BACKGROUND & SIGNIFICANCE: Women experience a precipitous decline in balance and strength between the ages of 40 to 60. Changes occur gradually with people unaware they are experiencing decline.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY: The goal was to identify everyday activities that reflected changes in balance and strength and to determine if, once recognized, women experienced an increase awareness of change.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK: The Individual and Family Self-management Theory proposes that self-monitoring and reflection are essential for self-management.

SAMPLE DESCRIPTION: Age stratified, convenience sample of community-dwelling, English-speaking women, ages 40 to 60.

SETTING: On-line pre and post survey using an anonymous tool similar to Survey Monkey.

DESIGN/METHOD & PROCEDURE: This pilot study included a single group, repeated measures, descriptive design. A convenience sample of community dwelling English-speaking women ages 40 to 60 was solicited. Scientists and expert clinicians prepared a list of daily activities requiring balance (8 items) and strength (11 items). Participants solicited by personal invitation and referral completed an on-line survey consisting of 24 questions about personal characteristics, balance and strength (1 to 10 linear Likert-type rating scale) twice within a two-week time period.

RESULTS/OUTCOMES: Preliminary findings indicate a total of 55 participants responding at time 1 and 30 at time 2. Thirty-nine percent reported falling within the past year. Mean scores varied across questions and ranged from 1.76 to 5.62 with women in the higher age category having higher mean scores. Scores that changed over time (p value set for p = .1, exploratory work) included “using hand rails to rapidly descend stairs” (t = -1.11, 29 df, p = .056), “less likely to take risk doing physical activity” (t = 1.7, 30 df, p = .098), “need to be more cautious carrying child/pet/large, breakable item downstairs” (t = 2.655, 30 df, p = .013) and “hesitate to take care of small child by self” (t =-2.252, 30 df, p=.032).

CONCLUSION: Results of this study provide preliminary evidence that increasing awareness of one’s ability to perform daily activities may be useful in changing women’s perceptions of changes in their balance and strength and this may differ across age.