

Everyone knows how to find the age of a fallen tree. We count the number of rings on the tree's stump. A scientist has found a new way to measure the age of people get them to stand on one leg. Dr Kenton Kaufman from the Mayo Clinic in the USA said standing on one leg shows how well a person can balance. He said balance becomes more difficult as we age. Dr Kaufman added: "Balance is an important measure because, in addition to muscle strength, it requires input from vision, the [hearing] system, and the [senses]." He added: "Good balance provides the ability to carry out activities of daily living without the fear of falling, and this leads to improved quality of life and healthy ageing."

Forty people over the age of 50 took part in the research. They did tests for walking, balance, grip, and knee strength. Each participant had to balance on their dominant and non-dominant leg for 30 seconds. They did this with their eyes closed, and again with their eyes open. Kaufman found that standing on the non-dominant leg showed the highest rate of decline with age. There was a 2.2-second-per-decade decline when participants stood on their non-dominant leg. This compared to 1.7 seconds for the dominant leg. Kaufman concluded: "Standing on one leg is a good measure of your overall health because balance reflects how the body's systems are working together."

What might these things tell us about people?

| | What This Means | This and Me |
|------------------------|-----------------|-------------|
| Standing on one leg | | |
| Crossing one's eyes | | |
| Clicking one's fingers | | |
| Whistling | | |
| Doing handstands | | |
| Holding one's breath | | |

Paragraph 1

| | | | |
|---|----------------|----|---|
| 1 | fallen | a. | Made better than before. |
| 2 | rings | b. | The short part left after cutting a tree or another object. |
| 3 | stump | c. | Stay steady without falling over. |
| 4 | measure | d. | Dropped down or went to a lower place. |
| 5 | balance (noun) | e. | The part of your body that helps you move and lift things. |
| 6 | muscle | f. | Round shapes, like circles. |
| 7 | improved | g. | Find out how big, long, or heavy something is. |

Paragraph 2

| | | | |
|----|-------------|----|--|
| 8 | grip | h. | How fast or how often something happens. |
| 9 | participant | i. | A person who takes part in something. |
| 10 | dominant | j. | Shows or gives back an image, idea, or result. |
| 11 | rate | k. | Hold something tightly with your hand. |
| 12 | decline | l. | Become less or go down. |
| 13 | decade | m. | The strongest or most powerful. |
| 14 | reflects | n. | A time of ten years. |