

Incorporating Balance Exercise INTO EVERYDAY LIFE

Balance exercises need to be closely related to real life movements and can easily be incorporated into your every day life and activities.

To improve your balance and reduce your risk of having a future fall or fracture, you should perform exercises that challenge your balance, for at least 2 hours per week for a minimum of six months, but ideally continue long-term. This can seem like a lot, but balance exercises can be easily incorporated into your everyday life.

- **Daily activities** such as showering, bathroom routines, dressing
- **Household activities** such as cooking, dusting, cleaning, washing, yard work, painting, washing the car
- **Leisure activities** such as gardening, dancing, bowls, darts, while reading & watching TV.

Many falls occur during transitions such as sitting down or changing direction. To improve balance during transitions you can start by sitting down slowly, advancing to no hand support, then one leg support.



IMPORTANT

Turn "waiting time" from annoying to productive "balance enhancing" time.

Reduce stress and decrease fall risk at the same time.

1 Reduce your base of support

TANDEM STAND

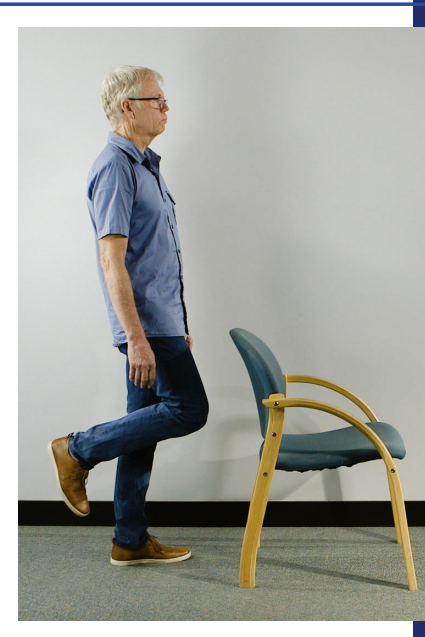
You can challenge your balance by standing with one foot in front of the other at the kitchen bench while; waiting for the kettle to boil, preparing your food, washing the dishes. Or while waiting in a queue, waiting at the bus stop, waiting for the elevator, waiting for the computer to start or watching TV.

TANDEM WALKING

You can walk heel-to-toe next to the kitchen bench, along the hallway, along the side of the house, from the front of the car to the back of the car, close to the wall when walking around the house, next to the rail along the verandah, next to the dining room table.

ONE LEG STAND

Whenever standing, try to stand on only one leg. You can stand on one leg while talking on the phone, waiting for the kettle to boil, heating food in the microwave, waiting in a queue at the supermarket, waiting at the bus stop, or putting your socks on. Use your finger tips or hands for support on furniture or stand close to stable things in your environment to provide safety and support, such as walls or countertops.



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2 Shifting your weight

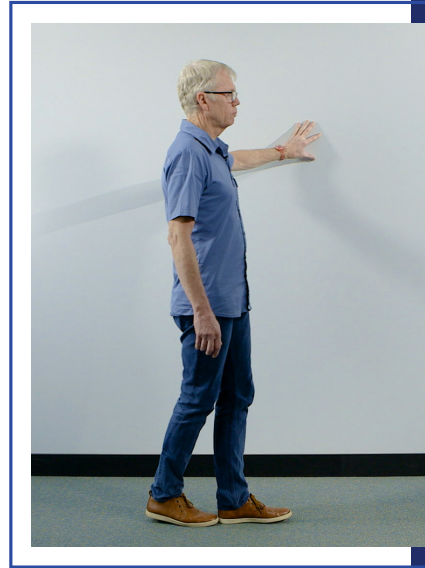
SIDE TO SIDE WEIGHT SHIFT

You can shift your body weight from side-to-side while watching TV, waiting for the kettle to boil, heating food in the microwave, waiting for the bus or train or waiting in line at the bank.

FORWARDS AND BACKWARDS WEIGHT SHIFT

Have support readily available as you shift weight forward and backwards while watching TV, waiting for toast or food to cook, waiting for the bus, before and/or after dressing in the morning (you can use your reflection in the mirror to guide you).

You can increase the challenge by standing with your feet together with no hand support, then closing your eyes and even adding a mentally challenging task. Remember to hold on for support at the start. When you have mastered this, progress by reducing the support.



3 Stepping over objects

FORWARDS AND BACKWARDS

Step forwards and backwards over the lino/carpet join in the doorway, over a sponge-type cleaning cloth, a tile on the bathroom, kitchen or laundry floor in the doorway as you walk in and out of the room, an object if you accidentally drop it on the floor such as a pen, hanky or broom stick.

SIDE TO SIDE

Step sideways over a rug or door mat, or over a book on the floor. Walk up-stairs sideways rather than facing forward. Lift your leg high to clear the object and use support on the bench, wall or doorway as needed.

IMPORTANT

Seek out opportunities to challenge your balance rather than avoiding things in your path, as long as you feel safe doing so.

4 Turning and changing direction

Change direction when walking around the kitchen or dining room table, listening to music in the kitchen, preparing lunch in the kitchen, walking back and forth between the kitchen bench and the fridge. Ensure you have support readily available. Do this exercise slowly, as doing it too quickly may cause you to feel dizzy. Aim to **STEP** and **STOP**. Do not pivot. Practice using alternate legs to clear obstacles if it is easier with one leg.



Remember - To improve your balance you need to practice activities that challenge your balance and keep progressing to more challenging balance-enhancing activities. Look for opportunities in your daily activities where you can include balance exercises.

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