

- Balance can be improved by strengthening the muscles of back, belly and legs.
- Exercise at least 2 times a week to enhance balance.
- After a fall it is useful starting the balance exercises in order to improve mobility and regaining confidence in everyday life activities.

**Balance exercise can be performed at home or at the gym. It is always recommended to consult your doctor to know how to exercise safely and the better way to exercise in relation to your health status**

#### Useful insights

- The U.S. National Institute of Aging (NIA) website <https://www.nia.nih.gov/>
- The 2018 "Physical activity guidelines for Americans 2nd edition"  
[https://health.gov/paguidelines/second-edition/pdf/Physical\\_Activity\\_Guidelines\\_2nd\\_edition.pdf](https://health.gov/paguidelines/second-edition/pdf/Physical_Activity_Guidelines_2nd_edition.pdf)
- The World Health Organization recommendations (WHO)  
[https://www.who.int/dietphysicalactivity/factsheet\\_olderadults/en/](https://www.who.int/dietphysicalactivity/factsheet_olderadults/en/)

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# Balance exercises for older people

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## Why balance exercises?

With aging there is a decline in balance control, so older people are at increased risk of falling and problems with walking. Falls at older age are associated with a greater risk of injury, disability, and also death.

People who start to have problems with walking or who have already experienced a fall, tend to be more sedentary. However, exercising can help to regain feeling safe in movements, prevent new falls and related consequences. Apart from this it may also improve your quality of life. For this purpose, balance exercise together with strength exercise for the lower limbs are extremely helpful.

## Example of balance exercises

- To perform balance exercise it is not necessary to have a lot of workout equipment. Just wear comfortable clothes (i.e. no jeans or suits), shoes that do not slip and prepare something stable to hold on if you lose balance, such as a chair.
- An example of balance exercise that



does not require any type of tool, includes walking so that the tip of one foot is behind the heel of the other foot (see picture). Simply spread your arms outward for more stability during exercise. If you are afraid of losing balance you can train near a wall (do not lean unless you lose balance) or with someone close to you ready to help you.

- Exercising at the gym can also help you socializing. An excellent exercise to improve balance to be done in the gym or outdoor with peers is definitely the Tai Chi. Tai Chi is a typical Chinese series of exercises. It is characterized by slow movements. It is relaxing, improves balance and other health aspects, such as blood pressure.

## Guidelines

The 2018 "Physical activity guidelines for Americans 2nd edition" developed by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, suggest:

- Multicomponent exercise (i.e. strength exercise + balance exercise + aerobic exercise) for older people as the best type of exercise.

