



EXERCISES FOR BALANCE

Balance exercises can help you maintain your balance and your confidence. If you are an older adult, balance exercises are especially important because they can help you prevent falls and maintain your independence.

FLAMINGO STAND



Stand on your left leg with your right leg lifted. Use a chair or wall for support as you stretch your right leg forward. Maintain good posture by keeping your spine, neck, and head in one line. To increase the difficulty, extend your left hand to reach for your right foot. Hold for up to 15 seconds. Then do the opposite side. Do 10 to 15 sets.

TIGHTROPE WALK



Hold your arms out straight from your sides. Walk in a straight line along the floor or ground, pausing for one to two seconds each time you lift a foot off the ground. Focus on a spot in the distance to help you keep your head straight and maintain your balance. Take 15 to 20 steps.

TOE RAISES



Stand straight and raise yourself up on your toes as high as you can go, then gently lower yourself. You may need to use a chair or counter for balance but don't lean too far forward on the chair or counter. Lift and lower yourself 15 to 20 times.

TAI CHI



Tai chi is a combination of slow, gentle movements which to improve balance because it targets all the physical components needed to stay upright—leg strength, flexibility, range of motion, and reflexes—all of which tend to decline with age. It can help to reduce the risk of falling.

Look for videos or books about tai chi, and when appropriate, attend classes.

HEEL-TOE WALKING



Put your right foot in front of your left foot so that the heel of your right foot touches the top of the toes of your left foot. Moving with control, move your left foot in front of your right, putting your weight on your heel. Then, shift your weight to your toes. Repeat the step with your left foot. Walk this way for 15 to 20 steps.

SIDE STEPPING



From a standing position, step sideways to the left side of the room. Lift your knees as high as you can while moving as though you're stepping over something. Then return to the right side of the room (15 to 20 steps each way).

AIRPLANES



Stand on your left leg. Slowly lift your right leg straight back—don't bend your knees. Hold that position for one second, then gently bring your leg back down. Use a chair for added balance if needed. Repeat this 10 to 15 times per leg.

NORDIC POLE WALKING



Walking poles improve balance and stability. In addition to the benefits of walking, poles help you maintain proper posture, especially in the upper back, and may help to strengthen upper back muscles, biceps, and triceps.

Look for videos or books about walking with poles, and when appropriate, attend group instruction walks.