

# Make protecting yourself from injury child's play

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As we age, most people slow down a bit to protect themselves from injury. Turns out, that may be the opposite of what they should do.

Danielle Johnson, a wellness physical therapist with the Mayo Clinic Health Living Program, says [play therapy](#) is one of the keys to protecting yourself from [injury](#) as you age.

"We lose the ability to stabilize our core in diagonal and rotational planes, which has big effects on our risk of injury, back injury, [hip injury](#), neck injuries," Johnson says.

She tells patients to picture a baby who is just learning to crawl. Then she asks how many of them are still able to get on the floor and crawl around—even though their bodies were made for such movements.

Johnson says reteaching your body to move like a child can actually protect you from serious injuries. And one of the best ways to move like a kid, she says, is to play like one.

"So things like hanging, jumping, crawling, running, playing actually can be a very fundamental way (to) move where we're really incorporating all different elements of movement, from balancing to efficiency of movement, to knowing how to sequence and time a jump," she says.

Johnson encourages people to make up games like tossing balls while

balancing on beams and constantly moving. She says the fun and laughter, along with the [movement](#), can improve your health just as much as trudging along on a treadmill.

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