



AECC University College

Clinical
& Rehabilitation
Services

Fall Proof

Your guide to balance & falls prevention



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An introduction

The purpose of this guide is to provide valuable information and practical strategies to help you prevent falls and improve your balance.

Importance of falls prevention for older adults

Falls can have serious consequences affecting your independence and overall well-being. This guide aims to empower you with knowledge and tools to increase your confidence and minimise your risk of having a fall.



Understanding balance

Balance is crucial for well-being and fall prevention. It's more than just standing upright; it involves key aspects essential for daily life.



Static Balance

Maintaining a stable posture, like standing upright, is essential for daily activities.

Dynamic Balance

Dynamic balance allows you to move without falling, enabling activities like walking, climbing stairs, and other motions.

Anticipatory Balance

Preparing for balance disturbances, like bracing yourself on a moving train, enhances adaptability in changing environments.

Reactive Balance

Regaining balance after destabilisation, such as being pushed in a crowd or stumbling, is crucial for fall prevention and confidence in daily activities.

Enhancing various aspects of your balance is crucial for overall well-being. By addressing each element, you can lead a more active and fulfilling life while minimising the risk of falls.

Engaging in balance-improving activities not only reduces fall risk but also enhances overall strength and bone health. Let's now explore practical strategies to boost these different balance facets in the upcoming sections.

Tips for fall prevention

Identifying potential risk factors

Understanding and addressing potential risk factors can create a safer environment, reducing the likelihood of falls. Ensure confidence in daily activities with these tips.

Lighting

Use brighter bulbs in dimly lit areas. Avoid walking in the dark at night; consider installing sensor lights or switching on lights for greater visibility and a safer environment.

Slippers and foot health

Choose supportive shoes, avoiding poorly fitting shoes or slippers. Maintain foot health for improved balance and mobility. Consider a podiatrist for foot health concerns.

Eye sight

Schedule regular eye tests, use recommended glasses or contacts for optimised vision, and reduce the risk of falls.

Obstacles or hazards

Create a safer environment by clearing clutter, securing loose rugs, and rearranging spaces for convenience. Use non-slip mats in slippery areas like the bathroom and consider supportive rails.

Multiple medications

Regularly review medications with your GP to identify potential side effects impacting balance and increasing fall risk.

Improving balance

By staying active and incorporating specific activities into your routine, you can develop strength, flexibility, and stability. Let's take a look at some key aspects, providing a range of exercises for confidence and an active lifestyle.

Improving general activity

Maintain good balance by staying active and minimising sedentary behavior. Add more movement to your daily routine to enhance overall balance and mobility.

Specific activities for improvement

Engage in activities like yoga, tai chi, strengthening and balance classes, housework, gardening, golf, and bowls. These activities promote strength, flexibility, and balance.

Key Balance Exercises

Incorporate balance exercises into your daily routine to significantly enhance stability. Aim for balance without relying heavily on support. If needed, hold onto a sturdy object but lighten your grip over time.

Strength Exercises

Boost your balance by integrating strength exercises into your routine. Whether using your body weight or incorporating weights/resistance bands, the benefits are substantial. Strengthening muscles improves stability, posture, and coordination. Start with manageable exercises, progressing gradually as your strength increases.

Exercising with Other People

Consider joining a local class to enhance your balance with others. Exercising in a group can offer extra motivation and support, making progress more enjoyable. Plus, instructors may provide professional guidance for maximum benefit.



7 Key balance exercises to try



Aim to complete these 2-3 times a week. Or try to fit a little in each day, for example while you are waiting for the kettle to boil.



1

Heel Raises

Stand upright and slowly raise your heels off the ground. This helps strengthen your calf muscles and improve balance.



2

Sit to Stand or Squat

Practice going from a seated position to standing or squatting and then returning to a seated position. This exercise improves leg strength and balance.



3

Standing with Feet Hip Width Apart, Turning Slowly Each Side

Stand with your feet hip-width apart and turn slowly to look over your shoulder. Use your arms to help stretch further at the end. This exercise aims to improve anticipatory balance.



4

Floor Clock

Imagine a clock on the floor. Step out to different numbers on the "clock" and return to the centre. Stretch your foot as far as you can, gradually working up to a lunge. Try to speed up the exercise to enhance your balance and coordination.



