

How to Improve Your Balance

*Helpful Tips to Keep You
Steady on Your Feet*

WRITTEN BY

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Dr. Lianne Rogers PT, DPT specializes in helping adults 60+ move with confidence and stay physically active through all stages of life. She is passionate about educating patients in the areas of fall awareness and prevention. She enjoys assisting people to adopt a healthy and active lifestyle to remain independent throughout their lives.

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INTRODUCTION

Feeling unsteady on your feet can cause a person to worry about falling. Many people fear that getting older means their balance will decline and they accept there is nothing they can do about it, however this is a myth people believe. Improving your balance and decreasing your chances for a fall comes with practice and performing exercises that will challenge and strengthen the muscles in your body. Making a few adjustments to your home and in your life can also decrease your risks for falls.

You have already taken a step in the right direction to improve your balance by requesting our book. Let us help you continue along your journey to restoring confidence in the way you move and improve your mobility! Follow these tips and strategies to keep you steady on your feet and decrease falls!



Did you know... 1 in 4 adults older than 65 fall each year and falling once doubles your chance for recurring falls.

EXERCISE

The CDC recommends older adults get 150-300 minutes weekly of moderate activity. This can include walking, swimming, tennis, bicycling, or attending an exercise class. Walking can be a great introductory exercise if you are new to exercise. If your endurance level is poor begin walking in 2-3 minute sessions, 2-3 times a day to build up your endurance. As your endurance level improves increase your time to 30 minutes daily. If you walk daily, then start to increase your speed at which you walk.

In addition to 150-300 minutes of moderate activity, muscle strengthening/resistive training and balance training exercises should be performed 2-3 times a week. Maintaining your strength in your legs can help to prevent a fall or catch yourself if you lose your balance.

Examples of these activities may include weight training, body weight exercises, tai chi, yoga, and balance exercises.

Try these easy body weight exercises to help improve strength in your legs:

- Chair Stands: Using a sturdy chair practice standing up and sitting down. If possible do this without use of arms. Perform 8-10 repetitions.
- Heel raise: Stand up tall with feet shoulder width apart. Come up on to your toes and lower back down. If you need extra support perform this at a table or counter top. Perform 8-10 repetitions.
- Side Hip Strengthening: Stand tall next to a table or counter top. Transfer weight onto one leg while lifting the exercising leg out to the side and return. Be sure the exercising leg is straight and foot is forward. Perform 8-10 repetitions.

Exercise regularly to improve your balance, strength, and flexibility to keep you steady on your feet. These types of activities and more can help you to maintain muscle tone and balance for preventing falls.

PRACTICE YOUR BALANCE

Your balance will only improve if you continue to practice it daily and weekly. Think of it as use it or lose it!

Safety is important at all times! You may perform these exercises while using your hands to support yourself at a kitchen countertop or sink. There is still a lot of benefit from doing these exercises with the use of your hands to support you.

Begin with exercises such as:

- Standing with your feet together for 10 sec
- Standing with your feet ½ way overlapping for 10 sec
- Standing heel-to-toe for 10sec
- Standing on one foot for 10 sec.

If you are unable to perform these exercises start practicing daily to improve your balance!

VISION

Small changes to your eyesight over time can contribute to balance issues and fall risk. As you get older you rely more and more on your vision for balance. Problems such as glaucoma, cataracts, and macular degeneration can occur with age and may impair your vision resulting in a higher risk for falls. Annual eye exams are important to maintaining your eye health and preventing falls and keeping you steady on your feet.

MEDICATIONS

If you are currently taking 4 or more medications you could be at an increased risk for falls. Dizziness and lightheadedness are common side effects due to medication interactions that place you at a higher risk for falling.

So what can you do? Have an annual review of your medications with your physician or pharmacist to place you on the correct medications and keep you steady on your feet. This should include both prescribe and over the counter prescriptions.

HOME SAFETY

Your home can be a high-risk environment for falls if you do not take certain steps to remove hazards or make changes to increase your safety. Too often falls occur in the home that could have been easily prevented with a few easy and quick modifications. Here are a few tips to make your home safe:

- Clear clutter in all pathways throughout your home both inside and outside.
- Have proper lighting in all rooms during the day and night.
- Make safety modifications around your home such as installing grab bars or railings.

For a complete and detailed list of home safety please request our free **Ageing In Place** report.



Did you know 75% of falls occur in and around your home!

We hope you found the information in this guide helpful. If you are still concerned with your balance or have questions we can help!

Call today to speak with one of our team members for your FREE initial phone consultation.

For more information reach us at:

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