

Strength and Balance Exercises

Strength and balance exercises are just as important as endurance activity. Strong muscles and improved balance make it easier to do daily activities and help to prevent falls.

Try to do strength and balance exercises at least 2 days a week.

BEFORE YOU START

- If you are new to exercise or have not been active in some time, talk with your doctor to see if these exercises are right for you.
- If you feel pain, shortness of breath or dizziness while doing these exercises stop and talk to your doctor.

WHEN YOU EXERCISE

- Wear comfortable clothing and supportive footwear. A running or walking shoe is a good option.
- Hold the back of a stable chair (no wheels) for support.
- Use slow and controlled movements. Remember to breathe slowly. Do not hold your breath.
- Start by doing each exercise at least 5 times, and up to 15 times if you can.
- To prevent injury, warm-up with 5 minutes of walking or marching on the spot. Take 5 minutes to cool down at the end.

HOW YOU IMPROVE

- The exercises will get easier as your strength improves. This means you are ready to do more. If you can do each exercise 15 times, repeat all the exercises a second and even a third time if you can.
- Increase the time you hold the position, up to 10 seconds.
- When you feel steady, challenge yourself by holding on to the chair with only one hand. Try one fingertip or no hands as your balance improves.



1. HAMSTRING CURLS

- Stand with feet slightly apart.
- The knee of your support leg should be slightly bent.
- Slowly bend your knee, bringing your heel toward your buttocks.
- Only bend your knee, stand tall.
- Hold for 2 seconds and return to start position.
- Repeat using other leg.



2. SMALL SQUATS

- Stand with your feet slightly wider than shoulder width apart.
- Slowly push your buttocks back while bending your knees.
- Hold for 2 seconds and return to start position.
- Keep your chest and head up.
- This is a small squat so don't bend too far.



3. BACK LEG RAISE

- Stand with feet slightly apart.
- The knee of your support leg should be slightly bent.
- Slowly raise one leg back, keeping your back straight.
- Hold for 2 seconds and return to start position.
- Repeat using other leg.



4. SIDE LEG RAISE

- Stand with feet together.
- The knee of your support leg should be slightly bent.
- Slowly lift one leg out to the side, keep back straight and tall.
- Keep foot pointed forward.
- Hold for 2 seconds and return to start position.
- Repeat using other leg.



5. TOE STAND

- Stand with feet shoulder width apart.
- Slowly rise up onto the balls of your feet.
- Hold for 2 seconds then slowly lower heels to floor.
- Repeat.



6. FLAMINGO

- Stand with feet slightly apart.
- The knee of your support leg should be slightly bent.
- Stand and lift the right knee, by sliding the right foot halfway up the left leg.
- Hold the position for 2 seconds and return to start position.
- Repeat using other leg.



7. WALKING THE LINE

- Stand up tall near a wall or counter and look ahead.
- Place one foot directly in front of the other so your feet form a straight line.
- Step forward, walking in a straight line.
- Repeat for 10 or more steps.
- Turn around and repeat the exercise.



8. WALL PUSH-UP

- Place your hands on the wall at shoulder height.
- Keep your heels on the floor.
- Slowly lower yourself toward the wall bending your elbows while keeping your back straight. Hold for 2 seconds.
- Slowly extend your arms to return to start position.
- Hold for 2 seconds. Keep elbows soft (not locked). Repeat.



9. HIP FLEX

- This exercise is a stage 2 lift.
- The knee of your support leg should be slightly bent.
- Lift one leg toward chest and hold for 2 seconds, then lift leg higher and hold again.
- Slowly return to start position.
- Repeat using other leg.



10. STEP OVER

- Step to one side, lifting leg high as though stepping over a small box.
- Return to start position by stepping back over box.
- Repeat using other leg.



11. SIT TO STAND

- Sit towards the front of the chair with feet shoulder width apart.
- Lean slightly forward.
- Stand up slowly, using your legs, not arms.
- Keep looking forward. Stand tall.
- To sit: lean slightly forward, bend your knees and slowly lower your buttocks back into the chair.

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