Balance exercises
This booklet contains general information that is not specific to you. If you have any questions after reading this, ask your own physician or health care worker. They know you and can best answer your questions.

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Thank you to Natasha Kyle (volunteer) for her assistance with this document.

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Goals

➢ To maintain or improve standing balance.
➢ To improve tolerance for standing.
➢ To encourage participation in the rehabilitation program.

Instructions

➢ These exercises can be done by a person on their own.
➢ Instructions are provided in this booklet to complement the person's rehabilitation program.
➢ The exercises are performed in either sitting or standing positions.
➢ The number of repetitions per exercise may vary, but progression from 5 up to 10 or 15 is usually sufficient.
➢ Frequent rest periods between exercise sets are encouraged for better performance.
➢ All exercises should be done slowly to promote better movement recovery.

Cautions

➢ Stand in a safe environment when performing the exercises.
➢ Remain close to a rail, kitchen counter or table to hold onto in case of loss of balance.
➢ Keep a chair close to use when a rest is needed.
➢ Your therapist will specify the appropriate exercises for your condition.
Foot and ankle exercises – sitting

Introduction

Good strength and range of motion of the ankle, foot and toes can improve standing balance.

We encourage 2-4 minutes of these exercises.

1) Keeping your foot and heel completely on the floor, slide your foot back and forth, in front and behind the chair leg.

2) Lift your heel up and down, keeping the ball of your foot on the ground (heel tapping).
Foot and ankle exercises – sitting

3) With your heel on the ground, lift the rest of your foot up and down (toe tapping).
   Slow down the exercise to ensure you are stretching the ankle as much as possible.

4) Keeping your heel on the ground, lift the rest of your foot.
   a) Turn your foot in towards the big toe
   b) Turn your foot out towards the little toe
5) Lift your foot off the ground and rotate your ankle in circles. Try to perform smooth circles in one direction then in the other with each foot separately.

Foot and ankle exercises – sitting

6) Grab a towel or tissue on the floor with your toes and scrunch it up.

7) Lift your toes as far off the ground as you can while keeping the rest of your foot on the ground.
Foot exercises – standing

8) a) Stand up with your knees slightly flexed.
   b) Lift your toes off the floor to lift your foot arch.
   c) Drop all your toes down without losing the arch. Hold for 5-10 seconds.
Balance exercises
– standing

Instructions:

Hold onto a railing, counter or table if necessary and progress by letting go of the support.

1) Standing with your feet spread shoulder-width apart, shift your weight onto one leg, then the other.
   - Progress by moving your feet closer together, or by letting go of the table.

2) While standing with your legs shoulder-width apart crouch down about 6 inches then stand back up.
   - Always keep your back straight.
   - Progress by standing with your feet closer together or by letting go of the table.
Balance exercises – standing

3) Standing with your feet shoulder-width apart, knees slightly bent, shift your weight onto one leg and then the other.

Progress by moving your feet closer together, or by letting go of the table.

4) Standing with one foot in front of the other shift your weight from the front foot to the one behind. Alternate the foot that goes in front.

5) Stand straight, with your legs together, maintain this position for 20 seconds. Work up to 1 minute in this position.

Progress by reaching both arms up over your head and down 5 times slowly. Reach both arms out to the side, touching overhead if possible 5 times slowly.
Balance exercises – standing

6) Standing with your feet apart shift your weight to your toes, then your heels.

7) Walk sideways to one direction, then the other.
   To progress, walk to the right crossing the left leg in front of the right. Then try crossing the left leg behind the right. Try going the other direction.

8) Step up on a step and back down with the right foot. Repeat with the left foot. Start with a low step, then try a higher step.
   Try practicing climbing stairs.
   Progress each of these exercises by not holding the railing.
Balance exercises – standing

- 9) Standing with your feet shoulder-width apart, hike one hip up, keeping that leg straight. Repeat with your other leg.

- 10) Balance on one leg. Holding the position with each leg for 2–3 seconds.

- Progress to 10–15 seconds.