

Balance

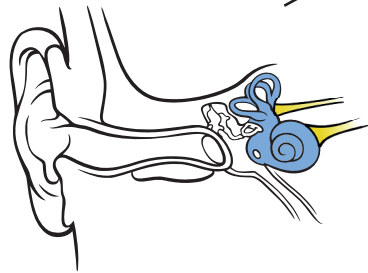
Balance is controlled by 3 systems:



The balance control system

Your brain puts together information from all three systems to help you to stay balanced.

Your brain will use the information which is most relevant in any given situation. For instance, in the dark it will rely less upon information from the visual system.



The vestibular system

The inner ear contains a system of fluid-filled canals. These are a bit like a spirit level: they can tell the brain about the movements and position of the head.

The vestibular system can help you tell which way is up, even in the dark.



The proprioceptive system

Information from all over your body, but particularly your feet and legs, feeds the proprioceptive system. It tells the brain how your body and head are positioned relative to the ground.

Stand up and gently sway forward and back. Notice how you can tell which way your body is leaning based on the sensations from your feet.



The visual system

Your eyesight helps you tell the position of your head and body relative to the world and is used to sense movement in the environment.