

Balance Exercises for Stroke Patients

September 18, 2015



5 easy at-home balance exercises for stroke patients

Balance exercises are intended to strengthen your core and stabilizing muscles so that your body has more control and coordination. This helps reduce your risk of falling and reestablish balance between both sides of your body.

In each of these balance exercises, we'll explain different ways to make the move more difficult. After all, the best way to develop balance is to continuously challenge it!

1. Flamingo Stands

Do you know what a flamingo looks like when it's standing on one leg? That's what you'll need to look like during this exercise. Practice standing on one leg for about 30 seconds and then switch to the other foot, holding on to a chair, counter top, or table for extra stability.

How to make it harder:

Ditch any assistive furniture and practice this exercise solo. Then, for even more of a challenge, you can continuously increase the duration of your exercise until a 2-minute stand feels like a piece of cake.

2. Side Leg Raises

This balance exercise is also single-legged, but you'll be keeping your leg straight this time. From a standing position, lift your leg out to your side about 45 degrees (or as much as you can do) and hold it there for a couple seconds, using any furniture that you need to help you keep your balance. Then, bring your foot back down to the floor and complete 10 total repetitions on each leg.

How to make it harder:

For extra difficulty, try closing your eyes during this exercise. It might seem easy in theory, but once you try it you'll really feel the challenge. Just be extra careful, please! **Make sure that there's someone around to ensure your safety.**

3. Bicycle Crunches

A strong core is essential for good balance, which is why we love bicycle crunches! Unlike regular crunches, you alternate between touching your right elbow to your left knee and then your left elbow to your right knee.

How to make it harder:

Try these crunches on top of an exercise ball for extra range of motion that will make your muscles work harder.

4. Heel-Toe Walking

While performing this exercise, think "baby steps" to yourself.

From a standing position, place your right foot firmly on the ground beneath you and then place your left heel right up against your right toes. Your feet should be perfectly in line with one right in front of the other. Then, practice walking while keeping constant heel to toe connection, placing your right heel to left toe and left heel to right toe and so forth.

How to make it harder:

Try this balance exercise on an uneven surface like a grassy hill or sandy beach. The uneven terrain will make you work harder and improve your balance even more!

5. Box Squats

In the gym, a box squat involve squatting down to a box and then standing back up. You don't need a gym or a box to do this exercise, though. In fact, a sofa or dining room chair will work perfectly fine. Simply practice sitting down and standing up from any seat of your choice.

Try not to rest for too long when you sit down – aim for just one second – so that you can keep your muscles engaged for as long as possible. This will work out your legs and lower torso muscles to help improve your balance.

How to make it harder:

Oh, so you're ready for the biggest challenge of them all? Try holding weights while you do this exercise, paying extra attention to [proper squat form](https://greatist.com/fitness/perfect-squat) (https://greatist.com/fitness/perfect-squat). Then you'll really start to build a solid foundation that can help improve your balance after stroke.

Improve Balance Faster

You'll notice that these exercises don't just involve the core, but also your legs and arms.

That's because balance is a full-body activity. And if you'd like to improve your full-body mobility faster, then our [FitMi home therapy tool](#) can help. FitMi helps improve muscle coordination faster by motivating you to complete 12x more repetition than traditional therapy. The more repetition you perform, the more you activate neuroplasticity and rewire your brain.