

How to Reduce Risk of Falling after Stroke

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These 5 easy rehabilitation exercises can help reduce your risk of falling after stroke. By gently working your legs, core, and affected side of your body, you can regain **stability** and balance. Let's get started.

1. Sit-Stands

Take advantage of your mealtimes! Before you sit down to eat, practice sitting down and standing up while using your table for support if you need it. Repeat sitting down and standing up 10 times before each meal and you'll easily work 30 repetitions into your day!

This exercise will help prevent falling by working your legs and lower torso muscles, which both play a role in good balance.

2. Core Crunches

One of the most important elements of good balance is a strong core. Try doing some small crunches while lying in bed. Or if you're feeling really ambitious, you can practice some bicycle crunches by bringing your right elbow to your left knee while keeping your hands behind your head.

Then repeat on the other side by reaching your left elbow to your right knee. Try doing sets of 10 or as many as you can do. Even if you can't make the connection between your elbow and knee yet, you're still helping your abdominal muscles grow stronger when you practice.

3. Single Leg Stands

Another great way to develop balance is by challenging it. Stand in front of a table and stand on one leg, holding the table for balance. You don't have to lift your leg up very high to experience the benefits of this balance exercise. After 30 seconds, repeat on the other side. As you get better, increase the duration of your single leg stands.

4. Neck Stretches

Some stroke survivors are so focused on *not* falling that they don't turn their head, which can lead to stiffness. So try incorporating some neck stretches into your daily routine.

In a comfortable seated position, practice slowly turning your head to look to your right and then left. Repeat this 10-15 times, depending on how tense your neck is.

Then, practice tilting your head to the right, bringing your right ear down as if you were going to touch it to your shoulder – but try to resist lifting your shoulders. Return to center and practice on the other side, bringing your left ear down towards your left shoulder.

5. Getting Up on the Wrong Side of the Bed...

Every morning, try getting out of bed on your affected side. This will help strengthen your affected side and make your trunk stronger as a whole. Using your affected side will also help prevent 'learned nonuse,' a phenomenon that occurs when your brain actually forgets how to use your affected limb if you stop using it. So getting up on the 'wrong side of the bed' is actually a great thing to do!

By focusing on balance, core stability, and strengthening your affected side, you can improve your balance and help prevent falling. Always start slow and be extra careful about your safety when performing these exercises.