

Balance February 2022

One out of every five falls causes an injury such as broken bones or a head injury. More than 95% of hip fractures are a result from falling, usually sideways and women account for three-quarters of these hip fractures! Practice this balance technique to keep you on your feet!

Heel-to-Toe Standing/walking

Benefits and how it will reduce your risk:

- Helps keep balance when walking through a narrow space
- The more you practice this exercise the more your strength and balance will increase and will become equipped to avoid a fall

How to do it:

- Lightly hold onto a wall or countertop
- Look forward at eye level, relax your shoulders
- Slowly place one foot in front of the other touching your heel to your toe
- Take at least 8 steps and try to increase as you become more confident

Challenge yourself:

- Hold your arms out to your sides and with each step touch your nose.

Modifications:

- If you find it too hard then simply walk with your feet closer together than you ordinarily would until you can place them heel to toe.
- For a standing modification with your finger tips on something solid, stand heel-to-toe bend your knees slightly and keep still for 10 seconds repeat with the opposite foot. Gradually work up to walking or standing still for longer.



Make your home safer to reduce your risk of falling. Relocate items on the floor and around your home that could be a tripping hazard. Consider adding grab bars next to the toilet, in and outside of your shower or tub, install railings on both sides of the stairs and ensure your home is well lit, adding brighter lightbulbs. Combining these small home safety changes with balance exercises will help reduce your risk of falls.

Side Leg Raises (abductions)

Benefits and how it will reduce your risk:

- This exercise will target your hip flexors and thighs which are part of your core muscles.
- Keeping your core strong will help reduce your risk.

How to do it:

- Stand behind or beside a chair, table or counter top with your back straight.
- Place your feet flat on the floor about hip width apart. Hold onto the back of the chair or the table.
- Take a deep breath and as you exhale, slowly lift your right leg about 6 to 12 inches off the floor to the side. Keep both legs straight and your toes pointed forward
- Inhale and hold this pose for a few seconds. As you exhale return to starting position.
- Repeat this 6-8 times on one side then switch to the other leg.

Challenge yourself:

- Gradually work up to holding the pose for longer and/or doing more repetitions.
- Add a resistance band just above the ankles.



Falls are not a normal part of aging, they can be prevented. Older adults, caregivers and healthcare providers can work together to prevent devastating injuries. Adding balance exercises into your daily workout will allow you to have faster reaction times, better coordination and of course reduce your risk of falls.

Clock Reach

Benefits and how it will reduce your risk:

- Improves your balance, helpful when reaching into cupboards and other day to day activities.

How to do it:

- Standing and holding a chair with your left hand
- Imagine a clock with 12 o'clock in front of you and 6 o'clock behind.
- Lifting your right leg up, reach to 12, 3, and 6
- Repeat with your other side
- Repeat 5x per side

Challenge yourself:

- Lean your body in the same directions you are reaching
- Work up to more reps on each side

Modifications:

- Can be done seated
- Leave both feet on the floor and reach

