

Improve Your Balance in 10 Minutes a Day

Four Square

An important part of the balance system you use every day is your ability to know where certain body parts are in space. Your “internal sense of spatial orientation” is helped by this exercise.

1. Sit on a comfortable mat or towel placed on a firm surface, not on a bed or sofa.
2. Get on all fours with knees and hands 12 inches apart.
3. Keep your back flat and your head “straight.”
4. Lift each arm forward by itself and hold for 5 to 10 seconds.
5. Repeat with each leg, straightening it behind you but keeping it close to the ground.

Lift the opposite arm and leg (right arm, left leg) at the same time and hold for 10 seconds. Then repeat on the opposite side.

Posture Perfect

Posture and strength are important components of your body’s system of maintaining balance. These exercises encourage good posture while enhancing lower extremity strength as well.

1. Stand with your arms resting comfortably with a countertop or sturdy table in front of you and a wall behind you.
2. Stand with your feet comfortably apart. Look straight ahead, keep your back straight and your knees slightly bent.
3. Slowly rise up on your toes.
4. Lower yourself down slowly and repeat 5 times.
5. Keep your posture the same, but this time raise the front part of your foot, lower it slowly, and repeat 5 times.
6. Finally, keep standing as you have been. Lift one leg several inches off the floor and hold for 5 seconds, lower it slowly, and repeat 5 times. Repeat on the opposite foot.

The Eyes Have It

Good balance requires input from the environment to give your body the correct signals. Your eyes tell your body a great deal about the space in which you need to move and balance.

1. Sit in a stable chair with a straight back and arm rests if you need them to get up from a sitting position.
2. Focus your eyes on a target 10 to 20 feet away while you stand up slowly and then sit down again with your eyes **open**.
3. Repeat with your eyes **closed**.
4. Repeat 5 times.

Disclaimer: This information is not intended as a substitute for professional care. Your physician should be consulted for personalized information.