

## Dr. Lovejoy-Evans's Nursing Home Prevention Strategy

### Balance: Beginning

Improving your balance will reduce your risk of falls and fractures, which will allow you to continue to walk and live independently.

Remember safety first when your balance needs improving.

If you can safely stand, put your hands on a solid counter and hold on with as much strength as you need. Hold onto the counter for each of these:

Spread your arms out as if flying like an eagle. Shift your weight back and forth from left to right, moving your hips out to the side as far as you safely can, sliding the hands along the counter.

Shift your weight forward and backward.

Stand on one foot as long as possible. Repeat on the other side.

Place one heel directly in front of the toes of your other foot.

Walk forward, placing one heel directly in front of the toes of your other foot. Then walk backward, placing the toes of one foot directly behind the heel of the other foot.

Standing on one leg, lift the other leg out to the side.

Standing on one leg, bring the other leg back diagonally behind you.

March in place, alternate picking your knees up high into the air.

Stepping sideways, cross the opposite leg in front.

Stepping sideways, cross the opposite leg behind you.

Stepping sideways, alternate crossing in front of you, then behind.

When brushing your teeth or getting a drink of water, squat.

Repeat each activity four times on each leg. When you are stronger and your balance is improving, progress to just touching the counter with your fingertips, touching or hovering your hand above the counter, touching only when you need to.

To continue improving:

- Take a balance class through your local community college, YMCA, or senior center.
- Try Tai Chi or Qi (Chi) Gong classes at a community college or check your library for classes on video.
- Take a water exercise class and “water walk” or do the motions listed above holding onto the edge of the pool initially.

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