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# **ABLE Bodies**

# **Balance Training**

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**Sue Scott, MS**  
Renewable Fitness



**Human Kinetics**

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To my family, colleagues, clients, and the exercise sciences.

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# Activity Finder

Activity	Page number	Flexibility	Posture and core stability	Strength for a purpose	Balance and mobility	Cardiorespiratory endurance	Beginner	Intermediate	Advanced	Conceptual	Somatosensory	Vision	Vestibular	Gait	Rhythm	Integrated movement	ADL
A&W Chest Presses	217		✓	✓			✓		✓	✓					✓		
A&Ws at the YMCA	143		✓						✓								
African Safari	339					✓			✓	✓							✓
Agility Grids	281				✓			✓						✓		✓	✓
Agility Ladders	279				✓		✓					✓	✓	✓			✓
Allemande Left	311				✓			✓				✓	✓		✓		
Around the World	195			✓					✓				✓	✓			
Back on Your Heels	272				✓		✓				✓			✓		✓	
Balance Pads or Mats	263				✓			✓			✓		✓			✓	
Ball on the Wall	244				✓				✓		✓					✓	✓
Balloon Knee Squeezes	160			✓			✓							✓			
Balloon Lap Press-Down	205			✓			✓										✓
Balloon Lifts	139							✓			✓						✓
Balloon-Squeeze Chest Presses	218			✓				✓			✓						
Belly Button Training	239				✓		✓				✓				✓		✓
Bop the Hedgehogs	327				✓		✓				✓	✓					
Bows and Arrows	206			✓				✓		✓							
Buddha's Prayer	131		✓					✓		✓							

Activity	Page number	Flexibility	Posture and core stability	Strength for a purpose	Balance and mobility	Cardiorespiratory endurance	Beginner	Intermediate	Advanced	Conceptual	Somatosensory	Vision	Vestibular	Gait	Rhythm	Integrated movement	ADL
Carry the Baby	86	✓					✓				✓	✓	✓			✓	
Chain Gang	329				✓			✓			✓					✓	
Chair Push-Ups	222			✓					✓					✓			✓
Change of Pace	348					✓			✓				✓	✓			
Clock Stepping	192			✓				✓					✓				✓
Coming to Your Senses	231				✓		✓				✓						
Cops and Robbers	201			✓			✓			✓							
Country-Western Heel and Toe	277				✓			✓					✓	✓			
Cross-Legged Knee Extensions	154			✓			✓										✓
Cups and Relays	111		✓					✓		✓				✓			
Curl Up and Sit Tall	127		✓					✓			✓						
Drive Me Up the Wall	213			✓					✓				✓				
Ducks and Pigeons	149			✓			✓							✓			
Exploring Joint Stiffness	65	✓					✓			✓							
Eyes on the Prize	251				✓		✓					✓		✓			
Farmer and the Hula	84	✓						✓		✓							
Farmer's Stretch	83	✓					✓			✓							
Feel-Good Posture	90		✓				✓			✓							
Figure Eights, Reciprocal Movement, and Kayaking	307				✓			✓			✓			✓		✓	✓
Figure-Eight Obstacle Course	309				✓			✓			✓		✓	✓			✓

(continued)

(continued)

Activity	Page number	Flexibility	Posture and core stability	Strength for a purpose	Balance and mobility	Cardiorespiratory endurance	Beginner	Intermediate	Advanced	Conceptual	Somatosensory	Vision	Vestibular	Gait	Rhythm	Integrated movement	ADL
Flag Salutes	215			✓	✓		✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
Follow the Light	257						✓									✓	
Forklifts	133		✓					✓		✓						✓	
Front Step-Ups	197			✓					✓								✓
Games	350					✓		✓									
Gentlemen's Bow (Standing)	87	✓					✓				✓						
Hat Trick	299				✓				✓		✓		✓				✓
Heavy Hands	266				✓		✓				✓			✓	✓	✓	
Hedgehogs	288				✓			✓			✓			✓		✓	✓
Heel Drags	152			✓			✓							✓			
Heel Raises and Rocking on a Half-Round	188			✓					✓				✓	✓			
Heel Side Kicks	164			✓				✓						✓			
Heel-Touch and Roll-Up	273				✓		✓				✓			✓	✓		
Heel-Touch Forward, Toe-Touch Back	177			✓				✓					✓			✓	
It's a Reach	297				✓		✓				✓		✓			✓	✓
Keeping You on Your Toes	271				✓			✓			✓		✓	✓		✓	
Knee Crosses	166			✓				✓						✓		✓	
Knee Lift, Abs In	121		✓				✓				✓						
Knee Lift, Touch Back, and Squeeze	184			✓					✓					✓			✓
Life's Little Hurdles	285				✓			✓						✓	✓	✓	✓



