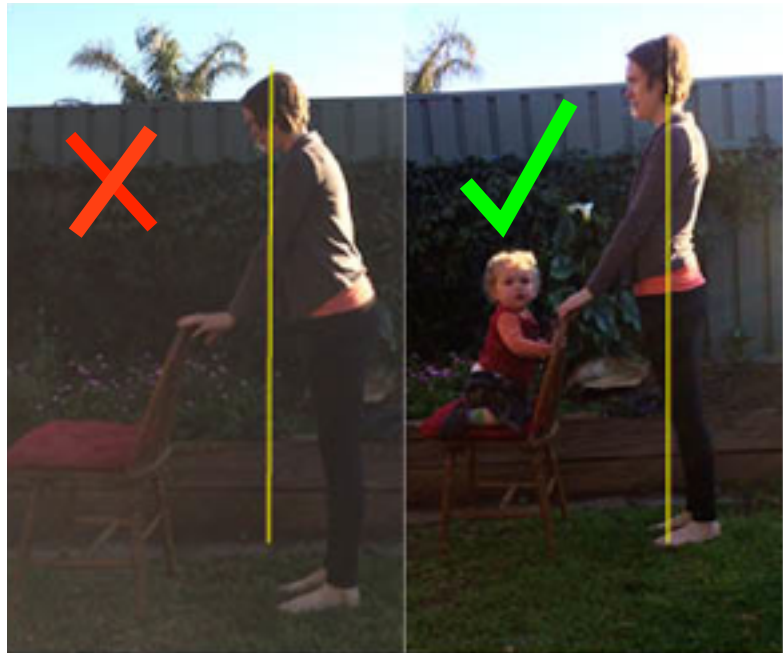
It is also common for pain in one part of the body to be caused by dysfunction somewhere else. A podiatrist is able to assess your posture and make suggestions accordingly. For example some research has indicated that knee pain is linked to a 'flat' foot and can benefit from footwear changes and orthotic therapy.

A podiatrist can also assist with basic hygiene tasks such as nail and skin care and can provide a general foot health check.

Remember, your feet carry you and you only have one pair, they deserve to be looked after well.

One simple home exercise is to stand in front of a chair and holding the chair for support, simply stand still, taking note of keeping the body straight and how it feels to have good posture while balancing. You can ask someone to help you if you need to.

You can challenge yourself further by progressing to standing on one leg, and when you're ready letting go of the chair.



head, shoulder, hips and feet
not aligned - unstable posture

hips, shoulders, head and feet
aligned - better posture

There are many different exercise options available in the community. Groups to contact include:

- Local Council or community centre
- Local Health Professionals ie: Physiotherapist, GP
- Gymnasium and other commercially advertised Fitness Centres
- Fitness Australia
- Disease specific organisations ie: Parkinson's Australia

It does not matter what type of exercise you do, as long as you feel comfortable and enjoy it so that you can continue in the long term. This is easier if you join groups of like-minded people or take a friend or family member for support.