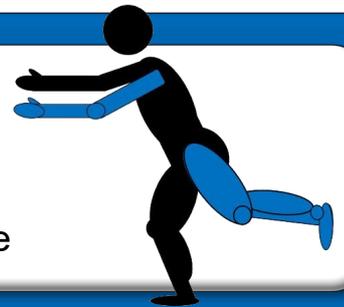


# Maintaining Balance Fitness as we get older

**What is happening?** Age-related changes impacting our ability to maintain balance include; postural changes such as rounded shoulders and a chin-poke, flexibility changes such as ankle stiffness, and muscle changes such as a decreased speed at which our muscles are able to respond when our balance is challenged.

- ✓ Falls are **not** a normal part of getting older
- ✓ High sporting demands **increase** the risk of falling
- ✓ Sport-specific training alone **will not** improve your balance



**How to improve!** Improving balance requires training to increase muscle strength, power, and flexibility, in addition to balance reactions. Expert functioning in each of these areas allows us to adapt to our environment and stay on our feet! Superior balance also helps us to control our bodies better, so that we can jump higher, run economically, hit harder, or aim with more precision.

**Progression?** During balance training, keep upping the challenge; narrow the base of support (e.g. progress from tandem standing to standing on one leg), make the surface unstable (e.g. stand on a cushion or the grass), move (e.g. walk backwards or reach far enough to almost lose balance), and change the sensory input while balancing (e.g. close your eyes or turn your head from side-to-side).

**BE SAFE. HAVE SOMEWHERE TO HOLD TO PREVENT A FALL.**

# Balance Fitness Training for Athletes 50+

## BEGINNER EXERCISE



Step onto a couch-cushion, balancing for 5 secs on the step-up leg before stepping backwards off the cushion again

**Repeat x 5 sets for each leg**



## INTERMEDIATE EXERCISE

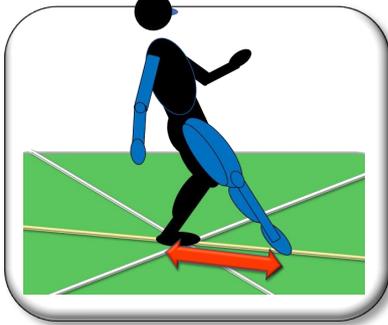


Step forward, placing the feet heel-to-toe and hold for 5 secs before stepping forward with the back leg

**Repeat x 5 sets for each leg**

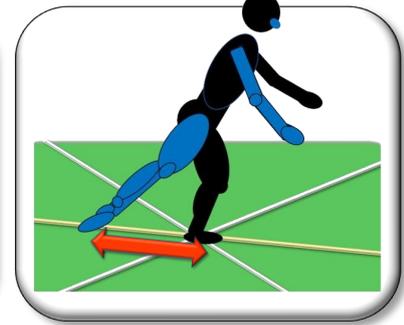


## ADVANCED EXERCISE



Standing on a star taped to the floor, alternate tapping your toes as far forward & back along each taped line as you can

**Repeat x 5 sets for each leg**



- **Do** while standing close to a wall or railing, holding on if needed
- **Caution** if you have vertigo, dizziness, or poor foot sensation
- **Stop** if you are unstable or fear you may fall with the exercise