Activity	Page number	Flexibility	Posture and core stability	Strength for a purpose	Balance and mobility	Cardiorespiratory endurance	Beginner	Intermediate	Advanced	Conceptual	Somatosensory	Vision	Vestibular	Gait	Rhythm	Integrated movement	ADL
Look and See Flexibility	66	✓					✓			✓							
Lunge Stretch	85	✓						✓			✓						
Making Waves	262				✓		✓					✓	✓				
Marching in Place (Seated)	162			✓			✓							✓			
Marching in Place (Standing)	174			✓				✓						✓			
Modified Lunges	186			✓					✓				✓	✓			✓
Multidirectional Lunges	306				✓			✓								✓	
One-Arm Bandits	211			✓					✓								
Opposing Circles and High Fives	255				✓			✓				✓	✓			✓	✓
Over the Moon—Basic Stretch	233				✓		✓				✓						✓
Over the Moon—Rock Forward, Stand Up	235				✓			✓			✓					✓	✓
Overhead Lat Pull-Down	208			✓				✓									✓
Parts of the Whole	92		✓				✓			✓							
Pass the Duck	324				✓		✓				✓						
Pendulum Legs	179			✓				✓					✓	✓			✓
Pickup Lines	304				✓			✓					✓	✓			✓
Posture Affects Function and Balance	101		✓				✓			✓	✓						
Puddle Jumping	283				✓			✓			✓					✓	✓
Purse Snatcher	129		✓					✓		✓							
Push Up and Think Thin With a Balloon	209			✓				✓						✓			✓

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Activity	Page number	Flexibility	Posture and core stability	Strength for a purpose	Balance and mobility	Cardiorespiratory endurance	Beginner	Intermediate	Advanced	Conceptual	Somatosensory	Vision	Vestibular	Gait	Rhythm	Integrated movement	ADL
Push Up, Pull Down	135		✓					✓			✓						
Push-Backs	125		✓					✓			✓						
Put Your Best Foot Up and Get Off Easy	302				✓			✓						✓		✓	✓
Rhythm and Moves	319				✓			✓			✓				✓		
Right Cross, Left Cross and Right Hook, Left Hook	220			✓				✓									✓
River Fun	334				✓				✓		✓			✓		✓	✓
Rock Forward, Knee Lift	275				✓		✓				✓			✓			✓
Rows with Check-Mark Feet and a Thera-Band	199			✓			✓				✓						
Seated Balloon or Beach-Ball Volleyball	326				✓		✓					✓				✓	
Seated Heel Raises	146			✓			✓							✓			
Seated Heel—Toe Rocking	150			✓			✓							✓			
Seated Leg Press With a Thera-Band	156			✓			✓							✓			
Seated Side Steps With a Thera-Band	158			✓			✓							✓			
Seated Toe Raises	148			✓			✓							✓			
Seated Whole-Body Stretch	74	✓					✓				✓						
Shake a Leg	293				✓			✓			✓					✓	
Shallow Squats	172			✓				✓					✓				✓
Show Me the Money	119		✓				✓				✓						
Side Steps Walking	181			✓				✓						✓			✓
Side Steps With a Thera-Band	190			✓					✓					✓			✓

Activity	Page number	Flexibility	Posture and core stability	Strength for a purpose	Balance and mobility	Cardiorespiratory endurance	Beginner	Intermediate	Advanced	Conceptual	Somatosensory	Vision	Vestibular	Gait	Rhythm	Integrated movement	ADL
Smell the Coffee	99		✓				✓			✓		✓		✓		✓	
Soccer Drill	333				✓			✓			✓			✓		✓	
Standing Hamstring Curls	176			✓				✓			✓		✓				
Standing Heel Raises	170			✓				✓					✓	✓			
Standing Heel-Toe Rocking	182			✓				✓	✓				✓	✓			
Standing Weight Shifts	249				✓			✓			✓		✓				
Step and Stop	237				✓		✓				✓						
Straight-Ahead Lat Pull-Down	203			✓			✓										✓
Supple Spine	70	✓						✓		✓							
Tai Chi	246				✓			✓			✓		✓		✓		
Tall Sits	113		✓				✓				✓						
Tall Sits With a Balloon Squeeze	115		✓				✓				✓						
Tap and Catch a Balloon	141		✓						✓			✓				✓	
Teeter-Totter Chair Stands	167			✓				✓			✓						✓
The Ball Game	228				✓		✓				✓		✓				
The Up and Up	137		✓				✓				✓						
Thumb Rolls	117		✓				✓			✓							
Tight Tandem Walking on a Line or Beam	253				✓			✓			✓	✓		✓		✓	
Torso as a Cylinder	105		✓				✓			✓							
Traffic School	289				✓			✓					✓	✓		✓	✓

