

Throw Your Weight Around



Fortunately, we don't usually have to think about keeping our balance. But how do we stay balanced? It's trickier than you think. Challenge yourself with these three moves!

The heavy foot. Your foot doesn't weigh very much, does it? Well, try this:



- Stand sideways next to a wall, with your right side against it.
- Put your right shoulder, right cheek, and side of your right foot directly against the wall.
- Lift your left foot off the floor. What happens?

Now, move six inches away from the wall and lift your left foot off the floor. How did your body shift to help you stay balanced? Why couldn't you move this way the first time?

The Seat that can't be beat.

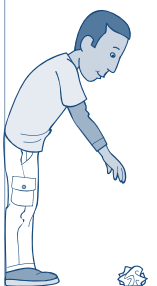
How hard can it be to get out of a chair? Try this:



- Sit on a straight-backed, armless chair. Make sure your feet can reach the floor.
- Cross your arms over your chest.
- Keep your feet flat on the floor and your back straight. Try to stand up.

Now, get out of the chair the way you usually do. How did your body shift to help you stand up? What is your body doing so you can get out of the chair?

glued to the wall. Picking something up is easy, right? Well, try this:



- Stand with your back against a wall.
- Place a small object, such as a coin or wad of paper, on the floor about 12 inches in front of your feet.

- Put your feet together and your heels against the wall.
- Try to pick up the object without moving your feet or bending your knees.

Now, step away from the wall and pick up the object. How did your body shift to help you stay balanced? Why couldn't you move this way the first time?

chew on This

When you are standing and lean forward or stick out an arm or a leg, do you realize that you always move another part of your body in the opposite direction to stay balanced? For example, when you lean forward, gravity pulls your head and shoulders toward the ground. To stay balanced, you move your hips back. With gravity pulling your hips toward the ground, the two pulls cancel each other out and you don't fall over.

Fortunately, your brain automatically moves your legs, feet, arms, head, and everything else to keep you stable. Dancers and athletes are exceptionally good at sensing how they have to move their bodies to stay balanced.

Dig Deeper

- * Do animals with four legs have better balance? Get on your hands and knees. In this position, how easy is it to lean way over to one side? What do you have to do to stay balanced?
- * Figure skaters do triple lutzers; dancers leap and twirl; gymnasts pull off back flips—amazing accomplishments for most people. Watch a performance and observe how people move their bodies to maintain their balance.
- * Try some more “body puzzles.” To run a race folded up like a pretzel, try the Standing Pretzel Relay challenge. To stop people in their tracks with just one finger, try the Keep in Chair challenge. Get these challenges from the ZOOM Web site at pbskids.org/zoom/activities.



Watch FETCH! on PBS KIDS GO! (check local listings) and visit the FETCH! Web site at pbskidsgo.org/fetch.

Okay, that's easy enough. Now, I'm back on the dance floor again, thanks to you! Charlene, the poodle next door, is going to find my moves irresistible!



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Fold

Fetch!

Throw Your Weight Around

Seems like whenever I “boogie down” and bring out my inner hip hop, I manage to throw out my lower back. Who knew this dancing stuff could be so dangerous? Help me solve my stumbling problem by coming up with several dance moves that will make me look athletic and graceful. Should be easy, shouldn't it?

GOOD FETCH!

