



Balance Matters



KNOW THE FACTS:

- **FALLS ARE PREVENTABLE!**

STUDIES INDICATE LEADING RISK FACTORS ARE:

- Problems with walking and balance
- Weakness
- Visual deficits
- Taking four or more medications or any psychoactive medications
- Environmental factors including home safety.

IN ADDITION TO EXERCISING YOU CAN:

- Have your vision and hearing tested.
- Have your pharmacist evaluate your medications. Combining medications can affect your coordination and balance.
- Limit the amount of alcohol you drink.
- Stand up slowly after eating or lying down. Getting up too quickly can cause your blood pressure to drop, causing dizziness.
- Use a cane, walking stick, or walker.
- Wear rubber-soled, low-heeled shoes that fully support your feet.
- Hold the handrails when you use the stairs.
- Don't stand on a chair or ladder to reach something that's too high—use a "reach stick" instead.

BE PROACTIVE
MAKE YOUR HOME SAFER:

- Clear away area rugs
- Install bathroom bars
- Improve lighting
- Keep a flashlight by your bed
- Add reflective tape to outside steps
- Clear clutter off of floor and hallways

Getting Started:

Do at least 30 minutes of activity that increases your breathing rate daily.

- Endurance activity builds your energy or “staying power.” You don’t have to be active for 30 minutes all at once. Ten minutes at a time is fine.

How hard do you need to push yourself?

- If you can talk without any trouble, you are not working hard enough. If you can’t talk at all, you are working too hard.

Aerobic endurance activities include:

- Stationary bike riding, walking at a quick pace, marching in place, stair climbing, or any combination.

Strength exercises build muscles.

- When you have strong muscles, you can remain independent.
- You are less likely to fall when your leg and hip muscles are strong.
- You can get up from a chair and off the floor by yourself.

Improve your balance.

- Following the exercises outlined in this book will help you with your strength and balance.

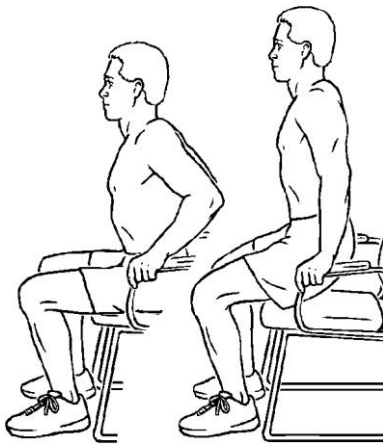
Stretch

- Moving more freely will make it easier for you to reach down to tie your shoes or look over your shoulder when you drive.

Who Should Exercise?

Almost anyone, at any age, can do some type of physical activity. You can still exercise even if you have a chronic condition such as heart disease or diabetes. In fact, physical activity will most likely help your condition. Initiating an exercise program under the guidance of a physical therapist will help ensure a balanced and safe program. Check with your doctor if you experience or have any of the following:

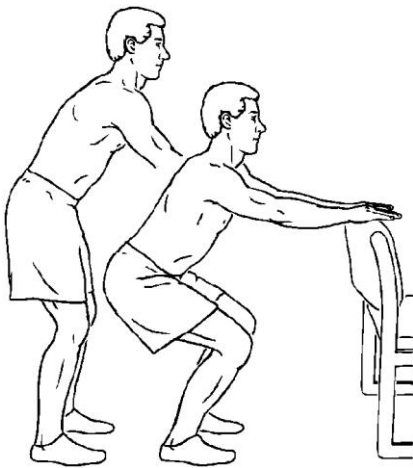
- Dizziness or shortness of breath
- Erratic, racing, or fluttering heart beat
- Blood clots
- An infection or fever
- Unplanned weight loss
- Foot or ankle sores that won't heal
- Joint swelling
- A bleeding or detached retina or recent eye surgery
- A hernia



Chair Stand

With hands on armrests, push up from chair. Return to sitting slowly.

