



## Why Am I So “Unbalanced?”

A Bruno Byte

From Dr. Richard L. Bruno, HD, PhD  
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Question: My balance is not good when walking, turning, twisting or backing up. I must be careful as these activities can cause me to fall. Balance has slowly gotten worse. I now walk with cane but I often need a walker. My doctors don't know what to say, and have suggested that I have MS, or they say the balance and weakness is caused by my polio leg being smaller and weaker.

Dr. Bruno's Response: “Balance” is the key word. If you're stronger on one side of your body than the other, you're out of "balance" side-to-side and may be headed for a fall.

If you're walking on your arms with crutches and your arms get weaker you won't be able to hold yourself up front-to-back and maybe side-to-side.

Also, the importance of hip muscle strength in keeping you balanced is often overlooked by polio survivors and physical therapists.

Also, if a part of your body doesn't move (as with a spinal fusion) you can't compensate for a misstep by twisting just a little and down you go.

If you're a polio survivor, you don't need to have MS or some other condition to be out of balance. Every polio survivor will have a different set of weaknesses and strengths that need to be evaluated by a physical therapist to help find out what's causing you to be unbalanced. Then they can recommend assistive devices (e.g., rolling walker, rolling chair) to keep you upright and off the floor.

### **The Encyclopedia of Polio and Post-Polio Sequelae**

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