

## Poor Balance and Fall Prevention

Over 1/3 of individuals over the age of 65 experience a fall in their life. Research continues to prove that falls are one of the most common forms of injury that require hospitalization in America. Falls can cause both immediate injury and problems that persist. Falls can cause hip fracture which sometimes lead to the demise of older adults.

### What can physical therapy do for Poor Balance/Fall Prevention?

The balance system consists primarily of three systems: vision, somatosensory/proprioceptive (our feet feeling the ground/the body knowing joint position), and vestibular (inner ear). Frequently with aging, people rely more heavily on vision for balance than the other systems. This is a reason falls occur more commonly in low or no light. Physical therapy can assist by improving the somatosensory/proprioceptive systems and the vestibular system, leading people to be less reliant on the vision system. Additionally, building strength and stability through exercise will diminish the likelihood of a fall or assist in recovery when the body moves off balance. Physical therapists also teach people how to get up from a fall safely and effectively.

### Treatments for Poor Balance:

**Neuromuscular Re-Education:** Training that targets the bodies sensory systems. This includes exercises designed to stress your balance systems, particularly exercises where your eyes are closed when standing on uneven surfaces. A program is designed and progressed as you demonstrate success.

**Exercise:** Targeted at the hips and ankles to increase strength and stability, improving the speed at which you can recover when your balance is challenged.

**Biodex SD Balance System:** An electronic balance platform system that provides feedback to assist in learning proper balance and body control. This system is available at both UR Medicine / Noyes Health locations.