

Strength and Balance Exercises

If you have medical problems or if you have been inactive and want to exercise vigorously, check with your doctor before beginning a physical activity program. Your doctor can help you find a program suited to your needs and physical condition. If you're at high risk of heart disease, your doctor may conduct an [exercise stress test](#) to identify any potential problems.



Arm Raise

Purpose: Strengthen shoulder muscles.

Starting Position: Sit tall with your feet flat on the floor, shoulder-width apart.

Action:

- Hold hand weights (one to two pounds to start) with your arms straight down at your sides and your palms facing inward. Your shoulders should be down (not lifted toward your ears).
- Keeping a slight bend in your elbows, lift both arms to the sides until they are parallel to the ground. Keep your wrists straight. Take about three seconds to lift your arms only to shoulder level.
- Hold for one second. Then, slowly lower your arms so that they are straight down by your sides again. Take about three seconds to lower your arms.

Pause and repeat.



Triceps Extension

Purpose: Strengthen the triceps muscles (back of the upper arm).

Starting Position: Sit tall with your feet flat on the floor, shoulder-width apart.

Action:

- Hold a hand weight (one to two pounds) in your left hand and raise your left arm up as far as you can. Bend your arm so your elbow is pointing toward the ceiling, with your hand and the weight behind you. Support your left arm by holding it just below the elbow with your right hand.
- Slowly (about three seconds) straighten your left arm so your left hand is reaching toward the ceiling.
- Hold for one second. Then, slowly (about three seconds) bend your elbow to lower the weight behind you. Continue using your right hand to support your left arm throughout the exercise.
- Pause, then straighten and lower your arm again.
- Complete one set, then put the weight in your right hand and work your right arm.

Repeat: 6 to 8 times.



Walking Heel-to-Toe

Purpose: Improve balance.

Starting Position: Stand close to a wall, chair or table for balance.

Action:

- Walk by placing the heel of one foot just in front of the toes of the other foot. Your heel and toes should touch or almost touch.
- Take at least six heel-to-toe steps.

Repeat: 6 to 8 times with each arm.



Leg Extensions

Purpose: Strengthen the thigh and leg muscles.

Starting Position: Sit tall with your feet flat on floor, shoulder-width apart. You may hold onto the sides of your seat for support.

Action:

- Lift one leg off the floor until your knee is straight. Your leg should be slightly lifted off of the chair.
- Hold for a few seconds.
- Return to the starting position with both feet on the floor.
- Repeat on the other side.

Repeat: 6 to 8 times on each side.



Side Leg Raise

Purpose: Strengthen hip and thigh muscles.

Starting Position: Stand behind a straight-backed chair, with both hands on the back of the chair for balance. Place your feet slightly apart. Keep your upper body straight.



Plantar Flex

Purpose: Strengthen ankle and calf muscles.

Starting Position: Stand behind a straight-backed chair, with both hands on the back of the chair for balance. Place your feet slightly apart. Keep your upper body straight.

Action:

Action:

- Slowly (taking about three seconds) lift your right leg out to the side until your feet are 12 to 18 inches apart. Keep your back and legs straight, and your toes pointing forward.
- Hold for one second. Then, slowly (about three seconds) lower your leg back to the starting position.

- Lift both heels and stand as high up on tiptoe as you can.
- Hold for one second.
- Return to starting position. Repeat.

Repeat: 6 to 8 times; rest a minute, then do another set of 6 to 8.

Note: As you become stronger, you can do this exercise standing on one leg at a time. Work your way up to 15 repetitions per set.

Repeat: 6 to 8 times with each leg.

**Hamstring Curl**

Purpose: Stretch quadriceps muscles on front of thigh. Strengthen hamstring muscles on back of thigh.

Starting position:

Stand behind a straight-backed chair, with both hands on the back of the chair for balance. Place your feet slightly apart. Keep your upper body straight.

Action:

- Shift your weight onto your right leg and slowly bend your left knee, keeping both knees together.
- Lift your left foot behind you about 10 to 12 inches off the floor.
- Slowly return to starting position. Repeat.
- Complete one set, then work the other leg.

Repeat: 6 to 8 times with each leg.

Standing on One Foot

Purpose: Improve balance.

Starting Position: Stand close to a wall, chair or table for balance.

Action:

- Shift your weight onto one leg. Stand on that foot and stretch the other leg out in front of you, a few inches off the floor.
- Stand on one leg for eight counts.
- For an extra workout, flex and point your lifted foot. That is, bend the ankle so your toes point away from you, then flex the ankle to bring the toes back towards you. Flex and point eight times.
- Slowly return your leg to the starting position. Repeat with the other leg.



Bicep Curl

Purpose: Strengthen arm muscles.

Starting Position: Sit tall with your feet flat on the floor, shoulder-width apart.

Action:

- Hold hand weights (one to two pounds to start) with your arms straight down at your sides.
- Hold your hands in the position that's comfortable for you.
- Palms facing forward with your thumbs facing out (as shown).
- Palms facing in toward your body with thumbs facing forward.
- Palms facing out with your thumbs facing back.
- Keeping your elbows close to your sides, slowly bend one arm and lift your hand weight toward your chest. The lift should take about three seconds.
- If your palm is facing forward, lift straight up toward your shoulder, as shown.
- If your palm is facing in, twist your hand so your palm is facing your shoulder as you lift.
- If your palm is facing out, lift to the side instead of the front, toward the outside of your shoulder.
- Keep your wrists straight.
- Hold for one second. Then slowly lower your hand and return to the starting position. Take about three seconds to lower your hand.
- Pause and then repeat with the other arm.

Repeat: 6 to 8 times on each side.

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