

# FINDING OUR BALANCE

PREVENT SLIPS, TRIPS & STUMBLES

## Fall Prevention Exercise Programs



There are steps you can take to stay healthy and independent as you age. Regular exercise that improves strength, balance, and fitness is the most important step you can take to reduce your risk of falling.

Join a local exercise class to improve your strength, balance, and confidence to give you greater independence. Find a class you enjoy and bring a friend. Many programs are offered virtually.

Below are five evidence-based exercise programs that may be available near you:

**A Matter of Balance** is an 8-week structured group intervention that emphasizes practical strategies to reduce fear of falling and increase activity levels. For information, email: [sailwithmcec@gmail.com](mailto:sailwithmcec@gmail.com)

**EnhanceFitness** is a group falls prevention and physical activity program developed specifically for older adults. For information: [soundgenerations.org/health-wellness/](https://soundgenerations.org/health-wellness/)

**The Otago Exercise Program** is a series of 17 strength and balance exercises delivered by a physical therapist or PT assistant in a home, outpatient, or community setting. For info, email: [findingourbalance@doh.wa.gov](mailto:findingourbalance@doh.wa.gov)



**Tai Ji Quan: Moving for Better Balance™** is a falls prevention program delivered in two one-hour sessions each week for 24 weeks. For information: [betterbalance.net/class-locations](https://betterbalance.net/class-locations)

**Stay Active and Independent for Life (SAIL)** is a strength, balance, and fitness program for adults 65 and older. For information: [sailfitness.org](https://sailfitness.org)

Examples of SAIL exercises on other side ►►►

# Stay Active and Independent for Life (SAIL) Exercises

Falls are the leading cause of injury-related hospitalization for older adults in Washington State. Nearly 28% of adults 65+ in Washington state have a fall requiring medical care every year. The *Stay Active and Independent for Life (SAIL)* exercise program includes risk reduction education and can increase your strength and balance and decrease the risk of falling.

The exercises below are proven to reduce falls. They can be modified to your ability and performed while sitting or standing. You are neither too young nor too old to begin an exercise class. Have fun, stay active, and keep balanced!

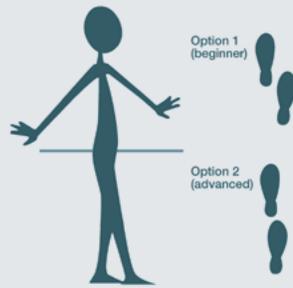
*Always consult your physician prior to any exercise program.*

## 2 HEEL-TO-TOE STAND

**Purpose:** To improve standing balance

**Goal:** To balance without the bar

1. Stand near the bar for support, if needed.
2. Hold arms out to sides for balance.
3. Place one foot slightly in front of the other (see Option 1).  
OR  
Place one foot directly in front of the other. The heel of the front foot should touch the toes of the back foot (see Option 2).
4. Stay in this position for 30 seconds.



## 1 MARCH IN PLACE

**Purpose:** To improve strength

1. Raise one knee in front of you, no further than to hip level.
2. Slowly lower leg back down to the starting position.
3. Repeat with other leg.
4. Repeat up to 10 times, alternating each leg.



## 3 PUSH-UPS

**Purpose:** To strengthen arms, shoulder, and back

1. Stand facing the wall or bar with hands at shoulder height and shoulder-width apart.
2. Keep back straight. Lower your body to the wall or bar.
3. Return to start position.
4. Repeat 8 to 10 times.



## 4 TOE STANDS

**Purpose:** To strengthen leg muscles

1. Stand tall with feet parallel while holding onto the bar.
2. Continue holding on as you raise your body up onto your toes.
3. Slowly lower your body to the starting position.
4. Repeat up to 8 to 10 times.



## 5 STANDING ON ONE LEG

**Purpose:** To strengthen and improve standing balance

**Goal:** To balance without the bar

1. Stand tall beside the bar with feet shoulder-width apart. (Hold on if necessary.)
2. Raise one knee in front of you, no further than to hip level, keeping the toes up.
3. Hold for up to 10 seconds and lower.
4. Repeat with other foot. Continue alternating sides, adding repetitions as strength increases.



For more exercise classes and fall prevention resources, visit [doh.wa.gov/findingourbalance](https://doh.wa.gov/findingourbalance) or email [findingourbalance@doh.wa.gov](mailto:findingourbalance@doh.wa.gov).