

Improving Balance and Strength

7 Exercises to Help Prevent Falls



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caregiver resource center

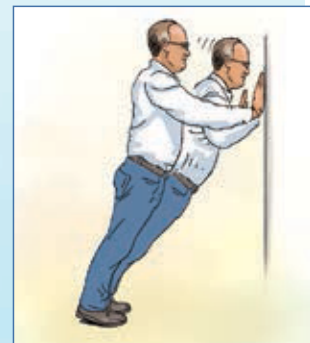
8421 Auburn Blvd., Suite 265

Citrus Heights, CA 95610

916-728-9333

www.deloro.org

As an older adult, you may know that a fall can cause life-changing injuries. But exercise can reduce your risk of falls. These simple exercises can improve your strength and balance and help you to stay healthy, active and independent.



Improving Balance

For each exercise, find a sturdy support to hold. Repeat each exercise 10 times.

1. Heel lifts

- Stand with both feet flat on the ground.
- Raise your heels and stand on your tiptoes.
- Hold for a second and then slowly lower your heels back to the floor.



2. Toe lifts

- Start with both feet flat on the ground.
- Raise your toes into the air until your weight is on your heels.
- Hold for a second and then slowly lower your toes.



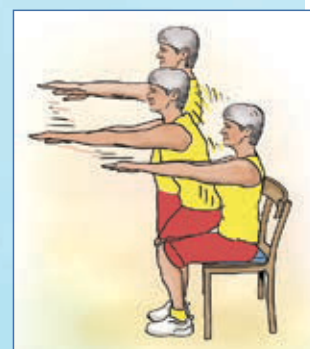
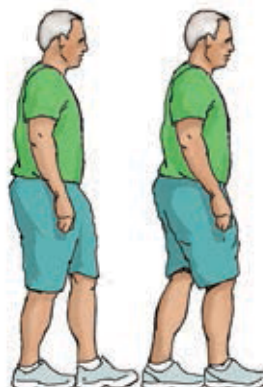
3. Leg lifts

- Stand up straight and lift one leg off the ground.
- After 10 seconds, lower your leg.
- Switch sides and lift opposite leg.



4. Heel-to-toe walk

- Slowly walk forward. Place the heel of one foot just in front of the toes of your other foot.
- To stay balanced, focus on a spot ahead of you and walk near a support, like a counter or a wall.
- Repeat for 20 steps.



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Improving Strength

Repeat each exercise 10 times.

1. Backward leg lifts

- Stand up straight with your feet shoulder-width apart.
- Lift one leg straight behind you and then slowly lower it back down.



2. Sit to stand

- Sit up straight in a sturdy chair and place both feet flat on the floor, hip-width apart.
- Stand up using only your legs. Hold your arms out in front of you. Look forward, not down.
- Slowly sit down again.



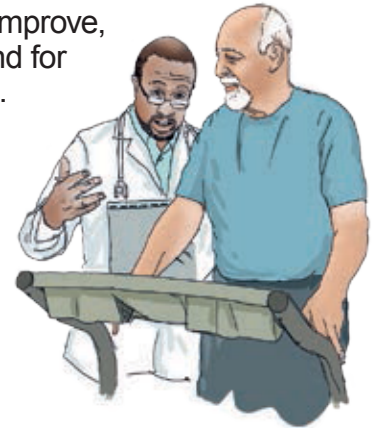
3. Wall push-ups

- Place your hands on a wall at chest height, fingers up.
- Keep your back straight and slowly bend your elbows to bring your body toward the wall.
- Straighten your arms to push yourself upright, like a standing push-up.



Exercise Tips

- ✓ Try to do these exercises at least twice a week. As you improve, exercise more often and for a longer period of time.
- ✓ Talk to a health care provider before you begin an exercise routine.
- ✓ If you feel pain or dizziness while exercising, stop **immediately**.



Stay Active

- ✓ In addition to improving your strength and balance, exercise boosts your stamina, mood and overall health.
- ✓ Take walks in your neighborhood. Use a walker or cane if you need to.
- ✓ Water exercise, yoga and tai chi are also good exercises.



For more information on improving balance and strength visit www.nihseniorhealth.gov