

# Simple Balance Exercises for Older Adults

Five easy exercises to build steadiness, at home

## BALANCE & FALL PREVENTION

Balance is a skill, and like any skill, it improves with regular practice. These simple exercises can be done at home in about 10 minutes a day. Start slow, use support, and build up gradually.

**Safety first:** always have a sturdy chair, countertop, or wall within reach for support. Stop any exercise that causes pain, sharp dizziness, or a loss of balance, and check with your doctor or physical therapist before starting a new exercise routine.

### 1. Standing Weight Shifts

- Stand tall behind a chair, holding on with both hands.
- Slowly shift your weight onto your right leg, then your left, without lifting your feet.
- Repeat 10 times each side. This builds the base control your body uses during everyday walking.

### 2. Heel-to-Toe Stand

- Standing next to a counter, place one foot directly in front of the other, heel touching toes.
- Hold the position for 10–30 seconds, then switch which foot is in front.
- As it gets easier, try holding with just one hand, then just a fingertip, on the counter.

### 3. Single-Leg Stand

- Hold onto a chair or counter with both hands. Lift one foot slightly off the floor.
- Hold for 5–10 seconds, working up to 30 seconds over time.
- Switch legs. Repeat 3 times per side.

### 4. Marching in Place

- Holding onto a stable surface, lift your knees one at a time as if marching.
- Aim for 20–30 seconds, keeping your posture tall rather than leaning back.
- This builds the hip strength and coordination used to clear your foot over curbs and thresholds.

### 5. Sit-to-Stand Practice

- From a sturdy chair with arms, practice standing up and sitting back down with control, using your hands as little as possible.
- Repeat 8–10 times. This is one of the best overall exercises for fall prevention.

**Building consistency:** aim for these exercises most days of the week rather than one long session. Short, frequent practice builds balance more reliably than occasional longer workouts.

**Talk to your PT if:** you feel unsteady even with support, these exercises feel too easy and you're ready to progress, or you've had a recent fall — a physical therapist can tailor a program to your specific needs.