

Balance & Strength Exercises for Falls Prevention

The following exercises can help improve your balance and strength, which can in turn prevent falls! Balance exercises should be done at least 3 days a week (but can be done every day) and strength exercises should be done at least 2 days a week (but can be done every other day).

It is important to be safe when exercising. Find something sturdy to hold on to or have near for support if you need it while doing the standing exercises. If you have any aches and pains, feel dizzy or short of breath, talk to your provider about modifications that could be made to the exercises.

As your balance and strength improve, you should make the exercises more challenging. You can do this by holding a position longer, reducing your support by not holding on to something while you do an exercise, or increasing how many times you do the exercise. Once an exercise becomes easy, you should make it harder to continue to build strength and improve your balance.

Here are a few balance and strength exercises that you can add to your daily routine.

Balance Exercises

Sit-to-Stand

To perform the sit-to-stand exercise, use a sturdy chair without wheels that preferably has armrests. Your feet should touch the floor, and the chair shouldn't be too low.

1. Scoot to the edge of the seat. Your feet should be shoulder-width apart with your ankles right underneath your knees.
2. Place both hands on the armrest.
3. Lean forward and push up off the floor as you stand up tall.
4. Remain standing for 5 seconds.
5. Find the chair with the backs of your knees and reach back for the armrests.
6. Sit down slowly.
7. Repeat 5 times.

- ❖ To make this exercise harder you can increase the number of times you do it, only use 1 hand on the armrest, or don't use any hands and cross your arms while you stand.
- ❖ To see a video of this exercise, go here: bit.ly/3CPssPK.

Weight Shifts

To perform weight shifts, stand up tall next to something that you can hold on to, like a counter or dresser.

1. Stand with your feet hip-width apart, with your weight distributed equally between your legs.
2. Slowly shift your weight over to the right side, while holding on with one hand.
3. Pick up your foot on your left side.

4. Stand on your right leg for as long as you can (up to 30 seconds), then gently set your left foot down and return to the starting position.
 5. Repeat 5 times on each side.
- ❖ To make this exercise harder you can increase the number of times you do it, increase how long you are standing on one leg or don't hold on while you do it (but still have something near you for support just in case).
 - ❖ To see a video of this exercise, go here: bit.ly/3JDNbYZ.

Tandem Walk

To perform the tandem walk exercise, stand up tall next to something that you can hold on to with one hand, like a counter or dresser.

1. Walk forward in a straight line, like you are walking on a tightrope, placing one foot in front of the other. Try to get the heel of your front foot to touch the toes on your back foot or get them as close as you can.
 2. Walk forward for 5-10 steps.
 3. Take 5-10 steps back to your starting position.
- ❖ To make this exercise harder you can increase the number of times you do it, increase the number of steps you take, or not hold on while you do it (but still have something near you for support just in case).
 - ❖ To see a video of this exercise, go here: bit.ly/3NqMy62.

Strength Exercises

Leg Lifts

To perform the leg lift exercise, use a sturdy chair without wheels that preferably has armrests. Your feet should touch the floor, and the chair shouldn't be too low.

1. Sit up tall in a chair with good posture with your feet flat on the floor.
 2. Lift your right leg and straighten your knee slowly, as high as it will comfortably go without locking the knee.
 3. Hold your leg up for 5 seconds.
 4. Lower your leg slowly.
 5. Repeat 5 times on each side.
- ❖ To make this exercise harder you can increase the number of times you do it or try lifting your leg higher (without causing pain).
 - ❖ To see a video of this exercise, go here: bit.ly/3CT9RB3.

Heel Raises

To perform heel raises, stand up tall next to something that you can hold on to, like a counter or dresser.

1. Stand with your feet shoulder-width apart, with your weight distributed equally between your legs.
2. Slowly shift your weight to your toes and come up on your tiptoes with your heels off the ground (without rocking forward).
3. Slowly lower your heels back to the ground (without rocking backwards).
4. Repeat 5 times.

- ❖ To make this exercise harder you can increase the number of times you do it or not hold on while you do it (but still have something near you for support just in case).
- ❖ To see a video of this exercise, go here: bit.ly/44wwPy3.

Hip Marches

To perform hip marches, use a sturdy chair without wheels that preferably has armrests. Your feet should touch the floor, and the chair shouldn't be too low.

1. Sit up tall in a chair with good posture with your feet flat on the floor. Your hands can rest at your sides, or wherever they are comfortable.
2. Lift your right knee as high as it will comfortably go, as if you were marching in place.
3. Lower your knee slowly.
4. Repeat 5 times on each side.

- ❖ To make this exercise harder you can increase the number of times you do it or try lifting your leg higher (without causing pain).
- ❖ To see a video of this exercise, go here: bit.ly/439Apku.