



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: Our health information content is based on research evidence and/or professional consensus and has been reviewed and approved by experts from the TBI Model Systems and Polytrauma Rehabilitation Centers. The resource has also been reviewed by American Indians with TBI and their family members. **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 this resource were developed under grants from the National Institute on Disability, Independent Living, and Rehabilitation Research (NIDILRR grant numbers 90DPKT0008 and 90DPKT0009). NIDILRR is a Center within the Administration for Community Living (ACL), Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). The contents of this resource do not necessarily represent the policy of NIDILRR, ACL, or HHS, and you should not assume endorsement by the federal government. **Copyright** © 2025 Model Systems Knowledge Translation Center (MSKTC). May be reproduced and distributed freely with appropriate attribution. Prior permission must be obtained for inclusion in fee-based materials.

