

# Balance

**Doing balance exercises on a regular basis can make you steadier on your feet.**

Start slowly and carefully. You can start with one or more of the exercises below. When you first begin, remember to hold onto a table or chair for balance. Hold onto the table with only one hand. As you progress, try holding on with only one fingertip. Next, try the exercises without holding on at all. If you are very steady on your feet, move on to doing the exercises using no hands, with your eyes closed. Have someone stand close by if you are unsteady.

## Exercises

### Lifting on your toes

1. Stand straight; hold on to a table or chair for balance.
2. Slowly stand on your tiptoes, as high as possible.
3. Hold position for one second.
4. Slowly lower your heels all the way back down. Pause.
5. Repeat 8-15 times.
6. Rest; then do another set of 8-15 repetitions.
7. If you are comfortable progressing, please refer to the suggestions in the first paragraph.

### Knee flexion

1. Stand straight; hold onto a table or chair for balance.
2. Slowly lift your foot behind you so your knee bends.
3. Hold position for one second.
4. Slowly lower foot all the way back down. Pause.
5. Repeat with other leg.
6. Alternate legs until you have done 8-15 repetitions with each leg.
7. Rest; then do another set of 8-15 alternating repetitions.
8. If you are comfortable progressing, please refer to the suggestions in the first paragraph.

### Hip flexion

1. Stand straight; hold onto a table or chair for balance.
2. Slowly bend one knee toward your chest, without bending your waist or hips.
3. Hold position for one second.
4. Slowly lower your leg all the way down. Pause.
5. Repeat with your other leg.
6. Alternate legs until you have done 8-15 repetitions with each leg.
7. Rest; then do another set of 8-15 alternating repetitions.
8. If you are comfortable progressing, please refer to the suggestions in the first paragraph.



*continued*

## Hip extension

1. Stand 12-18 inches from a table or chair, feet slightly apart.
2. Bend forward at your hips at about a 45-degree angle; hold on to the table or chair for balance.
3. Slowly lift one leg straight backwards without bending your knee, pointing your toes, or bending your upper body any farther forward.
4. Hold position for one second.
5. Slowly lower your leg. Pause.
6. Repeat with your other leg.
7. Alternate legs until you have done 8-15 repetitions with each leg.
8. Rest; then do another set of 8-15 alternating repetitions.
9. If you are comfortable progressing, please refer to the suggestions in the first paragraph.

## Side leg raise

1. Stand straight, directly behind a table or chair, feet slightly apart.
2. Hold on to the table or chair for balance.
3. Slowly lift one leg about 6-12 inches out to the side. Keep your back and both legs straight. Don't point your toes outward; keep them facing forward.
4. Hold position for one second.
5. Slowly lower leg all the way down. Pause.
6. Repeat with your other leg.
7. Alternate your legs until you have done 8-15 repetitions with each leg.
8. Rest; then do another set of 8-15 alternating repetitions.
9. If you are comfortable progressing, please refer to the suggestions in the first paragraph.

## Exercises you can do anywhere

1. Walk heel-to-toe. Position your heel just in front of the toes of the opposite foot each time you take a step. Your heel and toes should touch or almost touch.
2. Stand on one foot (for example, while waiting in line at the grocery store, at the sink while doing dishes, or at the bus stop). Alternate feet.
3. Stand up and sit down without using your hands.

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