



Maintaining a Balance

Tipping points are important—and well-named—features of many complex systems, including financial and ecological systems. At a tipping point, a small change in conditions in the system can result in drastic changes overall (just as a small

change in the weight of one end of a see-saw can reverse positions).

Most such systems are studied using mathematical models based on collections of differential equations.

The variables in the equations are related, leading to feedback in the system and potentially substantial changes, such as economic collapse.

Research is now being done to recognize tipping points in hopes that something can be done before it is too late.



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