



GARSTON - NEW ZEALAND

Miami Physiotherapy
+
Lakelands Physiotherapy & Allied Health

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Proprioception and Balance

If you've ever started a new hobby and noticed your balance isn't quite up to scratch, it can be quite a disturbing discovery. Balance is an important part of many activities and if your balance is not being challenged regularly, it's easy for it deteriorate without you noticing.

What is balance?

Keeping your balance refers to a state where your centre of gravity is maintained over your base of your support, preventing you from falling. Your body is always working hard to keep this equilibrium without you realising it. Balance is controlled by many systems that work together, including the visual, vestibular, proprioceptive and musculoskeletal systems.

What is proprioception?

Proprioception refers to the awareness of your body's position in space. The central nervous system gains sensory input from the muscles, skin and tendons and interprets the information, creating a sense of where your body is positioned. This is how you know your foot is flat and ready to take your weight when you step, without needing to look at it. You may not have heard of proprioception before, but it is vital to keep you from falling and can be improved.

How can I test my balance?

Your physiotherapist is able to assess your balance more extensively, however here are a few quick tests you can do at home to see if your balance can be improved.

- Stand with two feet together and close your eyes.
- Try again, this time standing on one foot. Close your eyes only once you have found a steady posture with your eyes open.
- To increase difficulty, stand on an uneven surface, like a pillow on the floor.

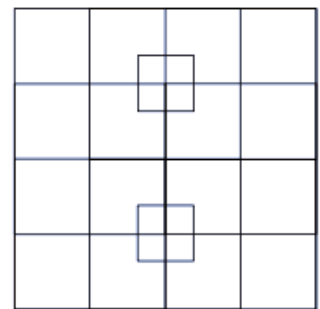
Aim to balance for at least 30 seconds in each of these postures. If you can't have a chat with your physiotherapist and see if your balance can be improved. They will be able to offer you some practical tips on how to reduce falls and injuries.



PHYSIO FACT

RUNNING DOES NOT INCREASE YOUR RISK OF DEVELOPING ARTHRITIS

Brain Teaser



How many squares can you count in the puzzle above?

PHYSIOTIP

WORK IN AN OFFICE?

TRY GETTING UP TO WALK WHEN TAKING PHONE CALLS

CALL US FOR AN APPOINTMENT

Strains vs. Sprains

Strains and sprains are words that are used almost interchangeably when describing injuries, however, they each have quite distinct meanings. The most straightforward explanation is that a "strain" refers to a tear in a muscle or tendon, while a "sprain" refers to a tear in ligament fibres. Here we briefly describe what that means and how we treat sprains and strains differently.

Ligaments are fibrous tissues that connect and hold bones to other bones. These are very strong parts of your anatomy and, depending on the joint, provide large amounts of support and stability to the body.

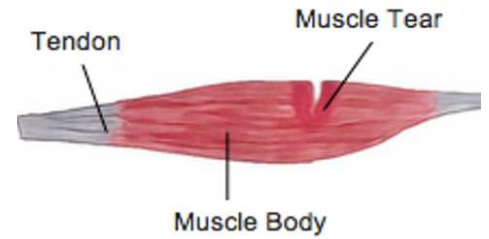
Some ligaments are so strong that sometimes a bone will break before the ligament will tear. When ligament fibres do tear, the nearby joint can feel unstable as it has lost some of its structural support.

A torn ligament will usually become painful and swollen, it may appear red and also warm to touch and occasionally there will be some bruising. The pain will be worse with movement or if the ligament is placed under more stress. Occasionally, if a ligament has torn all the way through, the pain will not be as severe as it is with a partial tear.

Your physiotherapist can grade the severity of a ligament sprain, which will help guide treatment and expected recovery times. Muscle strains are easy to confuse with ligament sprains, however, there are a few telltale differences. Following a muscle tear, it is more likely that you'll feel weakness rather than instability. The pain will also be isolated over the muscle, rather than near a joint.

An injury to a ligament will be tender over the site of the ligament and special tests can be done to test for any joint laxity. Treatment is also slightly different as sprains will need more support and will sometimes even need to be braced, whereas muscle strains will benefit from gentle

movements earlier. In both cases, following the basic principles of rest, ice, compression and elevation is great advice in the early stages of any injury. Applying heat is not recommended until at least two days after the injury.



It is important to seek a professional opinion when recovering from both a strain and a sprain. It is very easy to re-injure an area while it is healing if undertaking strenuous activity too early and without correct rehabilitation. Speak to your physiotherapist for more information.

None of the information in this newsletter is a replacement for proper medical advice. Always see a medical professional for advice on your injury.

Answers: 1. There are 40 squares.

Grilled Polenta with Rocket and Feta

Ingredients

- 2 cups Instant Polenta
- 5 cups Water
- 100g Parmesan Cheese
- 200g crumbled Feta Cheese
- 2 cups of Rocket Lettuce
- 6 Vine-ripened Tomatoes
- 3 Tbsp Olive Oil



1. Place tomatoes onto a baking tray lined with foil and drizzle with olive oil. Bake in a preheated oven at 170° Celsius for 1hr.
2. Bring water to a boil, reduce to low heat and slowly add polenta, stirring constantly for 6 minutes until polenta is smooth and thick, stir in parmesan cheese.
3. Place polenta onto a chopping board and flatten to 1.5cm height. Place in fridge for 40 minutes to set. Cut into 6cm by 6cm squares and spray both sides with olive oil.
4. Heat medium frying to medium heat, cook polenta pieces on each side for 2-3 minutes.
5. Wash rocket and place on top of baked polenta, cover with feta cheese and drizzle balsamic glaze over top to taste.



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