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## Tips for How to Prevent Falls by Maintaining Balance

As seniors age, the risk for falls increases. In an article from the [National Council On Aging](#) (NCOA) website, it states that according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, one fourth of Americans aged 65 and older suffer from a fall. This report also states that falls are the leading cause of fatal injury and also the most common cause of nonfatal hospital admissions. As falls among seniors result in 800,000 hospitalizations and often more than 27,000 deaths, it's important that we find ways to prevent falls from occurring.

While your loved one may feel helpless and as though there is nothing they can do because they neglected their physical health for so long, the opposite is actually true. By doing some gentle exercises, seniors are able to better maintain their balance and coordination, which could potentially decrease their risk of falling if they do become unsteady.

### Exercises That Can Help Seniors Maintain Their Balance

To improve balance, try doing some of the following balance exercises from the National Institute of Health's (NIH) [Senior Health website](#) with your loved one. Always be sure to remain close to your loved one in the event they lose their balance so as to prevent injury from occurring.

- **Balancing on one foot.** Holding onto something or someone, stand on one foot and hold this position for 10 seconds. Repeat this 10 to 15 times with each of your legs. As time goes on and balance improves, try holding onto the chair with one hand or just keeping it close by in case of unsteadiness.
- **Walking the tight rope.** Just like walking on a balance beam, put one heel in front of your toes to the point they are almost touching. Take a step, putting your foot that is behind in front of your toes. Choose a spot to walk to while maintaining your balance. The NIH recommends repeating this for about 20 steps.
- **Flamingo walk.** In this exercise, raise your arms to your sides at about shoulder height. Lift your leg, almost like you are a flamingo, as you walk. Pause for a second before continuing and repeat for 20 steps while alternating legs.
- **Back leg raises.** Begin by standing behind a chair that can be held for balance. Breathe in and out slowly while lifting one leg back without bending your knee or pointing your toes. Keep your back completely straight and your leg that you are standing on slightly bent. Hold this pose and breathe in as you lower your leg. Repeat this 10 to 15 times with one leg and then 10 to 15 times with the other.
- **Side leg raises.** This exercise is also done while holding onto a chair for support as it is much like the back leg raises. Begin by lifting one leg out towards the side with your back straight and your toes forward. Hold this for one second and then breathe out as you lower your leg. Repeat this 10 to 15 times and then continue to repeat this with the other leg for 10 to 15 times.

For videos of how to perform these exercises, [click here](#). If these exercises get easier over time, adapt them in subtle ways or talk to your doctor about more balance exercises that you can do. Remember that seniors should not begin a strenuous routine without talking to a doctor first.

*Inspiring Wellness!*



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Our mission at Lions Gate is to enrich the lives of those we serve through quality and compassionate care consistent with our heritage and values. We strive to provide [programs and services](#) that inspire wellness as well as social, cultural and spiritual independence.

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