

# **7 Factors That May Contribute Your Dizziness or Disequilibrium and Cause you to Fall**

## **Free Report**

Guide by Ann H. Newstead, PT, DPT, PhD

2017

## FREE REPORT

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Dr. Ann Newstead, PT, DPT, PhD, is a physical therapist with expertise in Neurologic (1995-2025) and Geriatrics (2005-2025), Vestibular Rehabilitation (1998) and is a Certified Exercise Expert in Aging Adults (CEEAA; 2010).

Dr. Newstead is a graduate of SUNY Potsdam (1976; BA) and University of Alabama in Birmingham (UAB; 1978; MS, PT) as a physical therapist. She has worked in acute care, outpatient, rehabilitation, home health, research, and educational settings. She pursued her interests in the area of aging adults at UT Austin and received her PhD (2010). She received her Doctor of Physical Therapy degree from University of Montana (2016). It was during this time that she decided that she would provide physical therapy for older adults to stay healthy.

Dr. Newstead enjoys sporting and outdoor activities including hiking, cycling, running and loves spending with her grandchildren. She has participated in triathlons, marathons, and cycling tours; she is an active participant in volunteering in community events.

Dr. Newstead is looking forward to serving YOU and her community through offering physical therapist services in the San Antonio, Texas

and the surrounding area. She lives with her family in Texas where she has called home since 1979.

## 7 Factors That May Contribute Your Dizziness and Disequilibrium and Cause you to Fall

Are you or a loved one living with dizziness or disequilibrium? Do you have difficulty changing positions? Have you had a previous fall? Are you fearful of falling? Are you frustrated? Let us help you to understand more fully why you may be falling. Read on.

1. **Changes in aging systems.** Your visual, sensory and vestibular systems in combination with your muscles are important for staying upright in your world. All of these systems work together to minimize your dizziness or imbalance. Working on your neck motion and eye coordination along with scanning your environment can improve your vision and your safety, especially for driving! Changing positions may create dizziness or light-headedness or vertigo – each reaction has a different reason for happening.

**Dizziness** may happen when you feel off balance or have disequilibrium because of muscle weakness and/or changes in your sensation in your feet or ankles.

**Light-headedness** happens when you move from sitting to standing you may feel woozy because you may have a drop in your Blood Pressure – called postural hypotension. **Vertigo** happens when your world moves around you and you feel off balance because of an inner ear problem such as dislodged otoconia (or crystals in the inner ear) during position changes. Physical Therapists determine the reason for your fall in an examination and then establish an

program for  
source of

individualized exercise  
you to take care of the  
the problem. One



example is standing with your eyes open feet together holding a countertop or other stable object can challenge your balance.

2. **Changes in muscle strength and flexibility that effect your balance and walking.** Have you had increasing difficulty with getting out of a chair or climbing stairs or curbs for a few weeks, months, or years? Has your walking speed decreased? Gradual functional declines may be signs of reduced muscle strength, decreased muscle flexibility or increased muscle stiffness. You do not need to live with reduced physical functioning and inactivity. You can improve your strength, flexibility, endurance, and ultimately your eye-head coordination, dizziness and balance and walking.

Research strongly suggests that people in the 40's begin to lose strength; and even people in their 90's can improve muscle strength to ultimately improve function and quality of life. Your physical therapist can perform a detailed muscle evaluation and begin a strengthening, flexibility and balance program designed just for you.

3. **Too many Medications or Polypharmacy.** Do you take more than five (5) medications prescribed for you? Many medications have adverse effects, interact with each other and the effects of medications can lead to dizziness, vertigo, imbalance or disequilibrium. Medications can also contribute to fatigue or weakness. If any of these are true, you need your medications reevaluated by your Primary Care Physician or Nurse or Physical Therapist or other health care provider that can evaluate the overall interactions. Do not stop taking your medications until you consult with an expert.

4. **Mood changes.** Has your quality of life decreased and you have stopped moving because of your dizziness? Are you less satisfied with your life? Is your mood out of sorts because you feel you cannot go out and be with friends or family? Call a friend or family member to say hello or volunteer to help someone or a cause. Seek

out help from a mental health practitioner or get a referral from your Primary Care Physician.

5. **Fear of falling.** Are you fearful of falling? Fear of falling may be a common concern and frustration as we age. Fear of falling is most common after one or more falls. Use of a supportive device such as a cane or walker or walking/hiking sticks may provide you with some more confidence. If you don't like the idea of a cane, dress it up! Show your personality! After a balance examination to determine your level of fear, balance retraining activities can help to build your confidence under controlled practice environments such as in physical therapy or group physical exercise classes e.g. yoga, tai chi or pilates.
  
