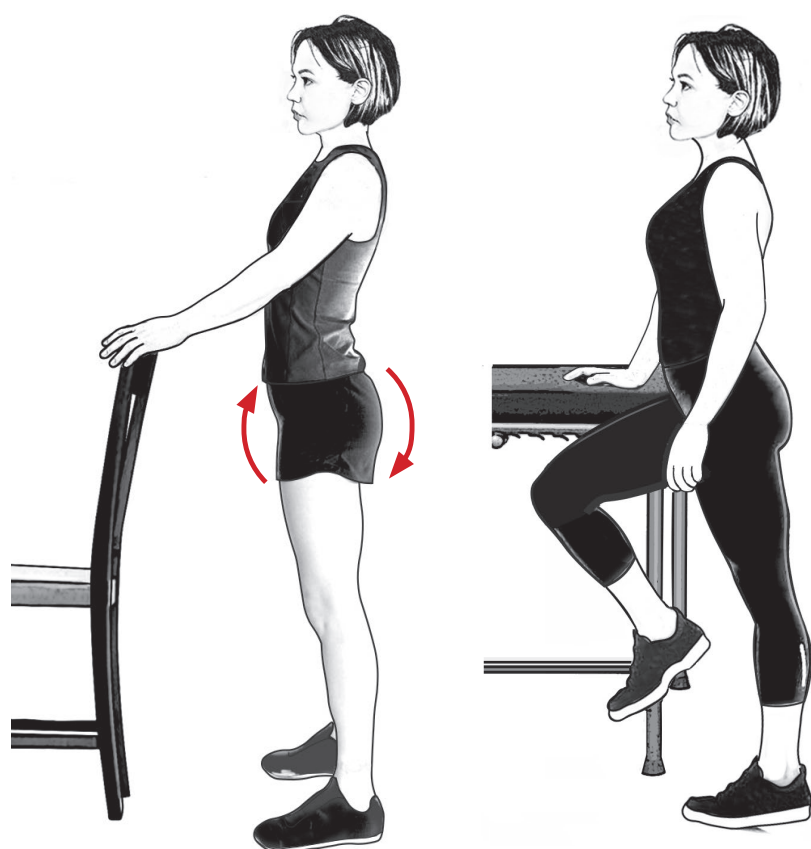


Your Balance Exercise Programme



An exercise programme

..... to help you take
control of your balance,
to reduce your risk of falls
and improve your quality
of life.

Royal Northern Infirmary Physiotherapy Department
Single point of Access number: 01463 888333

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Physical Activity Guidelines for Older Adults

In a week you should aim to achieve:

- 150 minutes of moderate activity
- Balance at least twice per week
- Strengthening twice per week
- Reducing time spent sitting

Safety Advice:

For the exercises to be challenging enough, you will feel unsteady. This should improve as your progress. To stay safe:

- Use a supporting surface that is sturdy and stable. Such as a kitchen counter top.
- Wear comfortable clothes and supportive footwear.
- Prepare a space and have a glass of water ready for afterwards.
- Consider completing the exercises with a chair near-by, for support if required.
- You might also wish to keep a mobile phone near-by.

Stop and contact your doctor if you experience:

- Chest pain
- Dizziness
- Severe shortness of breath

Exercise One

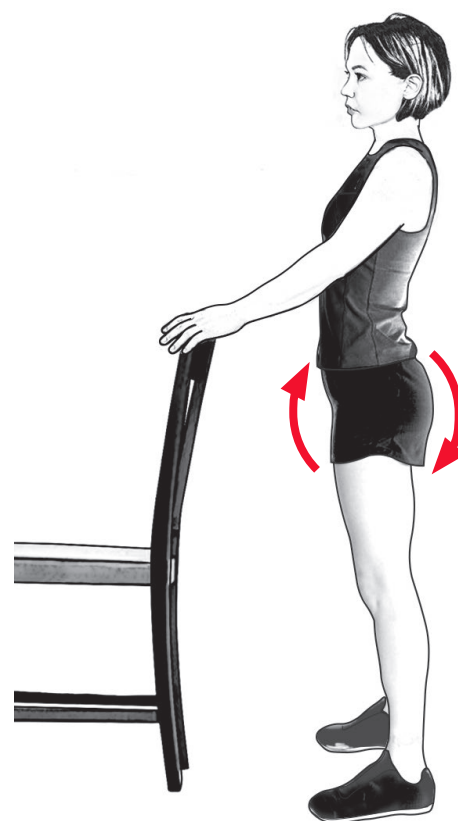
Standing Unsupported

- Stand with your hands on a supporting surface.
- Keep your feet comfortably apart.
- Tighten your stomach and buttocks muscles.
- Maintain your balance.
- Repeat regularly and increase the time.

To make harder: Reduce your hand support to light finger touch... then one hand... then no hands!

Why this exercise is important:

it will help you to keep your balance while reaching or using your hands for daily tasks.



Standing Unsupported Progression

- Progress when you can stand unsupported comfortably
- Raise up one arm to shoulder height.
- Repeat with the other arm.
- Repeat up to 20 times.
- Maintain your balance.

