

THE IMPORTANCE OF BALANCE

When beginning a fitness program, the biggest thing on the majority of minds is losing weight and looking better. To reach that goal, it takes consistent training in strength, cardiovascular, nutrition, and flexibility. As crucial as those are, there's still one factor missing... and that's balance.

We've all been exposed to the "Core Craze" that's swept television infomercials, magazines, and fitness classes-but why is it so important to our everyday fitness rituals?

It's not just all about getting sculpted hard abs, it's about conditioning the very muscles that promote balance and stability in our bodies.

The better your balance, the better your body functions and reduces the chances getting hurt. Plus, incorporating more muscles burns more calories!

The root of balance and stabilization lies within your core, which consists of all of the muscles in the abdominals, obliques, and muscles in the lower back and along the spine.

When your body's center of gravity is challenged, it automatically activates the above muscles to recruit stabilization to force your body to be balanced.

When incorporated in your workout, the stronger and more conditioned your core will become to do more advanced movements.

Someone with a weak core may have difficulties performing simple exercises-even daily activities-without compensating their form in some way to maintain balance.

This can be especially dangerous for the elderly because it can lead to all-too-common slip and falls, muscle sprains and strains, and broken bones.

There's no better time than now to get a leg up on balance... literally! Many pieces of equipment can help you recruit core strength and stability: Stability Ball, BOSU, Core Board, etc.

But you can begin by just standing on one leg at a time for as long as your can.

Make sure to keep your abdominals contracted and back straight for control.

The easier that becomes, combine it with an exercise movement like a bicep curl or shoulder raise.

Remember that the harder your body has to work, the more calories it has to expend while doing it!

So, balance and stabilization training is great for total body exercise.