Wellness Wednesday

LifeAdvisor.com

Ulliance
Enhancing People. Improving Business.

Find your path to total well-being!

This #1 Fitness Test Can Determine Your Fall Risk

As we age, maintaining our health and mobility becomes increasingly important. One of the significant concerns for older adults is the risk of falling, which can lead to serious injuries and complications. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, falls are the leading cause of both fatal and non-fatal injuries among older individuals. Understanding how to assess and mitigate this risk is crucial for ensuring a safe and active lifestyle.

Understanding Fall Risks in Older Adults

The Prevalence of Falls

Falls among older adults are alarmingly common. Research indicates that over 14 million seniors experience falls annually in the United States alone. These incidents not only result in physical injuries but can also lead to psychological effects, such as fear of falling, which may restrict mobility and independence.

Factors Contributing to Falls

Several factors contribute to the increased risk of falls in older adults. These include:

- **Muscle Weakness:** As we age, muscle mass and strength gradually decline, affecting balance and stability.
- **Vision Impairments:** Changes in eyesight can hinder depth perception and spatial awareness.
- **Medication Side Effects:** Certain medications may have side effects that impact balance or coordination.
- **Chronic Health Conditions:** Conditions such as arthritis, diabetes, and neurological disorders can affect mobility and balance.

The Importance of Balance

Balance is a critical component in preventing falls. It involves the coordination of various systems in the body, including the musculoskeletal system, vision, and the vestibular system located in the inner ear. Maintaining good balance can significantly reduce the likelihood of falling.

The Key Fitness Test: Standing on One Leg

Overview of the Test

Recent research has highlighted a simple yet effective fitness test that can help determine fall risk: the ability to stand on one leg. This test assesses balance and stability, which are vital in preventing falls.

Study Insights

A study conducted by researchers at the Mayo Clinic involved 40 healthy adults aged 50 and older. Participants were tested on various physical abilities, including:

- **Knee Strength:** Evaluating the strength of the muscles around the knee joint.
- **Grip Strength:** Measuring hand strength, which correlates with overall muscle health.
- **Walking Gait:** Observing walking patterns on a flat surface.
- **Balance Duration:** Timing how long participants could maintain their balance on one leg.

The results revealed that balance declines significantly with age, particularly the ability to stand on the nondominant leg, which decreased by an average of 2.2 seconds per decade.

Implications of the Findings

The findings suggest that the one-leg stand test is a valuable tool for assessing fall risk in older adults. A decline in balance can indicate potential neuromuscular issues that may lead to falls. cognitive function and may reduce the risk of neurodegenerative diseases.

How to Interpret Your Balance Results

What Is Considered a Good Balance Time?
While the study indicated that participants should aim to balance for 30 seconds on one leg, this benchmark may not be attainable for everyone.

- **30 Seconds:** Ideal target for healthy adults.
- **15-20 Seconds:** A more realistic goal for many older adults.
- **Less Than 15 Seconds:** May indicate a higher risk of falls and should prompt further evaluation.

Setting Personal Goals

If you're attempting to improve your balance, setting achievable goals is essential. Start with shorter durations and gradually increase your time as your strength and confidence grow.

Incorporating Movement into Daily Life

One of the best ways to enhance balance is through regular physical activity. Here are some practical tips:

- **Limit Sedentary Time:** Avoid prolonged periods of sitting. Stand up and move around every 30 minutes.
- **Use Stairs:** Whenever possible, opt for stairs instead of elevators to build leg strength and coordination.
- **Daily Walking Routine:** Establish a habit of walking daily, which can improve overall fitness and balance.

Resistance Training

Strength training is vital for maintaining muscle mass as you age. Incorporate exercises such as:

- **Chair Squats:** Great for building leg strength without needing special equipment.
- **Bodyweight Exercises:** Activities like push-ups, planks, and jumping jacks can enhance overall strength.

Balance-Focused Activities

Engaging in activities specifically designed to improve balance can be beneficial. Consider:

- **Yoga:** Enhances flexibility, strength, and balance through various poses.
- **Tai Chi:** A gentle form of martial arts that focuses on slow, controlled movements and balance.

The Role of Medical Professionals—Importance of Consultation

Before starting any new exercise program, especially if you have health concerns, consulting with a healthcare provider is essential. They can offer personalized advice and help identify specific balance issues.

Physical Therapy

Working with a physical therapist can provide targeted strategies to improve balance. They can design a customized program that addresses individual needs and limitations.

