

# Bolster Your Balance

Balance is especially important the older you get. Prevention is the key to good health and having poor balance is a risk. Your ability to balance is influenced by many factors, including vision, gait, inner-ear functioning, blood pressure, muscle strength and posture. The body can compensate if one or two factors are affected, however it is more difficult to overcome if multiple problems exist. There are some simple exercises you can do to bolster your strength and balance and prevent falls or injuries.

## **STAND ON ONE FOOT**

Start by incorporating balance into your daily activities. For example, stand on one foot while brushing your teeth or doing the dishes. Have a sturdy object nearby in case you lose balance (i.e. wall or counter top).



*Stand on one foot*

## **PROGRESS TO MORE DIFFICULT EXERCISES**

Once you feel sturdy standing on one foot, consider adding the following:

- Close your eyes while you stand on one foot
- Sit on an unsteady surface such as a stability ball (you can do this while you watch tv or work on computer)
- Stand on a Bosu ball
- Add resistance or light weights while doing the above exercises
- Consider taking yoga, tai chi or pilates



*Sit on stability ball*



*Stand on Bosu ball*



*Add light weights*



## **EXERCISE THE CORE MUSCLES**

Strengthening your muscles that support your spine/core is imperative for good balance. All movements originate from the core area (lower chest/abdomen) and if it is weak your balance can suffer.

## **GOAL**

A goal should be to practice your balance most days of the week and hold each exercise for 15-30 seconds. Try to focus on both strength and balance simultaneously.

## **Core Exercises**



## **RESOURCES:**

<http://www.livestrong.com/article/118484-stability-exercises-seniors/>  
<http://seniorliving.about.com/od/exercisefitnes1/a/4seniorexercise.htm>

**Before you start, talk with your healthcare provider to make sure your exercise plan won't interfere with your treatment or recovery.**