

The importance of a properly maintained balance to the modern pharmacy cannot be overstated. It is simply impossible to imagine a pharmacy in the United States operating without a pharmacy behind the counter. As the over-50 population of the United States begins to swell as the Baby Boom generation ages, the volume of prescriptions and compoundings performed by the average pharmacist is only going to increase. It is important that pharmacies have the best quality balances they can afford, and that those working behind the counter know how to use them properly and safely.

Pharmacists have to undergo rigorous training before they can get behind the counter. Students have to learn a truly astronomical amount of material; obtaining a graduate degree is often considered easy when compared to pharmacy school. An important facet of this education is the proper use and care of a pharmacy balance. Students must learn how to properly weigh medications and make sure the the balance is properly calibrated.

Compounding is another important activity that a pharmacist must master. Combining two or more medications takes effort and concentration. Though it can be tempting to rely upon the modern digital balances for compounding, pharmacists should also be able to use older analog balances. These balances, such as the Torbal DRX-3, have been the standard for compounding pharmacies across the country; it is not unusual to look behind the counter at a compounding pharmacy and find a DRX that has been in service for decades. Why, you may wonder, should a pharmacist know how to use an analog balance?

If a situation should arise in which an electronic balance ceases to function, or is otherwise unavailable for use, and an analog balance is the only one available, the pharmacist **MUST** be able to use the analog balance, or else the pharmacy cannot dispense compounded substances. Customers rely upon the pharmacist to get them their medications as soon as they need them. Time can be an important and sometimes dangerous factor. A properly trained pharmacist must be ready for any contingency, and the ability to use an analog compounding balance is an important part of that readiness.

However, it is also important that the pharmacist be up to date on how to use digital balances as well. The constant upgrading of pharmacy balances with new features is something that the modern pharmacist must be aware of.