



Balance Problems After Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI)

What Affects Balance and Why Is It Important?

About half of people with a TBI have dizziness and loss of balance at some point in recovery.

Physical strength and coordination, sensory abilities, and being able to think all affect balance.

Good balance is important because it can help prevent another TBI.

Balance problems are common after a TBI.

What Are Some Common Causes of Balance Problems After a TBI?

Problems with the inner ear.

Problems with vision.

Problems with nerves and the ability to feel things, such as in your feet.

A brain stem injury.

Medicines.

Mental health issues.

Postural hypotension. This is a form of low blood pressure that occurs when standing up after sitting or lying down.



Doctors Who Diagnose Balance Problems

Ear, nose, and throat doctors (ENT).

Physical therapists.

Neurologists.
These doctors treat problems with the nervous system and brain.

How Quickly Can Balance Improve?



How long it takes to improve balance depends on the level of injury and health before the TBI.

Some people may need one or two sessions of rehabilitative care; other cases may take **weeks, months, or years.**

Strategies to Improve Balance

All strategies to improve balance should be monitored by a health care professional.

Use **caution** to prevent falling when working on improving your balance.

Move **slowly** while changing position.

Increase your **strength** and **flexibility**.

Find your **limits** in balance to develop strategies to keep you from losing your balance.

Practice standing or walking in **different conditions**. Walk in the grass, on a sidewalk, and for long distances with someone there to reduce the risk of falling.

Source: The infographic was adapted from Balance After TBI factsheet developed by Michelle Peterson, PT, DPT, NCS, and Brian D. Greenwald, MD, in collaboration with the Model Systems Knowledge Translation Center. (<https://msktc.org/>)

Disclaimer: This information is not meant to replace the advice of a medical professional. You should consult your health care provider regarding specific medical concerns or treatment. The contents of the infographic were developed under a grant from the National Institute on Disability, Independent Living, and Rehabilitation Research (NIDILRR grant number 90DPKT0008). NIDILRR is a Center within the Administration for Community Living (ACL), Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). The contents of this infographic do not necessarily represent the policy of NIDILRR, ACL, or HHS, and you should not assume endorsement by the Federal Government.

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