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How Balance Training Exercises Can Help Seniors Prevent the Dreaded Broken Hip

Slip- and-fall accidents are the most feared among our aging population.

Simple balance exercises can make a huge difference in their safety.

San Diego – October 26, 2009 –One of the most challenging issues that affect older adults is instability and loss of balance. As reported by the American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons, falls in the senior population cost the United States more than \$20 billion per year. Dysfunctions in stabilization and improper movement patterns result in approximately 352,000 hip fractures due to falls, over 220,000 total hip replacements and more than 542,000 total knee replacements every year in the United States. The sad truth is that many falls, surgeries and missed workdays could be avoided if people received the proper intervention.

Dr. Evan Osar provides expert advice aimed at improving [balance and stability for older adults](#) in the October issue of *IDEA Fitness Journal*:

- While low-impact exercises such as yoga, swimming and biking can benefit many clients, resistance and body weight training should also be included, as they increase muscle strength and bone mass, improve range of motion and help create a sense of well-being.
- The foot and ankle are often the culprits for balance challenges. People with current or prior ankle injury and those with hypermobile ankle joints are especially prone to the disruptions in the central nervous system that cause balance-related accidents.
- The three points of foot-to-surface contact, creating a “foot tripod” foundation, are the big toe, the small toe and the center of the heel. Older adults should strive for this contact in all the patterns in which the foot is in flat contact with the ground.
- Single-leg rotation exercises and forward and sideways lunges with proper form are excellent ways for balance-challenged older adults to progress from fundamental movement patterns to more complex.
- Older adults can progress to using balance tools such as a thick foam pad or a core board once they have demonstrated good form and confidence on solid ground.

“With the senior population increasing by leaps and bounds every day, balance issues and balance-related injuries are going to gain greater significance than ever,” said Kathie Davis, executive director of IDEA Health & Fitness Association. “This excellent, practical article brings focus on a few simple changes older

adults can make at any stage to prevent the quality of life debilitating consequences of a slip-and-fall injury.

You can access the full Senior Fitness column on “Balance for Baby Boomers and Seniors” in the IDEA Online Library: <http://www.ideafit.com/fitness-library/balance-for-baby-boomers-and-seniors>

About IDEA Health & Fitness Association

IDEA Health & Fitness Association is the world’s leading membership organization of fitness and wellness professionals with more than 23,000 members in over 80 countries. Since 1982, IDEA has provided personal trainers, group exercise instructors, fitness program directors, mind-body teachers, health club owners and fitness center managers with pertinent information, health and fitness educational opportunities, career development programs and industry leadership while helping them enhance the quality of life worldwide through safe, effective lifestyle and fitness programs. IDEA members interact with consumers more than 25 million times a year in the fitness marketplace. For more information on IDEA fitness and wellness conferences, publications, professional fitness education and products, member services and other activities, visit [IDEA Health & Fitness Association](http://www.ideafit.com).