

Better balance at every age

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(HealthDay)—You probably take balance for granted, but it's a motor skill that benefits from training throughout life.

Working on your balance is key to staying active and injury-free today and in the future. Balance is part of some [exercise](#) disciplines, and there are also specific exercises you can do.

Get started with [heel](#)-to-toe walking. Place the heel of your right [foot](#) just in front of the toes of the left foot. Heel and toes should just barely touch. Focus on a spot ahead of you and take a step, putting the left heel just in front of the toes of the right foot. Take 20 steps to start, and work up from there.

Next, practice standing on one foot. Balance on one foot for 20 seconds, then switch to other foot. Hold onto a sturdy counter at first if needed. Gradually add more time.

Progress to exercises with a balance pillow, disc or board to challenge you to stand on an unsteady surface. Sitting on a stability ball engages core muscles in your abdomen, back and hips to improve balance. Once you've mastered simple sitting, do exercises on the ball to develop balance further.

Yoga has many poses that improve balance, plus flexibility and posture. Tai chi also has these benefits. And both offer other pluses, like stress relief and the ability to work at an easy pace.

Do [balance](#) exercises every day, and always before other types of activity when muscles are fresh. Just remember that they're in addition to—not instead of—cardio and strength training.

More information: The American Council on Exercise has step-by-step details on [yoga poses for better balance](#) that you can do in a chair, perfect for seniors and everyone who works at a desk job.

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