

## Strength and Balance

by Barbara Killmeyer

I've noticed that as I age I'm becoming less agile, the strength in my legs is not what it used to be, and my balance is just a wee bit off. I wanted to do something about this, but I didn't want to join a gym or invest in expensive exercise equipment. I was fortunate enough to meet someone who was able to give me just the guidance I was looking for.



Kurt Grottenthaler has been a physical therapist for 16 years and has practiced his profession in a variety of settings, and for many different age groups. When I told him what I was looking for he had exactly the right answer for me. He said that several years ago, while working in a Home Health situation in Southern West Virginia, another therapist told him about a program he called the Kitchen Sink Exercises, so called because of where you can do them. No special equipment is required. They are simple exercises, but if you do them faithfully you will strengthen your legs and increase you sense of balance. Each of these exercises should be performed three times a day and it is advisable to hold onto the kitchen sink while doing them.

The first gets you Up on Your Toes and it is excellent for increasing the strength of your calf muscles which play a major role in balance. Stand with your feet flat on the floor and lift both heels off the floor simultaneously. Hold this position for several seconds. Do this 15 times in succession, and after you are comfortable with it you can slowly increase the number of times to 30.

Secondly march in place, bringing your thigh up and forward until it is parallel with the floor. This strengthens the muscle of the hip and the alternating, reciprocal motion challenges your balance. Once again, repeat 15 times and work up to 30 times.

The third exercise is to alternate kicking first one leg then the other out to the side while trying to maintain an erect upright posture. This too works many of the hip muscles related to balance. Do this the same number of times as above.

Kurt says, "Remember, a little bit of activity goes a long way."

I was glad that Kurt was able to give me the information I was looking for and I intend to make it my New Years Resolution to practice these on a daily basis. The price is certainly right and I don't have to leave my house to travel to a gym. I hope you too will find these exercises beneficial.

Thank you Kurt from all of us.



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