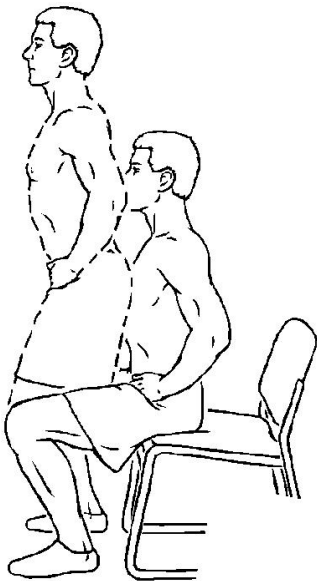
Repeat 10 times, 3 sets.



Squat

Keep feet flat on floor, shoulder width apart, squat approximately 45 degrees. Do not let your knees fall to the inside; keep them over your middle toe. Use support as necessary.

Repeat 10 times 3 sets.



Sit to Stand

Level One:

Sit on a chair with your feet flat on the floor. Stand upright without using your hands and extend your knees fully.

Pull up with your abdominals as you stand. Sit slowly back down with good control 10 times.

Level Two:

Raise your arms over your head as you stand. Sit down slowly with good control.

Repeat 10 times, 2 Sets

Marching



Level One:

March in place next to counter top.
Repeat 10 times 3 sets.

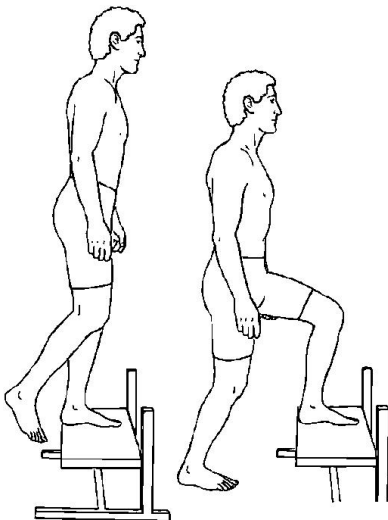
Level Two:

March with high knees while moving down hallway.

Level Three:

March while moving, punching arms overhead

Step-Up/ Step Down

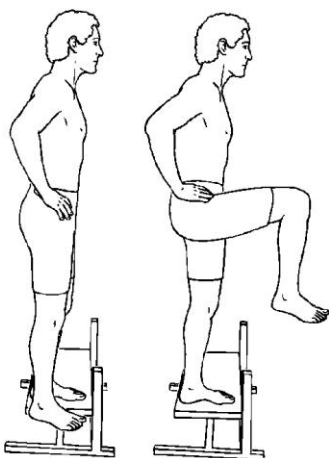


Level One:

Alternate tap steps, R then L for one minute.
Rest, then repeat 2 more times.

Level Two:

Step up a step or curb with L leg, follow with R leg, then step down with L leg, and then down with R leg. Keep torso tall and tighten your bum as you step up Repeat leading with your R leg. Try to do exercise for 2 minutes, rest, then repeat

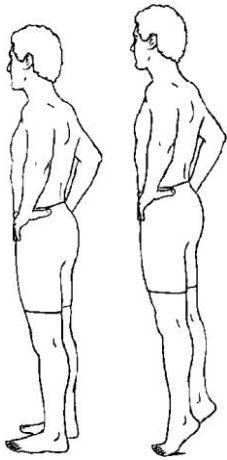


Step Up with Knee Raise

Level Three:

Step up with your L leg and raise your R knee. Step down with your R leg and repeat 20 times. Change legs and repeat another 20. Progress by reaching your arms over head as you step up.

Heel Raise



Level One:

Hold on to counter top for balance. Rise up on the balls of your feet without pushing on the counter.

Repeat 10 times. Do 3 sets.

Level Two:

Do exercise without holding on to counter.

Level Three:

Increase repetitions to 15 times 3.



Toe Raise

Level One:

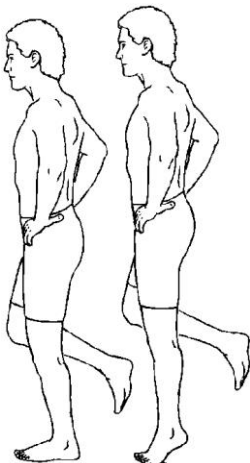
Hold onto counter. Rock back on heels. Try to stand as straight as possible with toes off of the ground. Repeat 10 times, 3 sets.