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Activity	Page number	Flexibility	Posture and core stability	Strength for a purpose	Balance and mobility	Cardiorespiratory endurance	Beginner	Intermediate	Advanced	Conceptual	Somatosensory	Vision	Vestibular	Gait	Rhythm	Integrated movement	ADL
Trip to the Olympics	342					✓	✓		✓			✓					✓
Turn Down the Lights	260				✓							✓					
Venus de Milo Arms	63	✓					✓			✓							
Waist Whittlers	123		✓					✓			✓						
Walk in the Park	295				✓			✓			✓			✓	✓	✓	
Walk the Line	312				✓			✓			✓	✓		✓		✓	
Walkabouts	346					✓		✓		✓	✓			✓			✓
Walking Sticks	268				✓			✓			✓			✓			
Wall Push-Ups and Wall Push-Offs	224			✓					✓								✓
When Push Comes to Shove	107		✓					✓		✓							
Whooh, Whoohh, Whoohhh!	110		✓				✓			✓							
Words on the Wall in the Hall	68	✓					✓			✓							
You Shoot, You Score!	331				✓				✓			✓		✓	✓	✓	

# Preface

**S**o, you want to be an awesome instructor. You want to be confident that the programs you offer will help others live better, more capable lives. *ABLE Bodies Balance Training* is designed for you and any exercise leader or personal trainer working with frail populations.

The *ABLE* in *ABLE Bodies* is an acronym that stands for Adventures in Better Living through Exercise. This phrase reflects two of my core beliefs. First, I believe that life should be an adventure. Just how adventurous depends on the person, of course, but living enthusiastically and being able to do what you enjoy make life better. Everyone deserves the opportunity to set and work toward goals that have personal meaning. Having purpose and facing challenges are important to quality of life. Everyone values having choice and capability, regardless of age.

My second core belief is from the perspective of an exercise science professional: I believe that physical activity offers incredible tools that we can use to get the results we want. Exercise gives us a stronger, more capable body that allows us to continue doing what we choose and enjoy. Appropriate physical activities can restore, maintain, and improve physical capabilities. Different physical goals require the use of different exercises. Olympic sprinters train for their events by using bursts of speed to create power; cross-country skiers train for endurance using activities that improve their ability to ski at high intensities for long amounts of time. It follows that older adults who want to improve their balance should train using a wide variety of physical activities that engage the principle elements of balance and the tasks of everyday living.

What makes *ABLE Bodies* a credible program for working with the frail elderly? *ABLE Bodies* techniques were proven effective in a randomized, controlled trial that used multiple components involved in balance, and meet American College of Sports Medicine (ACSM) guidelines for balance in the frail elderly. In 2003, a grant from the National Blueprint–Active Aging Partnership evaluated the effectiveness of *ABLE Bodies* techniques. The subjects were 70 years of age or

older and living in assisted living or retirement facilities; 38 percent used walkers. Results showed that *ABLE Bodies* training significantly improved balance, mobility, and activity levels in subjects. A main conclusion was that the multicomponent nature of the program (weaving many types of training together into one program) contributed to its success. This finding is consistent with other research and with current ACSM best practices for working with older adults. Understanding and applying those kinds of ideas is what makes *ABLE Bodies* training both credible and effective.

I have worked exclusively with the elderly for more than 15 years, and on a daily basis I see the high costs of inactivity and disease. Fear of falling and diminution of balance skills are devastating. They affect quality of life, self-efficacy, physical capabilities, and families and their finances. Previously, little other than strength training was used to bolster balance skills for frail populations. Now there is another tool—*ABLE Bodies Balance Training*.

This book brings together a much broader range of physical activities than has been used previously to improve balance and mobility skills in frail populations. Many activities in this book start simply and become progressively more challenging. This allows for progress to be made, measured, and celebrated. And for older adults who are already fit, the more challenging activities help improve their balance, mobility, and fitness. Because learning is always better when participants enjoy and are engaged in the process of learning, these activities are also designed to be fun and even a little adventurous!

## TEXT ORGANIZATION

Before jumping into the activities, it's important to understand how the *ABLE Bodies* system works. Part I explains the layout of the program and ways to use this book safely so that it best fits your program and population. Chapter 1 looks at the five components of *ABLE Bodies* training and explains the use and benefits of multicomponent training.