Recognizing the Signs of Balance Issues

It's crucial to pay attention to your fall history. If you experience multiple falls or near falls, it may indicate an underlying issue that needs to be addressed.

Common Symptoms of Balance Problems

Be aware of signs that may suggest balance concerns, including:

- Frequent trips or stumbles.
- Difficulty walking on uneven surfaces.
- Dizziness or lightheadedness.

Taking Action Against Falls—Empowering Yourself

Understanding your fall risk and taking proactive steps to improve your balance can significantly enhance your quality of life as you age. Regularly practicing the one-leg stand test and incorporating balance exercises into your routine can lead to better stability and confidence.

Encourage friends and family members to assess their balance and engage in activities that promote strength and stability. Together, we can create a safer environment for older adults, reducing the risk of falls and fostering a healthier, more active lifestyle.

Remember, the journey to better balance starts with a single step—so take that step today!

Roasted Brussels Sprouts

INGREDIENTS

- 1 pound Brussels sprouts
- 3 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
- 1/2 teaspoon kosher salt
- fresh black pepper

Optional for more flavor:

- 2 tablespoon fresh lemon juice, or more to taste
- 1/4 cup (1/2 ounce) freshly grated Parmesan or Pecorino Romano cheese

Brussels sprouts are often a misunderstood vegetable, but when prepared correctly, they can transform into one of your most nutritious and favorite sides.

They are named after Brussels, Belgium. Although, today the majority of these little cabbages are grown in California. Known for their unique flavor and numerous health benefits, these small green gems are perfect for any meal.

Nutritional Benefits

Brussels sprouts are low in calories but high in essential vitamins and minerals. Here are some key nutrients found in Brussels sprouts:

- Vitamin C: Supports the immune system and promotes healthy skin.
- Vitamin K: Essential for bone health and blood clotting.
- Fiber: Aids in digestion and helps maintain a healthy weight.
- Antioxidants: Protects the body from oxidative stress.

Nutrition Information

Serving: 3 /4 cup, Calories: 138.5 kcal, Carbohydrates: 10 g, Protein: 4 g, Fat: 10.5 g, Saturated Fat: 1.5 g, Sodium: 168.5 mg, Fiber: 4.5 g, Sugar: 2.5 g

INSTRUCTIONS

How to Make It

- Heat the oven to 450°F.
- Remove any yellow or outer leaves on the Brussels sprouts, then trim the core ends and halve lengthwise.
- In a large bowl, toss the sprouts with the olive oil, salt, and pepper until coated. Arrange the sprouts cut side down and evenly spaced on a rimmed sheet pan lined with parchment paper.
- Roast until the sprouts are tender and brown, about 15 to 18 minutes, depending on your oven, the size of your sprouts, and how done you like them. Start checking after about 10 minutes if you prefer that they still have a little crunch.
- If you want to add more flavor, place the hot roasted sprouts back in the mixing bowl, add the lemon juice, Parmesan or Romano and toss until combined.
- Season to taste, adding more salt if desired, and serve.

Tip: For extra crunch, flip them halfway through cooking to ensure even browning.

Reference: SkinnyTaste

https://www.self.com/gallery/bodyweight-exercises-you-can-do-at-home?intcid=inline_ampipsum

Featured Exercise ► Lateral Leg Raises

HOW TO DO IT:

- Lie on your side, legs extended.
- Lift your top leg 45 degrees, then lower slowly.
- Do 5 lifts with your toe flexed, 5 with your toe pointed, and 5 with your toe pointed toward the ceiling.
- Repeat on the other side.

THE BENEFITS:

- **Enhanced Hip Stability:** Strengthening the gluteus medius improves your ability to stabilize the pelvis during dynamic movements.
- **Injury Prevention:** Strong hip abductors can help prevent injuries related to the knees and lower back by maintaining proper alignment and function.
- **Improved Athletic Performance:** Athletes can benefit from increased power and agility, as strong hip abductors are essential for lateral movements in sports.
- **Better Posture:** Strengthening the hips contributes to improved posture, which can alleviate discomfort associated with prolonged sitting.

Click here to view online!

Regular exercise can help you control your weight, reduce your risk of heart disease, and strengthen your bones and muscles. But if it's been awhile since you've exercised and you have health issues or concerns, it's a good idea to talk to your doctor before starting a new exercise routine.

Meet Ulliance Senior Wellness Account Manager