

Fall Prevention

Nine Easy Exercises to Help Avoid Falling

Daily moves to help you stay strong and stable¹

Falls are not a given part of aging especially if you stay active

Although falls can happen at any age, they pose greater risk for older adults. The Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reports that falls are the leading cause of fatal and nonfatal injuries for adults 65 and older.



Often a small slip or trip won't lead to a doctor's visit but they are responsible for nearly all hip fractures and are the most common cause of traumatic brain injuries. The good news is that staying physically active is the easiest way to reduce your risk of falling. Key components to improve mobility and maintain independent living include:

1

BALANCE

Prevents falls and risk of knee & ankle injuries. Improves proprioception.

2

STRENGTH

Improves metabolism, protects joints from injury, and improves ability to do everyday tasks.

3

FLEXIBILITY

Prevents injuries, back pain & balance problems. Helps muscles achieve a full range of motion.

4

RANGE OF MOTION

Maintains mobility and flexibility to help improve joint function.

This information is for educational purposes only and is not a substitute for the advice of a doctor. Consult your doctor prior to beginning an exercise program or making changes to your lifestyle or health care routine.

¹Renew UnitedHealthcare, *9 Easy Exercises to Help you Avoid Falls*, <https://www.renewuhc.com/article/fitness/9-easy-exercises-help-you-avoid-falls>

Move It or Lose it

Lack of use, not simply aging, can lead to a decline in these essential components.

As you get older, your body tends to follow movement patterns that take the path of least resistance which can lead to a lack of use. When you stop challenging yourself or moving in different ways it becomes harder to break out of those patterns. In addition, ongoing health conditions — arthritis, chronic pain, diabetes, hearing or vision loss, and congestive heart failure — may also lead to mobility limits. This is a case where regular practice will improved mobility and your overall quality of life.

Morning Stretch

Take a long stretch before getting out of bed: Extend your arms above your head and reach with your fingers. At the same time, point your toes. Next, point and flex your feet. End with some wrist circles, in both directions. Do each move for about 30 seconds.

Sit to Stand

Practice getting in and out of a chair without using your hands, being sure to keep your feet firmly on the ground.

Knee Lifts and Donkey Kicks

Place one hand on a chair for support and stand tall, then lift one knee up to hip height and hold for five seconds before switching legs. Do 10 to 12 lifts with each leg. Next, try tapping your backside with one foot 10 to 12 times, then switch legs.

Pillow Toss

Throw a pillow (or other soft item, like a neck roll) straight up in the air and catch it. Do this 30 times. If you have a partner or roommate, play a quick game of catch with the pillow. It's a great way to work on hand-eye coordination, timing and reflexes.

Arm Exercises

Sit tall in a chair, hold a light dumbbell or water bottle in each hand, and do 10 to 12 bicep curls. Next, do 10 to 12 overhead presses. For each exercise, you can work one arm at a time, or do both together.

Squeeze a Ball

Hold a grip ball in one hand and squeeze it. Hold the squeeze for five counts, then release. Do 10 to 12 squeezes in each hand.

Stand on One Foot

Stand tall near a wall or piece of furniture and lift one foot off the floor. Balance for as long as you can, then switch legs. It's OK if you need to touch the wall (or furniture) for support, but keep at this exercise until you can let go and hold yourself steady for a few seconds.

Give Yourself a Pat

Stand or sit tall and pat yourself on the back, reaching toward the middle of your back, even if you can't quite reach it now. You can alternate hands or work one arm at a time. Do 10 to 12 pats per hand.

Walk

By walking more you can increase strength and improve your balance.