



CAROLINA
EAR NOSE & THROAT
SINUS AND ALLERGY CENTER, P.A.



How Your Hearing Affects Balance

The vestibular system is in the inner ear and is responsible for your sense of balance, detecting movements to provide awareness of spatial orientation. Many people do not realize that hearing and balance are related, but multiple studies have confirmed that untreated hearing loss is linked to imbalance and falls.

What the Research Shows

A 2012 study by Johns Hopkins University determined that even a mild hearing loss triples the risk of falls among the elderly. However, results also suggested that treating hearing loss with hearing devices can help reduce the risk of falling.¹

Another study published in 2014 by the Washington University School of Medicine confirmed that improving hearing improves balance in adults with hearing loss. In the study, patients who wore hearing devices performed better on balance tests when their devices were on versus when they were off.²

Timothy Hullar, M.D., professor of otolaryngology and one of the study's researchers, suggested this was due to more than just improved alertness. He hypothesized that we use sound to tell when we are in space, similar to how sight helps orient us. When hearing is compromised, our balance can suffer.

Don't Ignore Balance Concerns

If you're experiencing imbalance, you may have hearing loss. Schedule an appointment with Carolina ENT's experts to get to the root cause of your balance issues.

1 "Hearing Loss Linked to Threefold Risk of Falling." Jhu.Edu, The JHU Gazette. <https://gazette.jhu.edu/2012/03/05/hearing-loss-linked-to-threefold-risk-of-falling>.

2 Evangelou Strait, Julia. "Hearing Aids May Improve Balance." The Source, 11 Dec. 2014, <https://source.washu.edu/2014/12/hearing-aids-may-improve-balance>.

Services We Provide

- Vestibular Evaluations with a Topple Testing Battery
- Hearing Evaluations
- Hearing Aid Fittings

Want To Know More About Vestibular and Balance Health?

If you're looking for additional details about balance, visit **our website**.

You'll find a wealth of information on hearing loss, hearing aids and hearing protection. Visit carolinaearnosethroat.com and select the Hearing & Balance dropdown to start exploring.

Here are a few other websites our hearing and balance team recommends if you're looking for credible, up-to-date information about vestibular health and balance.

Vestibular Disorders Association—This organization strives to support patients with vestibular disorders on their journey back to balance.

American Institute of Balance Foundation—This group strives to care for children and adults with balance disorders and the education of those who serve them.

Thank you for trusting Carolina ENT with your care.

If you need support for balance concerns, please get in touch with us today!

www.carolinaearnosethroat.com | (828) 322-2183

Four convenient locations

Hickory

304 10th Avenue NE
Hickory, NC 28601

Lincolnton

1446 Gaston Street, Ste. 101
Lincolnton, NC 28092

Morganton

149 W. Parker Road, Ste. C
Morganton, NC 28655

Lenoir

322 Mulberry St. SW
Lenoir, NC 28645





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Don't Get Caught **Off-Balance** This Summer With Vestibular Issues

Hiking, tennis, water sports—summer is the season to stay active outside! But if you or someone you love has a vestibular disorder, participating fully in all the summer fun may be a little more challenging.

What Is a Vestibular Disorder?

A vestibular disorder is a condition that affects the vestibular system, which is part of the inner ear and brain. This system helps control balance, spatial orientation and coordination.

When the vestibular system is not functioning correctly, it can lead to a variety of unpleasant symptoms and issues, including vertigo, dizziness, balance problems and an unsteady gait.

How To Manage a Balance Issue During Summer Activities

Savoring summer is so much easier when you follow these simple guidelines:

- Wear sunglasses and a hat outdoors to avoid bright light, which can trigger balance problems.
- Use the buddy system by doing your favorite activities with a friend for extra security and safety.
- Bring a walking aid to use when you're on uneven ground or feeling unsteady.
- Have a cellphone handy in case of emergency.
- Use earplugs in noisy places, as loud noises may worsen vertigo, dizziness and balance issues.
- Looking for the best way to manage any balance issue you may face? Get the right medical treatment for it as soon as possible.

If you're struggling to find balance in your life, don't wait. Call Carolina ENT at (828) 322-2183 today to schedule a consultation with one of our highly trained hearing and balance specialists.

If you or someone in your family has been struggling with balance and vestibular issues, our expert team can help. Take the first step to finding relief by calling (828) 322-2183 today to schedule a hearing and balance consultation.

Feeling Off-Balance? Try These Exercises

As you age, staying steady on your feet can become more difficult. Over one in four people aged 65 and older falls every year, leading to three million emergency room visits and one million fall-related hospitalizations per year.¹

While age-related changes such as less muscle strength and flexibility are factors in falls, so is a poorly functioning hearing system. People with untreated hearing loss are three times more likely to fall than those with normal hearing.²

The Connection Between Hearing and Balance

The vestibular system, which helps you maintain your balance, includes tiny organs in your inner ear. The inner ear is also home to the cochlea, which helps you hear. If you have damage to the inner ear, your balance and hearing could be negatively affected.

Best Balance-Strengthening Exercises

No matter the severity of your balance issues, you can benefit from these daily exercises.

Toe Lifts:

- Stand near a chair or counter for support.
- Raise your heels as high as comfortably possible so that you're standing on the tips of your toes.
- Hold this position for a few seconds, then lower your heels down.
- Repeat 20 times.

Chair Stands:

- Sit in a chair without armrests.
- Cross your arms over your chest.
- Slowly stand up without using your hands, then slowly sit back down.
- Repeat 10–15 times.

Side Leg Raises:

- Stand behind a chair and hold onto it for support.
- Carefully lift one leg out to the side, keeping it straight and your back upright.
- Hold for three to five seconds, then lower your leg.
- Perform 10–15 repetitions on one leg, then repeat on the other side.

Marching in Place:

- While standing up straight, place your feet hip-width apart.
- Lift one knee as high as comfortable and then lower it back down.
- Repeat with the other leg as if you are marching in place.
- Continue for 1 to 2 minutes, gradually raising your knees.

If you're having issues with your hearing or balance, schedule a consultation with Carolina ENT's experts by calling (828) 322-2183.

¹ CDC. (2024). Facts about falls. <https://www.cdc.gov/falls/data-research/facts-stats/index.html>

² Hearing Health Foundation. (2024). Hearing loss & tinnitus statistics. <https://hearinghealthfoundation.org/hearing-loss-tinnitus-statistics#>