Standing on one leg can tell us about our age

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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."

Sources: *scitechdaily.com / plos.org / cnn.com*

Writing

It is important to know for how long we can stand on one leg. Discuss.

Chat

Talk about these words from the article.

age / fallen trees / rings / measure / standing on one leg / muscle / vision / ageing / people over the age of 50 / walking / grip / knee strength / decline / seconds / health

True / False

1) Very few people know how to find out how old a tree is. T / F

2) Your age is the number of seconds you can balance on one leg. T / F

3) We need balance, muscle, vision and hearing to stand on one leg. T / F

4) Good balance means we do not need to be afraid of falling. T / F

5) Participants in the research were all over 60 years old. T / F

6) People tried to stand on one leg for 30 minutes. T / F

7) People stood on one leg with their eyes opened and closed. T / F

8) Standing on one leg shows how parts of the body work together. T / F

Synonym Match

(The words in **bold** are from the news article.)

1.	**rings**	a.	better
2.	**measure**	b.	gives
3.	**requires**	c.	general
4.	**provides**	d.	calculate
5.	**improved**	e.	deterioration
6.	**took part**	f.	with each other
7.	**decline**	g.	circles
8.	**overall**	h.	shows
9.	**reflects**	i.	needs
10.	**together**	j.	participated

Discussion – Student A

a) What do you think about what you read?

b) How is your grip and knee strength?

c) What are you worried will decline with age?

d) What are the benefits of standing on one leg?

e) What are the bad things about ageing?

f) What three adjectives best describe this news story?

g) When might people need to stand on one leg?

h) What questions would you like to ask the researchers?

Phrase Match

1. Everyone knows how to find the age
2. We count the number of rings on
3. He said balance becomes more
4. the ability to carry out activities
5. this leads to improved
6. They did tests for walking, balance, grip,
7. balance on their dominant and
8. There was a 2.2-second-per-
9. This compared to 1.7 seconds for
10. a good measure

a. and knee strength
b. of daily living
c. the dominant leg
d. non-dominant leg
e. the tree's stump
f. decade decline
g. quality of life
h. of your overall health
i. of a fallen tree
j. difficult as we age

Discussion – Student B

a) How happy are you with your age?
b) What do you think of standing on one leg?
c) What's the best age to be?
d) How important do you think this research is?
e) How is your balance?
f) Do you worry about getting older?
g) How can you improve the quality of your life?
h) What are the good things about ageing?

Spelling

1. a new way to esemaur the age
2. in addition to lmuecs
3. it rqueries input from vision
4. the ability to carry out icteaivits
5. ivoermpd quality of life
6. healthy inegga
7. knee rthgtesn
8. each atpaicrnpit
9. a 2.2-second-per-edacde decline
10. 1.7 seconds for the omdantni leg
11. your rvlolae health
12. because balance csetfrel how

Role Play

Role A – Five
You think five is the best age to be. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their ages. Also, tell the others which is the worst of these (and why): 15, 30 or 70.

Role B – Fifteen
You think 15 is the best age to be. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their ages. Also, tell the others which is the worst of these (and why): five, 30 or 70.

Role C – Thirty
You think 30 is the best age to be. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their ages. Also, tell the others which is the worst of these (and why): 15, five or 70.

Role D – Seventy
You think 70 is the best age to be. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their ages. Also, tell the others which is the worst of these (and why): 15, 30 or five.

Speaking – The Best Age

Rank these with your partner. Put the best age at the top. Change partners often and share your rankings.

- 5
- 10
- 15
- 20
- 30
- 50
- 70
- 100

Answers – Synonym Match

1. g	2. d	3. i	4. b	5. a
6. j	7. e	8. c	9. h	10. f

Answers – True False

1	F	2	F	3	T	4	T	5	F	6	F	7	T	8	T

Answers to Phrase Match and Spelling are in the text.