Level Two:

Do exercise without holding counter.

Level Three:

Walk on heels for one minute, 3 times.

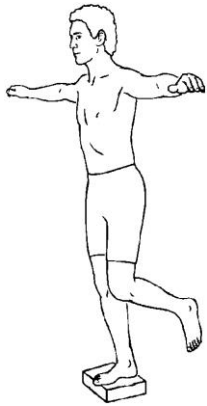


One-Legged Heel Raise

Level Three:

Balance on one foot and lift your heel off ground as high as possible without rolling to outside of foot. Use counter top for balance as necessary. Repeat as many times as you can, alternating feet.

Single Leg Balance



Level One:

Balance on one leg with finger- tip support only. Hold 30 seconds, repeat 3 times per leg.

Level Two:

Balance on one leg on a pillow or cushion. Hold as long as you can with counter nearby.

Repeat 3 times

Level Three:

Perform above exercises with eyes closed.



3-Way Toe Tap

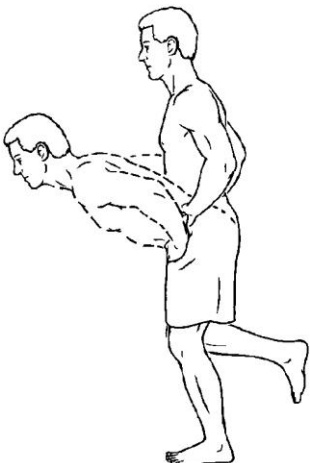
Level One:

Hold on to counter. Stand on R leg. Move L leg forward, to the side, then to the back.

Repeat 10 times per leg,

Level Two:

Repeat above exercise with hands on hips.



Balance with Forward Lean

Level Two

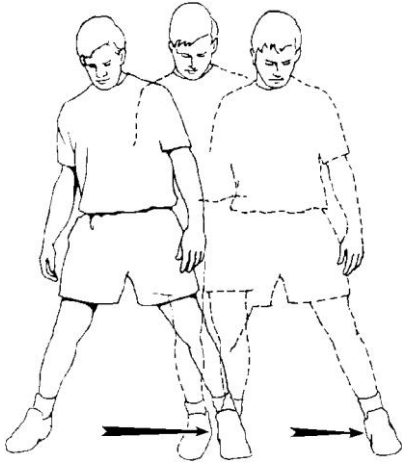
Stand on your R leg, lean forward from waist with Your hands on your hips. Alternate legs.

Repeat 10 times, 2 sets.

Level Three:

Reach as far as you can with one hand as you Lean forward. Mark your progress on the wall.

Side Stepping



Level One:

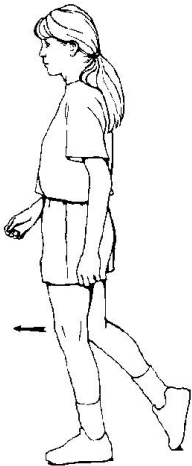
Side step to the R four times, then back to the L. Stand tall. Repeat 10 times.

Level Two:

Step Cross Step: Cross R leg in front of L leg, then R behind L leg four times, and then return leading with L leg.

Repeat 10 times.

Varied Gait



Level One:

Walk slowly for 10 yards followed by walking quickly for 10 yards. Stand tall and swing arms as you walk.

Repeat 10 times.

Level Two:

Walk at a normal gait speed for 10 yards looking L and then R. Try to walk straight and not deviate.

Repeat 3-5 times.