6. **Home hazards.** Is your home a fall hazard and full of obstacles? Do you have lights and nightlights in each room? Do you have handrails on your stairs or grab bars to hold in the shower or bathtub? Keeping your home safe and free from potential hazards and obstacles is important to avoid falls. Ask a family member or friend to help you declutter. If you have dizziness and difficulty scanning your environment, special exercises can help you improve your eye head coordination. If you have disequilibrium or imbalance, keeping areas in your hallways and in your kitchen, bedroom, bathroom and living areas free of throw rugs to avoid trips and slips may help you to avoid an injury. Many emergency room visits from a fall can be avoided by keeping walkways free from clutter or obstacles!
  
7. **Chronic falls - Two or more falls in the last year.** Do you have medical problems that contribute to your dizziness or falls? (e.g. cancer, diabetes, stroke, Parkinson's, recent total joint replacement?) If you have had two or more fall over the past year, you may have a chronic fall problem. A fall is defined as “any

change in body position resulting in contact with the ground or with another lower level” (CDC) If you have low blood pressure, you may suddenly feel light-headed. Lightheadedness differs from dizziness in that you may ability to turn your head without vertigo. Any fall can be catastrophic and result in a downward spiral or possible fracture and reduced ability to stay active.

Would you like to learn more about physical therapy for a comprehensive examination, and to improve your **physical activity** and **exercises** to decrease your dizziness, disequilibrium, falls **and** improve your strength, flexibility, balance and walking? A thorough examination and an **individualized program** just for **YOU** can improve your quality of life!

**Call or email NOW** for a **FREE one-on-one Phone conversation** with a **Physical Therapist** and/or an in person **Discovery/Consultation Visit with Dr. Ann Newstead, PT, DPT, PhD** to learn more how **YOU** can improve your dizziness and disequilibrium and decrease your Falls.

[ahnewPT@gmail.com](mailto:ahnewPT@gmail.com) or

*210-833-8336 (cell)*

*210-372-1271 (land line; please leave a message)*



## BONUS

### Top 5 activities and exercises to improve your balance and walking

1. **Eye head coordination**— turning your head side to side, sitting in a chair, focus on a target straight ahead. Can be done in standing holding a firm surface. Caution: you may feel more dizziness!
2. **Stretches/Flexibility**— Perform daily: hamstring and gastrosoleus stretches.
3. **Strength or Resistance Training**— Perform two to three times per week: standing toe and heel raises.
4. **Balance Retraining**— Perform most days of the week. Standing, holding a countertop, feet together eyes open. Feel your ankles working!
5. **Walking**— Perform daily: Wear good-fitting, comfortable shoes. Walk using a heel toe smooth pattern and walking one block to begin or just around your home from the kitchen to the living room. Drink plenty of water. Find a safe place to walk e.g. a high school track or park. Find a friend to share your experience. **JUST STAY ACTIVE!**

If you would like to learn more, contact us for a **Free Report** and/or a **FREE one-on-one Phone conversation with a Physical Therapist** and/or a **Discovery/Consultation Visit with Dr. Ann Newstead, PT, DPT, PhD** to learn more how **YOU** can improve your dizziness and disequilibrium and decrease your Falls.

Contact us **TODAY** at [ahnewPT@gmail.com](mailto:ahnewPT@gmail.com) or 1-210-833-8336 (cell; please leave a message) or 1-210-372-1271 (FAX).

**References:** PREVENTING FALLS: A Guide to Implementing Effective Community-Based Fall Prevention Programs. CDC - Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. National Center for Injury Prevention and Control. 2nd Edition. 2015.

***Health Advice Disclaimer***

**We make every effort to ensure that we accurately represent the advice and prognosis displayed throughout this Free Report.**

However, examples herein and their prognosis are based on typical representations of those problems that we commonly see in our physical therapy clinics. The information given is not intended as representations of every individual's potential problem. As with any problem, each person's symptoms can vary widely and each person's recovery can also vary depending upon background, genetics, previous medical history, application of exercises, posture, motivation to follow physical therapy advice and various other physical factors. It is impossible to give a 100% complete accurate diagnosis and prognosis without a thorough physical examination and likewise the advice given for management of a problem cannot be deemed fully accurate in the absence of the physical therapy examination from Physical Therapists at AHNEW Physical Therapy, PLLC. We are able to offer you this service at a standard charge. Significant injury risk is possible if you do not follow due diligence and seek suitable professional advice about your injury. No guarantees of specific results are expressly made or implied in this report.