Chapter 2 focuses on how to create programs, set up classes, and progress through activities using the ABLE Bodies activities, and chapter 3 looks at safety concerns when working with frail elders.

Part II provides activities that focus on the five components of ABLE Bodies training: flexibility (chapter 4), posture and core stability (chapter 5), strength for a purpose (chapter 6), balance and mobility (chapter 7), and cardiorespiratory endurance (chapter 8). The activities in these five chapters are outlined so that you know exactly how to prepare for and teach each activity. Every activity includes some or all of the following elements:

▶ **Benefits**—Lists what participants will gain by completing the activity.

▶ **Set It Up**—Describes work you need to do before the activity, such as preparing equipment or practicing the activity a few times so that you're familiar with the steps.

▶ **How to Do It**—Provides step-by-step instructions for exactly how to execute the activity, including the beginning positions, specific movements, and sample phrasing you can use to encourage participants. Photographs illustrate various movements of the activities.

▶ **Take It Further**—Provides ideas for making the activity progressively more difficult.

▶ **Give It More Balance**—Provides ideas for increasing the balance challenge of the activity.

▶ **Keep It Safe**—Offers reminders and tips to ensure that each activity is done safely.

▶ **Live It**—Provides quick reminders of why the activity is helpful. Stressing these reminders with participants will help them live the lesson of the activity outside of class.

As discussed in chapter 2, activities from each of these five areas can be combined to create a solid program for improving balance. The book can be used as if it were a big box of tools with sections for various or specific balance maladies. You can choose to use the tools you like where needed in your class or with your private clients. However, if you prefer more guidance and would like to start with a prepared lesson plan, then appendix A will be particularly useful. Appendix A provides 16 progressive lessons that you can follow when you teach your first courses. These 16 lessons give an idea of how you can combine activities to create effective classes. After a few times through, you will be able to make this program your own, using what works for you and your students.

You can use the Activity Finder provided at the beginning of this book to quickly find a particular activity. The Activity Finder has four sections, shown as groups of shaded or non-shaded columns. Each section of the activity finder lists in the top row categories that will allow you to locate an activity in several different ways. You can find an activity by its page number, the ABLE Bodies training component that it focuses on, its intensity level, or the specific need it addresses. The second section of the Activity Finder lists the components as they appear as chapters in the book and shows in which component you'll find an activity. The next section shows the intensity level of each activity, which increases as the activity works multiple muscle groups or combines different tasks. The last section of the Activity Finder shows which specific needs are addressed by each activity, such as conceptual, somatosensory, vision, vestibular, gait, rhythm, integrated movements, or activities of daily living. Using the Activity Finder should make it easier to locate activities that will fulfill the specific needs of your training sessions.

## ONLINE RESOURCE

A companion online resource provides many items in PDF format, making it easier for you to print out items. Every activity in the book is available, and you can print them out, making it easier to structure and plan your classes. The online resource also features 15 homework handouts that you can give to your participants so that they can practice different activities at home. A certificate of completion is also available for you. You can print and fill out the certificate as a "Congratulations, you did it!" reward for your participants. The online resource is available at [www.HumanKinetics.com/ABLEBodiesBalanceTraining](http://www.HumanKinetics.com/ABLEBodiesBalanceTraining).

*ABLE Bodies Balance Training* will change your view of frail adults and what you can do in your classes. I sincerely hope this book will be a favorite resource for you that will inspire you to do more balance activities with your clients. Preventing, deterring, or reversing declines in health and function with appropriate physical activities is one of the most important contributions an exercise leader can make in the lives of others. Take this journey with me and change a few lives for the better. Able, capable living is what we all want. Soon you, too, will be ready, willing, and ABLE!

# Acknowledgments

**C**onnections to others are truly what I think makes the world hum and work. We all hold hands with many people on any great project. This may be my book, but my journey to its completion was shared with so many others from start to finish. Family, mentors, colleagues, bosses, staff, clients, and residents all made this book sing for me.

This is my first book. It is such an honor; but there are many exceptional people to acknowledge and thank whose contributions made this book possible.

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I am grateful to God for making me just who I am. Talented in my own special way and with a passion to make a difference. I love my life and I am grateful for all I have.

It's been quite a journey; shared by many. I hope this work will continue to bless those who find it useful; and inspire others to believe even more in the potential of exercise.

And now you and I are connected as we share this path. Your journey will continue from here. I've so enjoyed this work and believe in its potential; I hope my next journey allows me to do more training and teaching. If you are interested in having me help train you or your staff, please contact me. I hope my work will help your journey be that much better, and that you will make wonderful differences in the lives of those you touch and work with. May your journey be grand, rewarding, and happy.