Figure 8 Walk

Level Two:

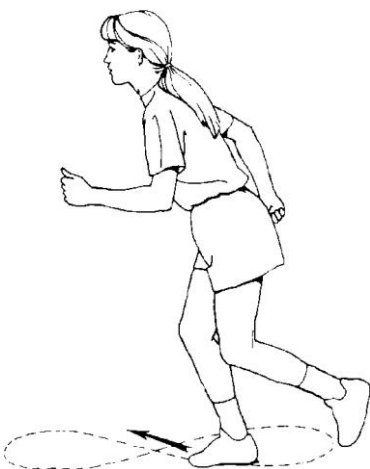
In a large area, walk in a figure-eight pattern.

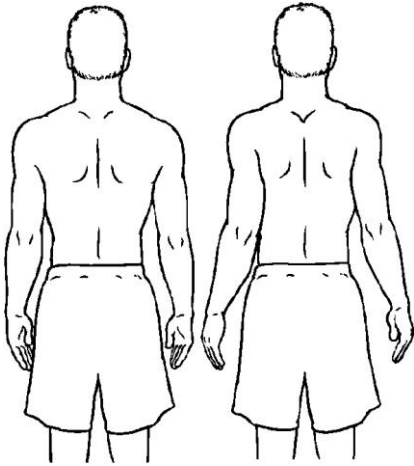
Repeat 3 times.

Level Three:

Progressively make the pattern smaller and smaller. Stop if you get dizzy or lose your balance.

Repeat 3 times.

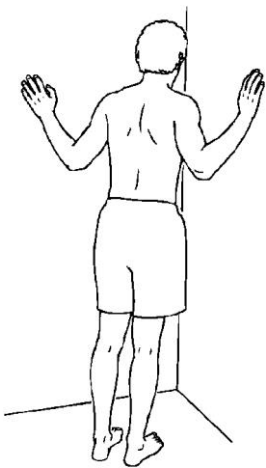




ALIGNING YOUR POSTURE

With your arms at your sides, reach down and rotate arms so palms go forward. Hold abdominals in to prevent your back from arching. You should feel the stretch in your chest and a tightening of your muscles in your lower shoulder blades.

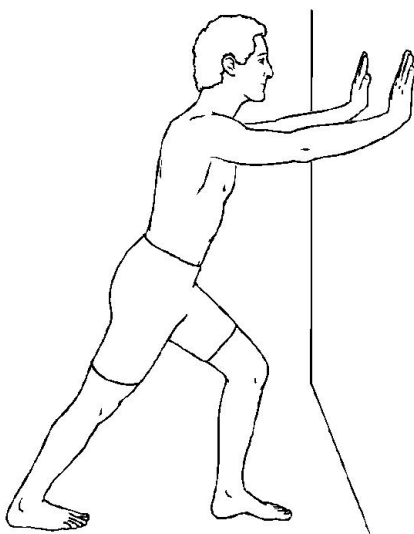
Hold 15-30 seconds, 3-4 times a day.



Corner Stretch

Stand in a corner with your hands at shoulder level, lean forward without arching your back until a comfortable stretch is felt across your chest.

Hold 15- 30 seconds, 3 times a day.



Calf Stretch

Stand with right foot back, leg straight, forward knee bent. Keep your heel on the floor and lean into the wall until a stretch is felt in your calf.

Hold for 45 seconds.

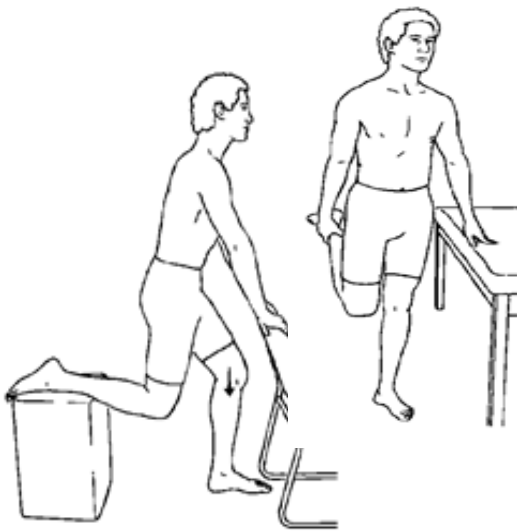
Repeat 2 times per leg, 2 times a day



Hip Flexor Stretch

Stand up straight and place your L foot on a step or chair. Extend your R leg behind you with your foot facing forward. Tuck your bum until you feel a stretch in front of your upper R thigh. Do not arch your back.

