

STAYING ON YOUR FEET

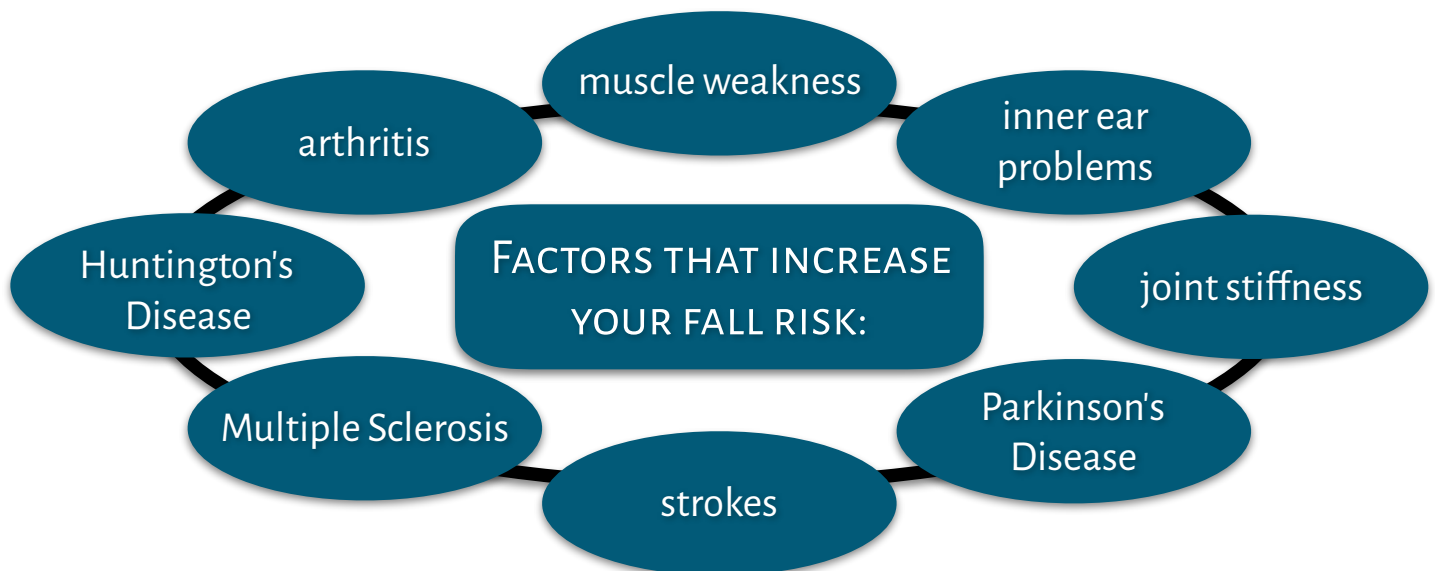
MAINTAIN YOUR BALANCE WITH PHYSICAL THERAPY

With winter fast approaching and slick surfaces on the way, keeping your balance is more important than ever. **Physical therapy can help you address balance issues, regain confidence, and maintain your independence.**

It's Not Normal

If you or someone you know has fallen or is at a risk for falls, you're certainly not alone. **1 in 4 Americans over the age of 65 falls each year.** Because falls are so common, there's a belief that they're not preventable, that it's just a normal part of aging or having certain conditions, like Parkinson's. This is simply not the case.

First, falls can lead to serious injury, even death, causing those with higher fall risk to become fearful and avoid social activities, rather than risk a fall. Second, while falls are common in older adults and people with neurological conditions, **they should never be considered normal.** The factors that contribute to falling can be addressed, many through physical therapy.



Muscle Weakness, Joint Stiffness, & Arthritis

One of the most common factors contributing to loss of balance is loss of muscle strength. As your body becomes weaker, usually due to lack of activity, **your muscles lose their ability to move quickly and effectively, which can lead to a fall when confronted with uneven or slippery walking surfaces.**

Joints become stiff and the symptoms of arthritis can intensify. Unfortunately, that pain and weakness lead to avoidance of activity and the cycle continues.

The great news is that it's never too late to improve your strength. Gains in muscle tissue can happen in your 70s, 80s, and even 90s! However, knowing which muscles to strengthen and how much exercise you should be doing can be overwhelming, which is why many people turn to physical therapy to help them meet their goals.

Inner Ear (BPPV)

Did you know that your ears can affect your balance? There are small crystals located in your inner ear that help you maintain equilibrium. These crystals shift around as you move, and can become stuck where they shouldn't be, leading to a condition called benign paroxysmal positional vertigo (BPPV), causing dizziness and nausea, sometimes resulting in falls.

You'd think that moving these crystals back to their correct location in the inner ear would be complicated; however, most of the time it's a simple fix. Physical therapists are trained to use a technique, called the Epley Maneuver, that repositions the crystals in your ears through body movement, which helps you regain your equilibrium.

Neurological Conditions (Stroke, Parkinson's, Huntingtons, M.S., etc.)

While physical and occupational therapy cannot stop or reverse the effects of neurological diseases like Parkinson's disease, Huntington's disease, multiple sclerosis, or a stroke, they can help to manage many of the associated symptoms through exercise and compensation techniques.

Balance is one of the main areas affected by conditions like these and is a huge factor when it comes to your ability to remain independent. Using specialized equipment and targeted treatments, physical and occupation therapy can help you stay in your home for as long as possible.



Receive a FREE balance assessment from one of our physical therapists & find out if physical therapy can help you.

(308) 872-5800
to schedule yours and
for more info.