

# Balance exercises

## Other formats

If you need this information in another format such as audio CD, Braille, large print, high contrast, British Sign Language or translated into another language please contact the PALS desk on 01271 314090 or at [rduh.pals-northern@nhs.net](mailto:rduh.pals-northern@nhs.net).

## Introduction

This booklet contains a variety of exercises designed to help improve and challenge your balance. It can be used alongside your usual physical activity, whilst you are in hospital or to strengthen specific muscle groups, as advised by your physiotherapist.

A physiotherapist will advise which exercises will be most beneficial to you (marked with a tick) and indicate how many to complete.

Ideally you should practice the exercises every day. The exercises do not all need to be done at once, and can be completed throughout the day. It is normal to experience some mild discomfort when exercising, however please stop if you begin to feel unwell, lightheaded or if you start experiencing pain.

There are many benefits of exercise and keeping active both in hospital and longer term. It can help reduce the risk of certain medical conditions such as stroke, high blood pressure, heart attack, and many more. In addition to this, maintaining an active lifestyle can help improve sleep, reduce stress, improve quality of life and maintain independence. It is recommended to complete 150minutes of exercise a week. This includes gentle exercises in the chair/bed, gardening, walking, housework and so on – that is half an hour on most days of the week. At home, strength, flexibility and balance exercises should also be incorporated a minimum of twice a week.



## Balance Exercises

**For your safety, please consider completing these exercises near a stable surface, such as a chair, windowsill or table, to help prevent losing your balance. Wear suitable footwear or non-slip slipper socks.**

### Heel raises / toe rock

Stand with your feet shoulder width apart and your hands gently resting on a stable surface in front of you.

Slowly raise your heels off the floor to stand on tip toes, keeping your knees straight.

Hold for \_\_\_\_ seconds then slowly lower your heels to the ground.

Rock back on to your heels, lifting your toes off the floor.

Hold for \_\_\_\_ seconds then slowly lower your heels to the ground.

Repeat this \_\_\_\_ times. This is one set.

Complete a total of \_\_\_\_ sets.



### Heel walk

Take steps forwards on your heels only. Use a stable surface for support if required.

### Toe walk

Take steps forwards while up on tip-toes. Use a stable surface for support if required.

### Heel-toe 'tandem' stand / balance

Stand with a hand / finger gently resting on a stable surface next to you.

Place one foot directly in front of the other with the heel touching the toe (as if standing on a 'tight-rope').

Try to balance like this for as long as you can, using the support only as much as you need.

Then repeat this with the other foot in front.



### Heel-toe 'tight-rope' walk

Keep looking forwards at all times, walk along stepping the heel of one foot just in front of the toes of the other (as if on a 'tight-rope'). If required, complete this exercise next to a wall or table, where you can gently rest your fingers to aid your stability.

Try to complete at least \_\_\_\_ steps. Rest and repeat \_\_\_\_ times.

### Single leg stand / balance

Stand with a hand / finger gently resting on a stable surface next to you.

Start with your feet hip-width apart.

Lift your left leg off the floor to balance, only holding on as much as you need.

Hold this position for \_\_\_\_ seconds before returning to the starting position.

Repeat on your other leg. Complete this \_\_\_\_ times. This is one set. Complete \_\_\_\_ sets.

To challenge yourself you can complete this task without holding on (hand hovering over the support), or by standing on a pillow/mat to create an unstable surface.



## Alternate side leg lifts

Stand facing a stable surface with both hands resting on the support.

Keep your face, shoulders and hips pointing forwards and raise one leg out to the side.

Bring the leg back down to the floor and swap legs to lift the other one.

Only hold on as much as you need.

Repeat this exercise \_\_\_\_ times. This is one set.

Complete a total of \_\_\_\_ sets.



## Forwards / backwards leg swing / balance

Stand with a hand / finger gently resting on a stable surface next to you.

Start with your feet hip-width apart.

Keep your face, shoulders and hips pointing forwards.

Lift your left leg off the floor and swing it forwards and backwards, keeping your trunk still.

Repeat this exercise \_\_\_\_ times on each leg and then rest. This is one set.

Complete a total of \_\_\_\_ sets.



## Further information

If you require information, please speak to your ward physiotherapist.

Here are some links to useful websites and contacts:

Care Direct – [www.devon.gov.uk/socialcare](http://www.devon.gov.uk/socialcare) Tel: 0345 155 1007

Age Concern Barnstaple – [www.ageconcernbarnstaple.org.uk](http://www.ageconcernbarnstaple.org.uk) Tel: 01271 324488

Royal Voluntary Service (RVS) – [www.royalvoluntaryservice.org.uk](http://www.royalvoluntaryservice.org.uk) Tel: 01209 705159

Chartered Society of Physiotherapy (CSP) – [www.csp.org.uk/public-patient/keeping-active-healthy/staying-healthy-you-age/avoiding-trips-falls](http://www.csp.org.uk/public-patient/keeping-active-healthy/staying-healthy-you-age/avoiding-trips-falls)

Saga – [www.saga.co.uk/magazine/health-wellbeing/wellbeing/falls-guide](http://www.saga.co.uk/magazine/health-wellbeing/wellbeing/falls-guide)

## References

[pathways.nice.org.uk/pathways/preventing-falls-in-older-people](http://pathways.nice.org.uk/pathways/preventing-falls-in-older-people)

[www.rdash.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/04/Saga-Get-Up-and-Go-guide.pdf](http://www.rdash.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/04/Saga-Get-Up-and-Go-guide.pdf)

[www.ageuk.org.uk/falls](http://www.ageuk.org.uk/falls)

[www.nhs.uk/conditions/falls](http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/falls)

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## PALS

The Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) ensures that the NHS listens to patients, relatives, carers and friends, answers questions and resolves concerns as quickly as possible. If you have a query or concern call 01271 314090 or email [rduh.pals-northern@nhs.net](mailto:rduh.pals-northern@nhs.net). You can also visit the PALS and Information Centre in person at North Devon District Hospital, Barnstaple.

## Have your say

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Tell us about your experience of our services. Share your feedback on the Care Opinion website [www.careopinion.org.uk](http://www.careopinion.org.uk).

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