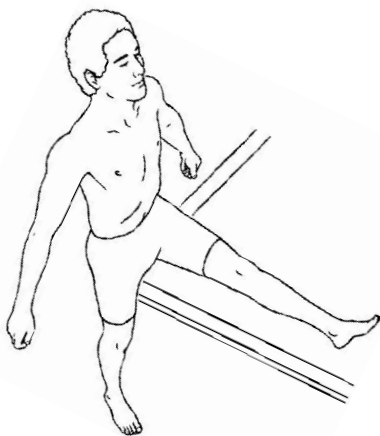
Hold for 30-45 seconds, 2 times per leg.



Quadriceps Stretch

Stand tall, hold onto a counter top or chair and bring your R ankle close to your bum without arching your back. Your knees should be aligned and you should feel the stretch in front of your R thigh.

Alternatively, place foot on chair, hold counter top and tuck your pelvis until you feel a stretch in your thigh. Hold 30-45 seconds, 2 times per leg.



Hamstring Stretch

Place your leg on your bed or table so you feel a gentle stretch in the back of your leg. Try to keep your back and leg straight. Lean forward until you feel a slight stretch. Hold 30-45 seconds. 2 times per leg.

You can also do this stretch lying down using a strap or towel to support your leg. Do not stress your neck.

**Avoid doing this if you have sciatica.



Safety Tips:

- Start slowly, especially if you haven't been active for a long time.
- Don't hold your breath during strength exercise. Holding your breath can cause an increase in your blood pressure.
- Unless your doctor has asked you to limit fluids, be sure to drink plenty of water when you are doing activities.
- Exercise should not hurt or make you feel overly tired. In fact, being active will probably make you feel better
- Follow up on the environmental and home safety check list.

Using Assistive Devices Properly:

Cane

- When using a cane, always hold it in the opposite hand of your weaker side.
- Canes help with balance.
- Canes don't make you look old, they make you look smart!

Walking Sticks or Trekking Poles

- Walking sticks are great for hiking but can be used anywhere. They enhance stability and offer support on all types of terrain.

Walker

- Keep your walker within comfortable arms distance with elbows slightly bent. Stand tall and avoid walking bent over.
- Place walker firmly on ground with all four legs in contact with the floor.
- Don't stand up using only the walker for support. Always have one hand on the walker and one hand on your chair when standing up.
- Use a "walker bag" to carry your objects.

DO

- Stretch and move as often as possible. When watching television, stand up or do some of your sitting exercises during commercials.
- Make sure your house is well-lit.
- Focus on a far object when you walk and practice slowly turning your head from side to side while maintaining good walking balance. (This will help your visual balance).
- Do the exercises daily, and be patient. You may not see results right away but the benefit will far outweigh the effort put in.

DO NOT

- Do not get up too quickly (getting up quickly can cause dizziness).
- Do not go out into bright sunlight from a dark area without sunglasses. (Glare can affect your balance) Take sunglasses off when entering a building.
- Do not push yourself if you feel tired.
- Do not alter medication dosage without your MD direction. If you adjust your meds and begin feeling dizzy, you need to contact your doctor immediately.

OPTM Balance and Fall Prevention Class

Participant Agreement

I, _____ agree to participate in OPTM Balance and Fall Prevention Program.

I have been informed that the sessions will include light to moderate exercise including stretching, strengthening, balance and range of motion exercises. I take full responsibility for my participation in these exercises. I agree to work within my own comfort zone and agree to stop exercising if I feel any pain or discomfort and will let one of the instructors know.

I agree to contact my physician regarding the exercises I will be doing as part of the OPTM Balance and Fall Prevention Program if I have any cardiac issues, previous episodes of dizziness or other medical concerns.

_____ I received permission to engage in the exercises.

_____ I was advised to take the following precautions:

Signature of Participant

Printed Name

Date