



31 Days to Better Balance

This challenge focuses on exercises to increase our balance and flexibility. See the reverse side for more information about each of the exercises. Whether you are just starting out on being active at home, or want to challenge yourself, these exercises will focus on leg strength, building upper body strength and maintaining balance.

BALANCE GOES BEYOND YOUR LEGS!	1 Stand on One Leg	2 Walk Heel-to-Toe	3 Seated Knee Raise	4 Standing Leg Raise	5 Taps	6 Wall Push-ups
7 Tai Chi Chuan	8 Chair Squat	9 Dance your heart away!	10 Seated Knee Raise	11 Walk Heel-to-Toe	12 Wall Push-ups	13 Stand On One Leg
14 Stand on One Leg	15 Taps	16 Wall Push-ups	17 Standing Leg Raise	18 Walk Heel-to-Toe	19 Tai Chi Chuan	20 Standing Leg Raise
21 Chair Squat	22 Seated Knee Raise	23 Taps	24 Standing Leg Raise	25 Tai Chi Chuan	26 Seated Knee Raise	27 Dance your heart away!
28 Walk Heel-to-Toe	29 Chair Squat	30 Wall Push-ups	31 Dance your heart away!	BALANCE PREVENTS INJURY		



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EXERCISE BREAKDOWN

Make sure you listen to your body when participating in an exercise program. This is especially important, with regard to exercises designed to improve balance. When performing these exercises, make sure that you have a chair close by, so that you can use it for support if needed.

Stand on One Leg

Challenge your balance by standing on one leg for 20-seconds, then increase the time over the course of the month until you can comfortably stand on one leg for one minute. Once you've mastered this skill, incorporate it into your "activities for daily living", such as brushing your teeth.

Walk Heel-to-Toe

With your feet shoulder-width apart, shift your weight to one side, step forward with the "empty" foot, placing the heel on the ground and gently roll the foot flat until the whole foot is firmly planted. Shift your weight forward. Once your weight is in the forward foot, raise the heel of the rear foot, then slowly lift the foot off the ground and then place it in front as you move forward. Walking, while placing focus on the entire foot will strengthen the muscles, and retrain your body to place your feet securely as you walk. Once mastered, move your feet closer together, placing one foot in front of the other, as if you are on a balance beam.

Seated Knee Raise

While seated in a high-back chair, keeping the back supported and the arms down at your side, gently raise one knee, which in-turn lifts the foot off the ground. Hold for 10-seconds. Then repeat with the other leg. The goal is to perform this exercise ten times with each leg. As your legs get stronger, you can increase the length of time. Another option is to place a light weight on the knee (a soup can, for example), which will add an additional level of resistance.

Standing Leg Raise

Stand behind a high-back chair with both hands holding on for support. Shift your weight to one side, while keeping the back straight. Abduct the "empty" leg to the side, raising it off the floor. It is important the pelvis remains in a neutral position. Hold for 5-seconds, and then relax. Shift your weight and repeat with the opposite leg. The goal is to perform this exercise ten times on both sides.

Taps

With your feet hip-width apart, stand in front of a step or a curb. It is important that you have a railing or chair for support if needed. Slowly bring your foot up to the step or curb and "tap" it. Next, return your foot to the floor. Continue for twenty times, and then switch to the other foot.

Wall Push-ups

This exercise is included in this fitness challenge to help you lower the risk of injury, should you fall. Stand an arm's length away from the wall, with your feet shoulder-width apart. Place your palms flat against the wall, and then begin to lean towards the wall, flexing your elbows. Hold this position for 3-seconds. Using your arms, push yourself back to the starting position, until your arms are straight. The goal for this exercise is twenty repetitions.

Tai Chi Chuan

Join us for our LIVE Virtual Fitness classes on our [YMCALIFitness Facebook page](#) (Facebook account required). Find more information at ymcali.org/at-home. Mastering the skills of Tai Chi Chuan are proven to increase you balance.

Chair Squat

Stand behind a high-back chair with both hands holding on for support. Keeping the feet flat, slowly relax the knee-joints and lower the body into a squat position, until the knees are flexed at a 45-degree angle. Hold for 3-seconds, and then rise into a standing position. The goal for this exercise is twenty repetitions.

Dance Your Heart Away!

Dancing is not only enjoyable while lifting the spirit, dancing also challenges our balance and teaches us correct foot-placement with upper-body movement. Join our Cardio Dance workouts as part of our Y @ Home Virtual Fitness classes on our [YMCALIFitness Facebook page](#) (Facebook account required). Find more information at ymcali.org/at-home. "Dance like nobody is watching!"