5

Grapevine

Stand with arms at sides, feet together. Cross one leg over the other, stepping to one side. Moving in the same direction, uncross your legs and come back to standing. Continue in the same way, then repeat in the opposite direction. This helps with preventing sideways falls.

These exercises are designed to help you maintain and improve your balance.

When completing balance exercises, take a step if you need to stabilise yourself. This helps practise your balance recovery. Start with support if necessary, and as you gain confidence, rely on it less to challenge yourself further.

Always consult with a healthcare provider before starting any new exercise routine, especially if you have underlying health conditions.

Tailor Exercises for Everyday Tasks

If you find certain daily activities challenging, it's an opportunity for targeted improvement!

You can safely modify exercises to practice activities that might be difficult. For example, if emptying your dishwasher feels challenging, start with squats, then practice bending to pick up a light object, gradually incorporating the dishwasher task into your routine. Consider discussing with a healthcare professional for personalised guidance.

What to do if you fall



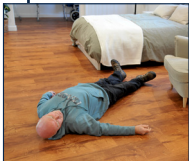
If you find yourself on the floor after a fall, it's essential to take it step by step to get back on your feet safely.

Follow these instructions and tips:

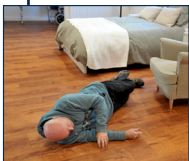
1 Prepare



Do not attempt to get up quickly. If you are hurt or in pain, call for help using Lifeline or a telephone to alert someone to your situation. Make sure people do not try to lift you off the floor. This could result in further injury to yourself or your helpers.

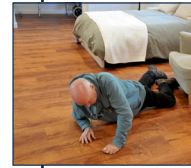


Look for something sturdy nearby, such as a piece of furniture, to assist in the process. Or ask someone to move a chair near you, if you have assistance.

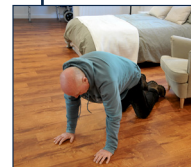


Roll onto your side, turning in this order: your head, shoulders, hips, and then your leg. This will help you prepare for the next steps.

2 Rise



Push your upper body up slowly. Lift your head, pause, and steady yourself.

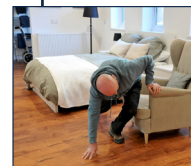


Rise onto your hands and knees gradually. Crawl to something sturdy you can hold onto for support.

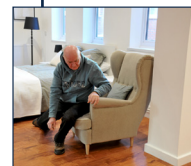


Slide one foot forward until it's flat on the floor (preferably the leg closest to your chair). Keep the other leg bent with your knee on the floor.

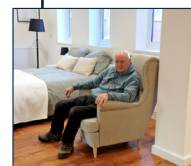
3 Sit



Staying close to the side of chair use your back leg to push up and rise slowly.



As you rise turn your body so that you can sit in the chair.



Sit for a few minutes before attempting any further activities.

When getting up from the floor, it's important to be sideways in relation to the chair, rather than facing the chair head-on.

Congratulations on taking the first step towards better balance and falls prevention

We hope this guide will be a valuable resource on your path to staying steady and improving your wellbeing. Remember, by taking these steps, you are making an important investment in your overall health.

Preventative action is the key to staying active and independent. We encourage you to integrate the knowledge and exercises provided in this guide into your daily routine.



Here's a quick summary of the key points we've discussed

Understanding Balance

We explored the different facets of balance, including static, dynamic, anticipatory, and reactive balance, and how they play a vital role in your daily life.

Improving Overall Balance

You've been introduced to specific activities and balance exercises to enhance your strength, flexibility, and balance, paving the way for a more active lifestyle.

Tips for Fall Prevention

You now know how to identify potential risk factors, maintain good eye health, and choose the right footwear to reduce the risk of falls. Regular medication reviews and safe home modifications have been highlighted as key measures.

What to Do if You Fall

We provided you with a step-by-step guide on getting up from the floor safely after a fall, ensuring that you remain in control and confident in such situations.

For further support with balance and falls prevention you may wish to seek regular fitness classes and/or exercise programmes. Speak to us today about specialist support to improve your balance and lower your risk of falls.

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This guide was produced by leading
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AECC University College

Clinical
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“With high-level expertise in clinical care and rehabilitation,
we help people return to everyday life faster and in a more manageable way.”

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