



balance

BASICS





## What do I need to know **BEFORE** PERFORMING the balance activities?

1

Make sure that my muscles are really warmed up so the balance activities are easier to perform.

2

Perform the balance activities in the order they are presented.

3

Be sure to perform the standing balance activities while I am standing close to a sturdy chair in a corner of the room or close to a wall when performing the moving activities (#7, 8, 9, 10).

4 Make sure that my muscles are really warmed up so the balance activities are easier to perform.

5 Perform the balance activities in the order they are presented.

6 Be sure to perform the standing balance activities while I am standing close to a sturdy chair in a corner of the room or close to a wall when performing the moving activities (#7, 8, 9, 10).

7 Be sure to hold onto a sturdy chair when I place the ball under my foot for activity #2.

I should not increase the challenge of the

b<sup>1</sup>

# standing towel scrunches

1 Place small towel under right foot while holding onto chair.

2 **Stand tall** and focus eyes on target at eye level.

3 Pull towel towards body **using toes** only. Push towel away from body until it is flat again.

4

Move towel to left foot and repeat.



**INCREASE CHALLENGE BY** using towel to spell-out words of increasing length with foot on the floor. Begin with three-letter words and increase to longer words with practice. Lightly hold onto chair until balance improves.



b<sup>2</sup>

# standing ball rolls

1

Place small ball (approx. 6 inches in diameter) under ball of right foot while holding onto chair.

2

**Stand tall** and focus eyes on target at eye level.

## COMPLETE FOLLOWING MOVEMENT SEQUENCE:

\* Roll ball forward and away from body until ball is under heel. Roll ball back towards body until ball is under forefoot again.

\* Roll ball to side and away from body. Roll back towards starting position.

\* Roll ball in a circle to the right and then to the left.

3

Repeat movement sequence with opposite foot.

4

Increase number of times sequence is performed as balance improves. Begin with 1-2 repetitions and increase to 5 on each foot.

5

Remove hand from chair as balance improves.



b<sup>3</sup>

# wall touches

- 1 Position body 6-8 inches away from wall. **Stand tall** with back to the wall and **feet hip-width apart**. Focus eyes on vertical target at eye level.
- 2 Shift weight backwards through **right hip** until hip touches wall. Return to starting position.
- 3 Shift weight backwards through **both hips** until buttocks touch wall behind. Return to starting position.

4

Shift weight backwards through **left hip** until hip touches wall.

5

Upper body remains tall with **shoulders relaxed and level** throughout the activity. Adjust distance from wall until able to touch hip(s) to wall on each weight shift.

6

Repeat weight shift sequence 3-5 times. Increase standing distance from wall as balance improves.



b<sup>4</sup>

# shift around the clock

1

**Stand tall** with feet **hip-width apart**. Hold onto sturdy chair for support if needed and **focus eyes on target** at eye level.

2

Lean forward to following points on imaginary clockface on floor: 12 o' clock, 6 o' clock, 3 o' clock, 9 o' clock.

3

Return to start position after each lean. Stand tall with eyes focused on a vertical target.

4

Repeat movement sequence in # 2 but move through the start position to each number (e.g., 12 to 6; 6 to 3).

5

Lean to each of the following clockface positions: 1 o' clock, 7 o' clock, 11 o' clock, 5 o' clock.

6

Return to start position after each lean. Stand tall with eyes focused on a vertical target.

