

## Exercises to Prevent Falls



Certain types of exercises may help make you less likely to fall.

Try the ones below or do other exercises that your healthcare provider suggests.

Depending on your health, you may need to start slowly. Don't let that stop you. Even small amounts of exercise can help you. Talk with your healthcare provider before starting any exercise program.

### Improve balance

Many types of exercise can help improve balance. Tai chi and yoga are good examples. Here's another one to try. You can do it anytime and almost anywhere.

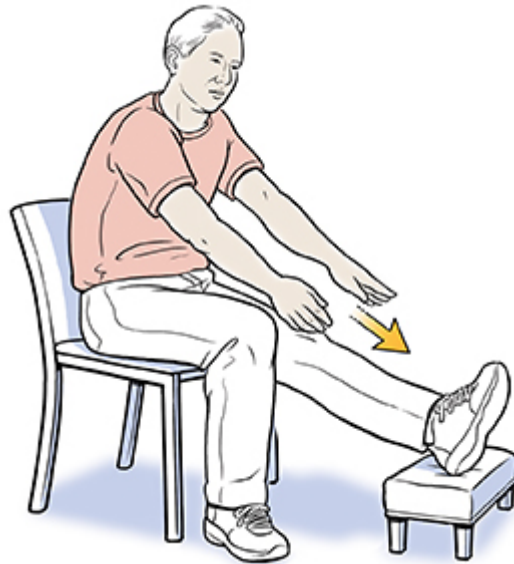
- Stand next to a counter or solid support.
- Push yourself up onto your tiptoes.
- Hold for 5 seconds. If you start to lose your balance, hold on to the counter.
- Rest and repeat 5 times. Work up to holding for 20 to 30 seconds, if you can.



**Increase flexibility**

Being more flexible makes it easier for you to move around safely. Try exercises like the seated hamstring stretch.

- Sit in a chair and put one foot on a stool.
- Straighten your leg and reach with both hands down either side of your leg. Reach as far down your leg as you can.
- Hold for about 20 seconds.
- Go back to the starting position. Then repeat 5 times. Switch legs.



### **Build strength**

Resistance exercises help build strength. You can do them without equipment. Or you can use weights, elastic bands, or special machines. One such exercise is called the biceps curl. You can hold a 1-pound weight or even a can of soup. Do this exercise at least 3 times a week. Strive for every day.

- Sit up straight in a chair.
- Keep your elbow close to your body and your wrist straight.
- Bend your arm, moving your hand up to your shoulder. Then slowly lower your arm.
- Repeat 5 times. Switch to the other arm.



## Build your staying power

Aerobic exercises make your heart and lungs stronger so you can keep moving longer. Walking and swimming are 2 of the best types of exercises you can do. Using a stationary bike is great, too. Find an aerobic exercise that you enjoy. Start slowly and build up. Even 5 minutes is helpful. Aim for a goal of 30 minutes, at least 3 times a week. You don't have to do 30 minutes in 1 session. Break it up and walk a little throughout the day.

## Starting out safely and slowly

- Start easy. Slowly work up to doing more.
- Talk with your healthcare provider about the best exercises for you.
- Call senior centers or health clubs about exercise programs.
- If needed, have a family member watch you walk every so often to check your stability.
- Exercise with a friend. Choose an activity you both enjoy.
- Be sure to gently warm up and cool down.
- Drink fluids, such as water, to stay hydrated. If your provider recommended that you limit fluids, ask them how much is OK to drink while exercising.
- Consider tai chi or yoga to strengthen your balance.

- Try exercises that you can do anytime, anywhere. Here are 2 examples. Have someone with you when you first try these:
  - Practice walking by placing one foot right in front of the other.
  - Stand up and sit down 10 times. Repeat this throughout the day.

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