

Is it getting harder to keep your balance while putting on your pants? Do you find yourself swaying a little when you get up from a chair or climb stairs?

Balance is the ability to control your body's position and movement in space. Many people lose their sense of balance with age. This increases your risk of injury and can limit your activities.

By doing a few simple exercises on a regular basis, you can improve and maintain your sense of balance.

Why do balance exercises?

In addition to improving your balance, balance exercises can help you:

- Prevent falls and other injuries
- Do what you enjoy better
- Be more confident in your abilities
- Be as independent as possible
- Have fewer aches and pains
- Feel good about yourself and life

Balance exercises are great for all ages. They can be done anytime and anywhere. Plus they're fun.

Getting started

Start slowly, and progress as you are able.

Important: Do you have any severe balance concerns or orthopedic problems? Talk with your doctor before doing balance exercises.

Stationary balance exercises

If needed, hold on to a chair with both hands at first. As your balance improves, you can make the exercises harder by holding onto a chair with only one hand, then with only one finger, and eventually by closing your eyes. Once you have mastered these progressions, you can advance to trying them on an uneven surface like a mat. You can also try adding head, leg, and/or arm motions while doing them.

The exercises below are simple and easy to do. Check the ones you would like to try.

Single leg stand

Start with your feet apart as wide as your hips. Make sure your weight is even on both legs. Lift your left foot off of the floor. Try to hold it up for 30 seconds. Bring your left foot back to the floor. Repeat with your right foot.



A healthier life is on the line for you!

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Balance Exercises

Heel raises

Start with your feet and heels together. Keeping your heels together, lift them off of the floor as high as you can until you are standing on your tiptoes if possible. Keep your heels off the floor for 2 or 3 seconds. Bring your heels back down to the floor. Repeat 6 to 10 times. Rest for 1 minute, and then repeat.

You can also try this off the edge of a stair with the balls of your feet on the edge. Lower your heels as far as is comfortable between raises.

Moving balance exercises

Stay near a stable support in case you lose your balance. Start by focusing on a spot in front of you such as a picture on the wall to help you keep your balance. Lift your arms out to the sides if needed. To progress, lower your arms, and eventually try closing your eyes.

Walking heel-to-toe

Put the heel of your right foot in front of the toes on your left foot, with your heels and toes very close to touching. Take 5 to 10 heel-to-toe steps forward. Add more steps as your balance improves.

Balance walk

Walk forward in a straight line. With each step, lift your knee and pause for one to five seconds before lowering your foot back to the ground. Take 5 to 20 steps. Progress as much as you are able.

Take Action

How could you fit some balance exercises into your daily schedule? Think about the coming week. In the chart below, make a plan. The first line shows an example.

Day	Activity, Where, When
Tuesday	Single Leg Stand and Balance Walk, at home, 7 a.m.
Sunday	
Monday	
Tuesday	
Wednesday	
Thursday	
Friday	
Saturday	



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