To make harder: Turn your head side to side. Progress to combining arm raises with head turns.

Why this exercise is important:

to help you maintain good balance, while reaching and looking around.



Exercise Two

Single Leg Stance

- Begin standing with your hands on a supporting surface.
- Lift one foot off the ground and keep your body tall.
- Maintain your balance for 10 -15 seconds.
- Swap legs and repeat 3 times on each side.

To make harder: Reduce to one hand support. Then no hand support when you feel able.

Why this exercise is important:

You stand on one leg every time you take a step forward. Therefore, this exercise will improve your balance with walking.



Single Leg Stance Progression

- Progress when you can stand on one leg with no support for 10 seconds.
- Stand on one leg.
- Draw the alphabet in the air with your free leg.
- Maintain your balance.
- Repeat standing on the other leg.

To make harder: Standing on one leg, hold your balance and turn your head from side to side.

Why this exercise is important:

You stand on one leg when you walk up and downstairs. Don't underestimate the importance of the single leg stand!



Exercise Three

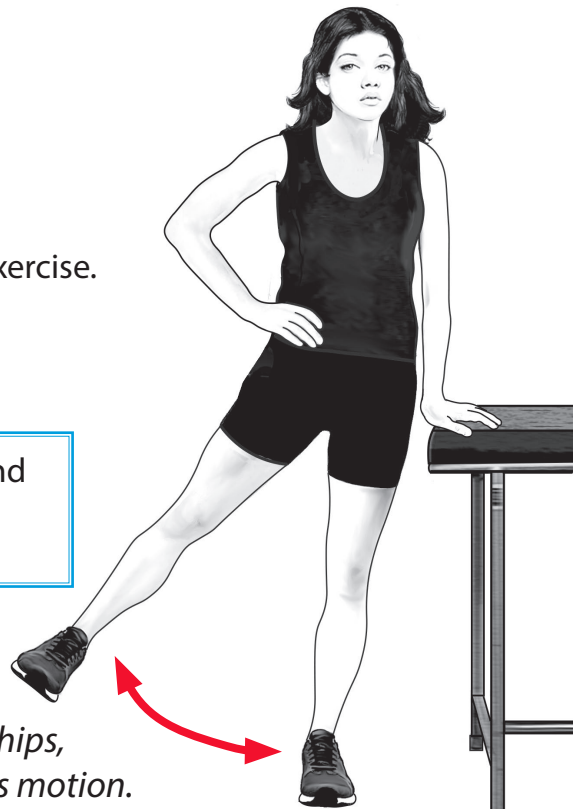
Hip Abduction in Standing

- Stand tall and take support of a secure surface.
- Lift your leg up sideways and bring it back.
- Keep your upper body straight throughout the exercise.
- Repeat 10 times. Twice. Each side.

To make harder: Take a step out to the side, and back in. When safe, you can progress to reducing your hand support.

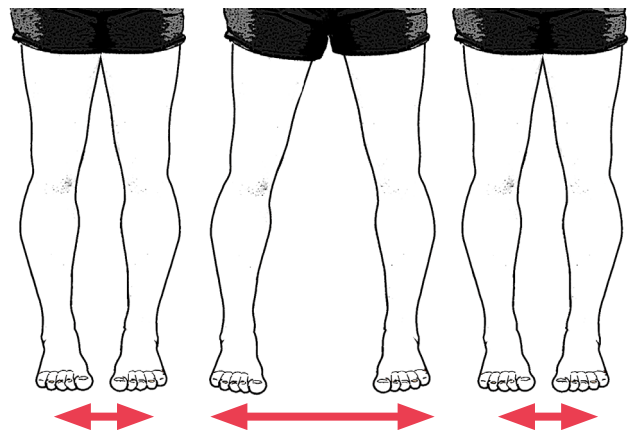
Why this exercise is important:

this increases the strength and stability of your hips, to improve your balance ability during sideways motion.



Side Stepping: Progression

- Hold onto a secure surface.
- Take side steps along the counter, as far as the space allows.
- With your upper body, try to maintain an upright posture.
- Repeat 8 - 10 lengths.



To make harder: Reduce your hand support.

Try with one hand or hover your hands over the kitchen counter, until you feel more confident to progress.

Why this exercise is important:

carrying out regular side stepping exercises can reduced the risk of falls by up to 50%

Exercise Four

Turning

- Stand at the supporting surface.
- Begin marching on the spot to warm up.
- Start by turning 90 degrees to your left and then back to the starting position.
- Turn 90 degrees to your right and back.

To make harder: Once you feel confident with turning, begin turning 180 degrees left then right.

Why this exercise is important:

For functional mobility, it is important to be able to turn around on the spot.



Figure of 8

- Progress to walking in a figure of eight when you have comfortably achieved the above exercise.
- Carry this out near your supporting surface.
- Only perform this exercise if you feel safe to do so.
- Repeat 10 times.



To make harder: Increase your speed, or increase your stride length.

Why this exercise is important:

This exercise challenges your balance responses to reduce your risk of falls.

Further Information:

www.nhsinform.scot/healthy-living/preventingfalls
www.fallsassistant.org.uk

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