

Steady & *Strong.*

A simple at-home guide to better balance, stronger legs, and fewer falls for adults 60 and up.

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- 2 quick self-checks you can do in your kitchen
 - 10 safe exercises with easier and harder options
 - A 4-week plan and a home safety checklist

— WHY THIS MATTERS

Falls are common. *They are not normal.*

Many people assume falling is just part of getting older. It is not. Most falls come from things that can be improved: weak legs, slower balance reactions, and hazards around the house. The good news is that the body keeps responding to training at every age. Our oldest client is 92.

1 in 4

adults age 65 and older
falls each year

#1

cause of injury and injury
death in adults 65+

**Less than
half**

of older adults who fall tell
their doctor

Source: U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Older Adult Fall Prevention.

How to use this guide

- **Start with the two self-checks** on the next page so you know where you stand.
- **Do the exercises 2 to 3 days a week**, on non-consecutive days. Most people finish in 20 to 25 minutes.
- **Always use support.** Stand at a kitchen counter or hold the back of a sturdy chair that will not slide. Wear sneakers, not socks or slippers.
- **Retest every 4 weeks** and write your scores down. Seeing progress keeps you going.

Safety first. Check with your doctor before starting a new exercise program, especially if you have heart disease, recent surgery, osteoporosis, dizziness, or have fallen recently. Stop any exercise that causes chest pain, shortness of breath, dizziness, or sharp pain. Have someone nearby the first few times you try the balance exercises. This guide is general education, not medical advice.

— CHECK YOURSELF

Two quick *self-checks*.

These are simplified versions of tests health professionals use, including in the CDC's STEADI fall prevention program. Do them with someone nearby.

1. The 30-second chair stand

Sit in the middle of a sturdy chair without arms, back against a wall so it cannot slide. Cross your arms over your chest. On "go," stand all the way up and sit all the way down as many times as you can in 30 seconds. Count each full stand.

Age	60-64	65-69	70-74	75-79	80-84	85-89	90-94
Men, below average if fewer than	14	12	12	11	10	8	7
Women, below average if fewer than	12	11	10	10	9	8	4

Scores from the CDC STEADI 30-Second Chair Stand assessment. A below-average score suggests a higher risk of falls. If you need your hands to stand up, stop the test and note that, too.

2. The 4-stage balance check

Stand next to a counter with someone beside you. Try to hold each position for 10 seconds without holding on. Move to the next stage only if you can.

- **Stage 1:** Feet side by side, touching.
- **Stage 2:** Instep of one foot touching the big toe of the other (half step forward).
- **Stage 3:** Heel to toe, one foot directly in front of the other.
- **Stage 4:** Stand on one foot.

What it means: If you cannot hold the heel-to-toe position (stage 3) for 10 seconds, the CDC considers that a sign of increased fall risk. That is a good reason to talk with your doctor and to start the exercises in this guide, ideally with a professional's help.

My scores today: Chair stands: _____ Balance stage held: _____ Date: _____

Stronger legs, *steadier steps*.

Move slowly and breathe normally. Quality matters more than speed.

1 **Sit to stand** 2 sets of 5 to 10

Sit near the front of a sturdy chair, feet flat and hip-width apart. Lean slightly forward, press through your heels, and stand all the way up. Sit back down slowly, with control.

Easier: use your hands on the armrests or add a firm cushion.

Harder: cross your arms, or pause just above the seat before sitting.



2 **Heel raises** 2 sets of 10

Stand facing the counter, holding on lightly. Rise up onto the balls of your feet, pause for a second, then lower slowly. Strong calves help you push off and recover when you trip.

Easier: hold on with both hands. **Harder:** one fingertip of support, or a 3-second lower.



3 **Toe raises** 2 sets of 10

Holding the counter, keep your heels down and lift your toes toward the ceiling, then lower. This strengthens the shin muscles that keep your toes from catching on rugs and curbs.

Easier: do it seated. **Harder:** rock from heels to toes in one smooth motion.

4 **Side leg raises** 10 each side

Hold the counter and stand tall. Lift one leg out to the side with your toes pointing forward, keeping your body upright. Lower slowly. Your hip muscles are what catch you when you lose your balance sideways.

Easier: smaller lift. **Harder:** hold the top for 2 seconds.



