

**Traumatic Brain Injury
Resource Bundle
for American Indians**

Managing Balance Problems After Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI)

Ms. Blackrock, a physical therapist, is leading a traumatic brain injury (TBI) support group in the community gym. She is teaching how to manage balance problems after TBI.

Hi everyone! Balance problems are important to me because several years ago, I got a TBI from being in a car accident.



After my TBI, I learned about ways to improve my balance. Does anyone want to share their TBI experience?



I hit my head while playing football.



I got a TBI at home, after I fell off a step ladder.

Thank you for sharing your experience! Now let's talk about what balance is.

Ms. Blackrock explains that balance is the ability to keep your body centered over your base of support.



When standing, your base of support is your feet.



When sitting, your base of support is your butt, thighs, and feet.



So, what do you think causes balance problems after a TBI?



Maybe it's because of the medicine a person takes.

Yes! Some medicines may cause balance issues. There are other causes, too.



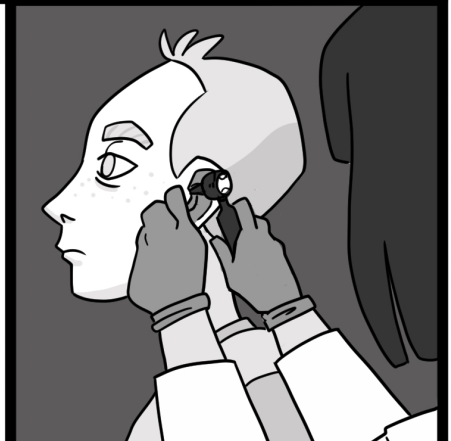
Ms. Blackrock explains that other causes of balance issues after a TBI include:



Postural hypertension. This occurs when your blood pressure drops too low when you stand up after sitting or lying down.



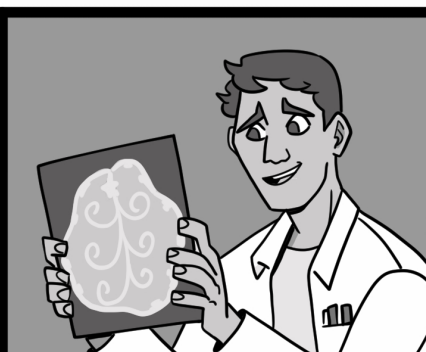
Vision problems.



Inner ear problems.



Problems with nerves, like the ability to feel your feet.



An injury to certain areas of the brain such as the cerebellum, which is responsible for coordinating movement.



Mental health issues. This may include psychogenic dizziness, which is dizziness caused by mental factors rather than physical ones.



Ms. Blackrock explains that neurologists; ear, nose, and throat doctors; and physical therapists can help diagnose a balance issue. A physical therapist can help you learn how to improve your balance.

There are many ways you can improve balance problems after TBI.



How to Improve Balance:

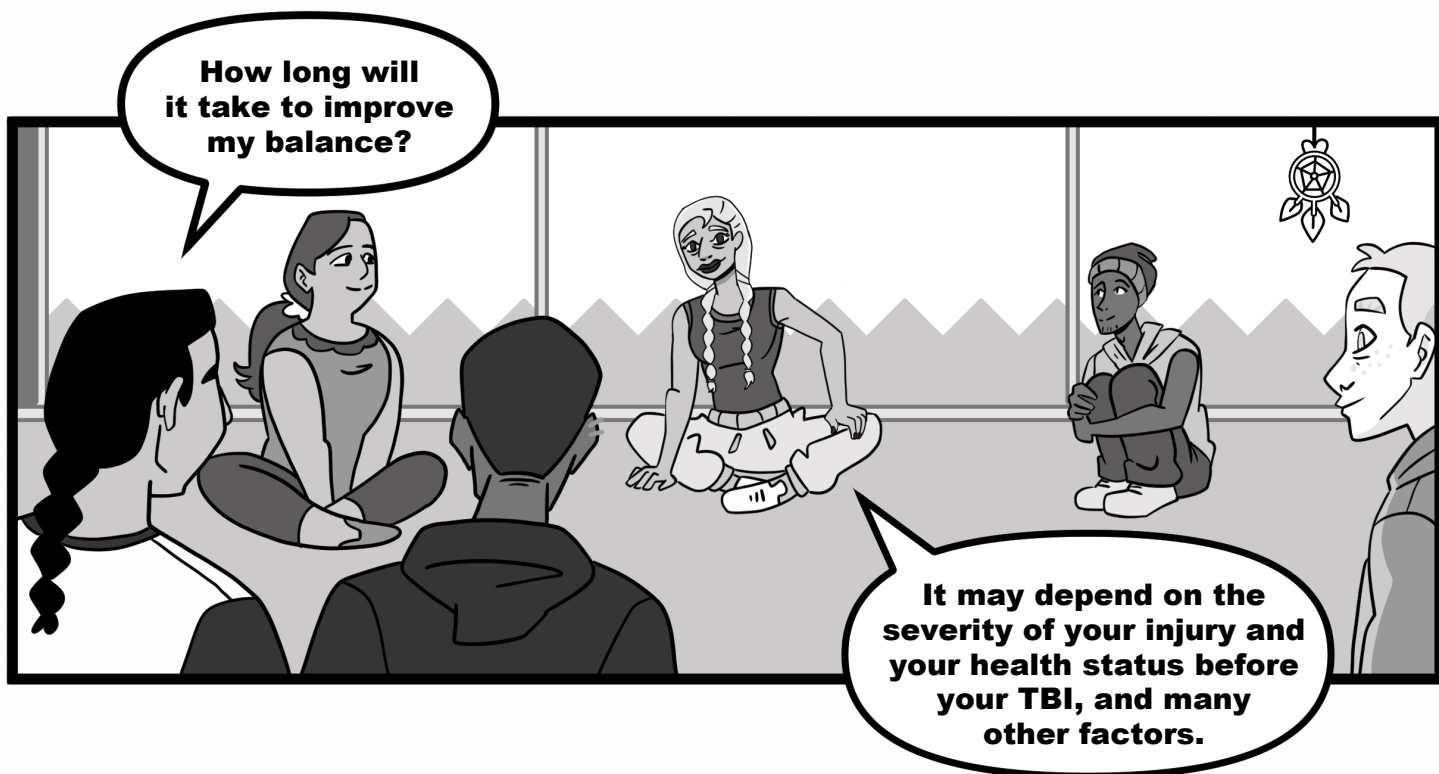
- Use caution when you work on your balance.
- Increase your strength and flexibility.
- Find your limits with your balance.
- Talk to your doctor about adjusting your medicines if they are causing balance issues.
- Always use handrails on stairs.
- Keep your head steady as much as possible and don't turn quickly.
- Practice standing or walking in different types of conditions.



That's an excellent question!



Ms. Blackrock explains that different types of conditions can include walking on grass, sand, or the sidewalk. It can also include walking for long distances with someone there to reduce the risk of falling.



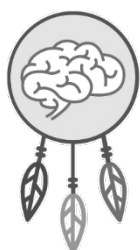
Remember, having good balance can help you prevent another TBI. It can help you live the life you want more safely. A health care provider should monitor treatments for your balance problems.



Source: The content of this infocomic was adapted from the factsheet entitled *Balance After TBI*, which was 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.

Copyright © 2024 American Institutes for Research. May be reproduced and distributed freely with appropriate attribution. Prior permission must be obtained for inclusion in fee-based materials.



**Traumatic Brain Injury
Resource Bundle**
for American Indians

