Physical & FUNctional

Exercising your core, balance, and flexibility is just as important as strength training and cardio!

**Core:** The “core” refers to the muscles in the center of your body, primarily your abdominal and back muscles along with the hips and gluts.

**Benefit:** A strong core can lead to better balance and stability. It makes other exercises and everyday activities easier to do.

**Importance:** Weak core muscles can lead to poor posture, back pain, and injuries.

**Balance:** Balance is the ability to remain stable in a variety of conditions and circumstances.

**Benefit:** Good balance improves coordination and can prevent slips, falls, and injuries.

**Importance:** Balance skills naturally decrease with age, but you can help maintain balance through exercises.

**Flexibility:** Flexibility is the range of motion in joints and muscles. It is primarily based on genetics, age, gender, and level of physical activity.

**Benefit:** Flexibility improves range of motion and posture. It also reduces muscle soreness, tension, and risk of injury.

**Importance:** Flexibility decreases with age, usually as a result of inactivity. This can cause stiffness, aches, muscle tears, and other injuries.
**Core Exercises: More than just sit ups!**

1. Lie face down with your palms and forearms flat on the floor
2. Push off the floor, raising up onto your toes/knees & resting on your elbows
3. Keep your back flat, in a straight line from head to heels
4. Hold for 10-30 seconds and repeat

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**Superman**

1. Lie face down with your palms facing the floor
2. Raise your arms and legs off the ground
3. Hold for 10-30 seconds and repeat

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**Side Bend**

1. Stand with your feet hip distance apart
2. Use a household item, like a canned good, as a weight
3. Lower right arm and bend to the side
4. Return to standing position and repeat on other side

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**Balance Exercises: Don’t Fall!**

1. Walk in a straight line with one foot in front of the other
2. Lift your foot on each step and hold it for 10 seconds
3. Step down and do the same with your other foot
4. Continue for 20 steps

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**Balance Walk**

1. Stand with your feet hip distance apart
2. Shift your weight to your right side, then lift your left foot off the floor
3. Hold this position as long as you can keep good form, up to 30 seconds
4. Return to starting position and then repeat on other side

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**Weight Shifts**

1. Stand with your feet hip distance apart
2. Shift your weight to your right side, then lift your left foot off the floor
3. Hold this position as long as you can keep good form, up to 30 seconds
4. Return to starting position and then repeat on other side

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**Single Leg Floor Touch**

1. Stand on one leg
2. Slowly reach to touch the floor while keeping your core tight
3. Return to standing position and repeat 10 times
4. Switch legs and repeat on opposite leg

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**Flexibility Exercises: Stretch!**

**Toe Touch**

1. Stand with your feet together
2. Bend at the waist and reach for your toes
3. Hold for 30 seconds and repeat

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**Shoulder Stretch**

1. Bring your right arm across your chest
2. Place your left hand near your elbow and pull your arm towards you
3. Hold for 30 seconds and repeat on opposite side

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For more information & other handouts, visit http://www.utexas.edu/student/housing/wellness