

Balance and Flexibility

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Could balance and flexibility be a predictor of your life's longevity and cognitive abilities? New research says YES!

A recent article published in the European Journal of Preventative Cardiology linked life expectancy with the ability to rise from a seated position on the floor to a standing position. Patients were asked to sit on the floor and rise to a standing position. They were scored on the number of supports they used. For example, those who put one knee and one hand on the floor were given a "3" instead of a "5." Those who used two or more supports were 4.7 times more likely to die within the next five years of the study than those who used little-to-no support.

This study and several like it have shown that sedentary lifestyles that create stiffness increase our mortality rate and rob us of our quality of life along the way.

Balance also can play a superior role in cognitive abilities. Did you know that if you are under the age of 65 and cannot stand on one leg for over 90 seconds that your probability of developing dementia increases by nearly 40%? Those who can stand for 90 seconds show an even less chance of developing dementia if they can stand on one leg with their eyes closed for over 15 seconds! This easy test may be one of the best predictors of future mental health than any scan or blood test.

So what changes in us as we age to cause us to lose flexibility and have poorer balance? And most importantly is it reversible?

Gil Hedley, PhD, demonstrates in his video, "The Fuzz Speech," (http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BdRqLrCF_Ys) how muscles gather "Fuzz." Hedley's "Fuzz" is scar tissue, a sticky, fibrous material that diminishes the sliding ability of muscles between themselves and the skin. This scar tissue is highly innervated, creating pain and discomfort when stretched or injured.

Hedley explains why it is important to stretch daily and be more active. Sedentary lifestyles coupled with inappropriate treatment of musculoskeletal injuries

leads to this accumulation of "Fuzz" and decreased mobility. This has a profound effect on quality and quantity of life.

Here's one daily movement that can help reduce your "Fuzz" and keep your muscles subtle and flexible.

1. Start with your feet shoulder width apart and your hands at your sides.
2. Bend your knees to a slight squat while performing a scooping action with both arms. This would be similar to scooping water out of a bucket between your legs.
3. Straighten to a standing position with palms to the sky.
4. Now lace fingers together and stretch to the sky.
5. Lean to each side gently allowing for a slight stretch down the flank and into the hips.
6. Return to the starting position, and repeat five times.

Another way to reduce your "Fuzz" is Active Release Technique (ART®). ART® is the only patented soft-tissue technique that has been proven to break up scar tissue ("Fuzz"). Its remarkable ability to reduce pain and improve range of motion in old and chronic injuries has been a useful tool at [CORE] Chiropractic since I've been practicing.

Patients with arthritic shoulders and joints have seen an increase in functional abilities and improved quality of life. Active athletes have enjoyed a fast recovery from injury while seeing their performance on the field greatly increase. ART®'s lengthy certification process helps to ensure that each ART practitioner is highly trained and able to give excellent care. If you have loved ones in another part of the world, check out the ART® website (ActiveRelease.com), and do a provider search for an ART® doctor near them.

I hope this gets you thinking about your balance and looking for ways to improve. Of course improved balance is often a benefit of chiropractic care. If you'd like to learn more about our services, please don't hesitate to contact us.

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CHIROPRACTIC AND WELLNESS