5 **Wall push-ups** 2 sets of 10

Stand an arm's length from a wall, hands on the wall at shoulder height. Bend your elbows to bring your chest toward the wall, then push back. Arm strength helps you catch yourself and get up from a fall.

Easier: stand closer to the wall. **Harder:** step farther back, or use the kitchen counter.

Balance is a skill. *Practice it.*

Always stand at the counter for these, with someone nearby the first few times.

- 6 Marching in place** 20 steps
Holding the counter, march in place, lifting each knee toward hip height. Stand tall and look straight ahead, not at your feet.
Easier: lower knee lifts. **Harder:** pause for 2 seconds at the top of each step.
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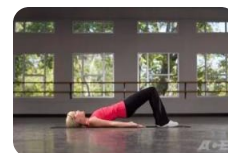
- 7 Heel-to-toe stand** Hold 10 to 30 seconds
Place one foot directly in front of the other, heel touching toe, like standing on a tightrope. Hold the counter as needed. Switch which foot is in front.
Easier: leave a small gap or stand with feet staggered. **Harder:** let go with one hand, then both.
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- 8 Single-leg stand** Hold 10 to 30 seconds each
Holding the counter, shift your weight onto one leg and lift the other foot slightly off the floor. Stand tall. Switch legs.
Easier: rest the lifted toes lightly on the floor. **Harder:** one fingertip of support, or slowly turn your head side to side.



- 9 Heel-to-toe walk** 2 trips of 10 steps
Walk along the counter, placing the heel of each foot directly in front of the toes of the other. Keep a hand on the counter and your eyes forward.
Easier: normal small steps along the counter. **Harder:** walk backward the same way.
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- 10 Bridge** 2 sets of 10
Lie on your back on a firm bed with knees bent and feet flat. Squeeze your glutes and lift your hips, then lower slowly. Strong glutes make standing up, climbing stairs, and recovering from a stumble easier.
Easier: smaller lift. **Harder:** hold the top for 3 seconds.



— YOUR PLAN

A simple **4-week plan.**

Week	How often	What to do
1	2 days	Exercises 1 to 10 using the easier options. Learn the movements.
2	2 to 3 days	Same exercises. Use the standard version where it feels steady.
3	3 days	Add a second set where listed. Try lighter hand support on balance work.
4	3 days	Try a few harder options. Retest your chair stand and balance check.

Also aim to walk on most days. The CDC recommends that older adults get at least 150 minutes of moderate activity a week, plus strength training at least 2 days a week, plus balance activities.

— HOME SAFETY CHECKLIST

Make your home harder to fall in.

- ☐ Remove loose throw rugs or secure them with double-sided tape
- ☐ Keep stairs and walkways clear of shoes, cords, and clutter
- ☐ Handrails on both sides of every staircase
- ☐ Bright lighting at the top and bottom of stairs
- ☐ Night-lights between the bedroom and bathroom
- ☐ Grab bars inside and next to the tub or shower
- ☐ Non-slip mats in the tub and on bathroom floors
- ☐ Everyday items on lower shelves, no step stools
- ☐ A lamp you can reach without getting out of bed
- ☐ Supportive shoes at home, not socks or loose slippers
- ☐ Have your vision checked every year
- ☐ Ask your doctor or pharmacist to review medicines that cause dizziness or sleepiness

Adapted from the CDC's "Check for Safety" home fall prevention checklist.

Train with people who **know bodies.**

Exercises on paper are a great start. A coach beside you is how most people make faster, safer progress, especially with balance work, a past fall, joint replacements, osteoporosis, or Parkinson's.

Repke Fitness is a private, nurse-founded personal training studio in Millersville, MD. Our founder is a Registered Nurse, and our trainers bring physical therapy clinic experience. Clients from Severna Park, Pasadena, Glen Burnie, Odenton, Annapolis, and across Anne Arundel County train with us one-on-one, by appointment.

\$25 FIRST SESSION

One hour, one-on-one. We review your history, test your strength and balance, and build your plan. No pressure, no contract that day. HSA and FSA accepted.

- **Call or text:** 667-771-5336
- **Visit:** 8268 Veterans Highway #3, Millersville, MD 21108
- **Learn more:** RepkeFitness.com/personal-training-for-older-adults-and-seniors

Bring this guide and your self-check scores to your first session.