

Lower Body Strength Guide for Safer Mobility

Five exercises that power everyday movement

STRENGTH & SAFER MOBILITY

Strong legs are your best protection against falls — they power every stand, step, and stair climb. These exercises target the muscles that matter most for safe, independent movement.

Safety first: use a sturdy chair or counter for support, move slowly and with control, and stop if you feel sharp pain or dizziness. Check with your doctor or physical therapist before beginning a new strengthening routine.

1. Sit-to-Stands

- From a sturdy chair, stand up fully, then lower back down with control — don't just drop into the seat.
- Use your hands for support at first if needed, working toward using them less over time.
- Repeat 8–12 times for 2 sets. This is the single most functional lower-body exercise for daily life.

2. Wall or Counter Squats

- Stand facing a counter or with your back against a wall, feet hip-width apart.
- Bend your knees slightly, as if starting to sit into a chair, keeping knees behind your toes.
- Hold 3–5 seconds, then straighten. Repeat 8–10 times.

3. Standing Hip Abduction

- Holding a chair or counter for support, lift one leg out to the side, keeping your body upright.
- Lower with control. Repeat 10–12 times per side.
- This strengthens the hip muscles that keep your pelvis stable while walking.

4. Calf Raises

- Holding onto a counter, rise up onto your toes, then lower slowly.
- Repeat 10–15 times. Strong calves help push you forward with each step and stabilize you on uneven ground.

5. Step-Ups

- Using a low, stable step (or the bottom stair with a railing), step up with one leg, then bring the other up to meet it.
- Step back down with control. Repeat 8–10 times per leg, leading with each leg in turn.
- This mirrors the strength and control needed for curbs, stairs, and getting in and out of vehicles.

How often: aim for 2–3 non-consecutive days per week to allow muscles to recover, gradually increasing repetitions or reducing hand support as strength improves.

Talk to your PT if: an exercise causes joint pain (not muscle fatigue), one side feels notably weaker than the other, or you're ready to progress beyond bodyweight exercises — a tailored program can build strength more efficiently.