7

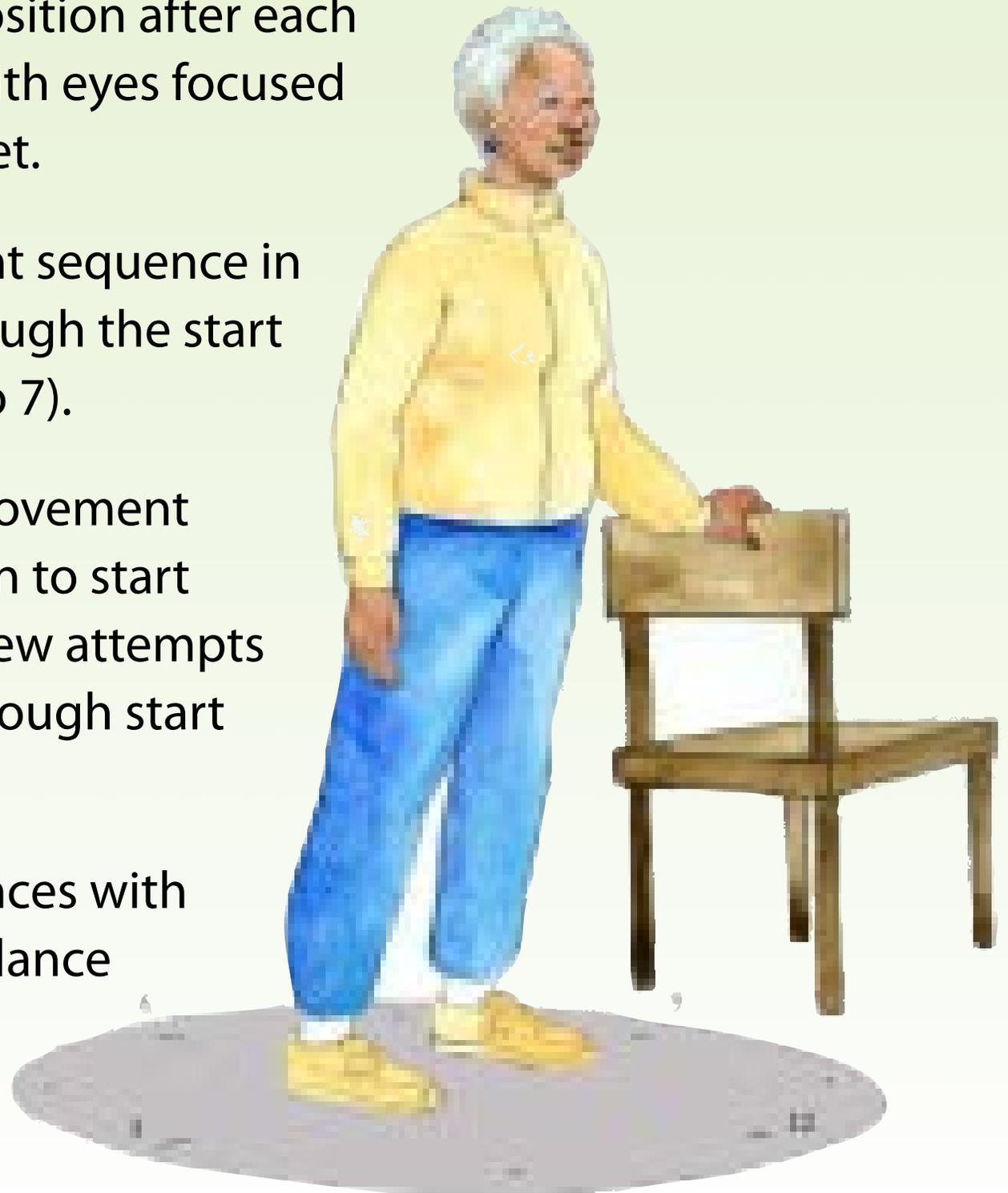
Repeat movement sequence in #5 but move through the start position (e.g., 1 to 7).

8

Combine both movement sequences. Return to start position on first few attempts and then lean through start position.

9

Repeat all sequences with eyes closed as balance improves.



# standing with altered based of support

1

Stand tall with feet hip-width apart. Hold onto sturdy chair for support if needed.

2

Focus eyes on a vertical target at eye level during each standing activity.

3

Bring feet together until toes and heels are (or almost) touching. Hold position for 10-30 seconds. Return feet to starting position.

4

Move right foot forward so that heel of right foot is forward of toes of left foot. Shift weight forward until belly button is positioned between heel and toes. Hold position for 10-30 seconds. Return



to starting position. Repeat activity with opposite foot in forward position.

4



5

Move right foot directly in front of left foot so that heels and toes are (or almost) touching. Shift weight forward until belly button is directly above heels and toes. Hold position for 10-30 seconds. Return to starting position. Repeat activity with opposite foot in forward position.

5



6

Shift weight over right foot and lift left foot off the floor. Hold position for 10-30 seconds. Lower foot to floor and repeat with opposite leg.

6



7

Repeat each standing activity with eyes closed as balance improves.

8

Remove hand from chair as balance improves.

b<sup>6</sup>

# march in-place with head turns

1

Stand tall with feet hip-width apart. Focus eyes on target at eye level.

2

Begin marching for 8 counts with eyes directed forward. Continue marching for additional 8 counts while turning head one-quarter turn to the right. Turn the head back to a forward position while continuing to march for 8 counts. Turn head one-quarter turn to left while continuing to march for 8 counts.

3

Focus eyes on new target at eye level with each

head turn.

4

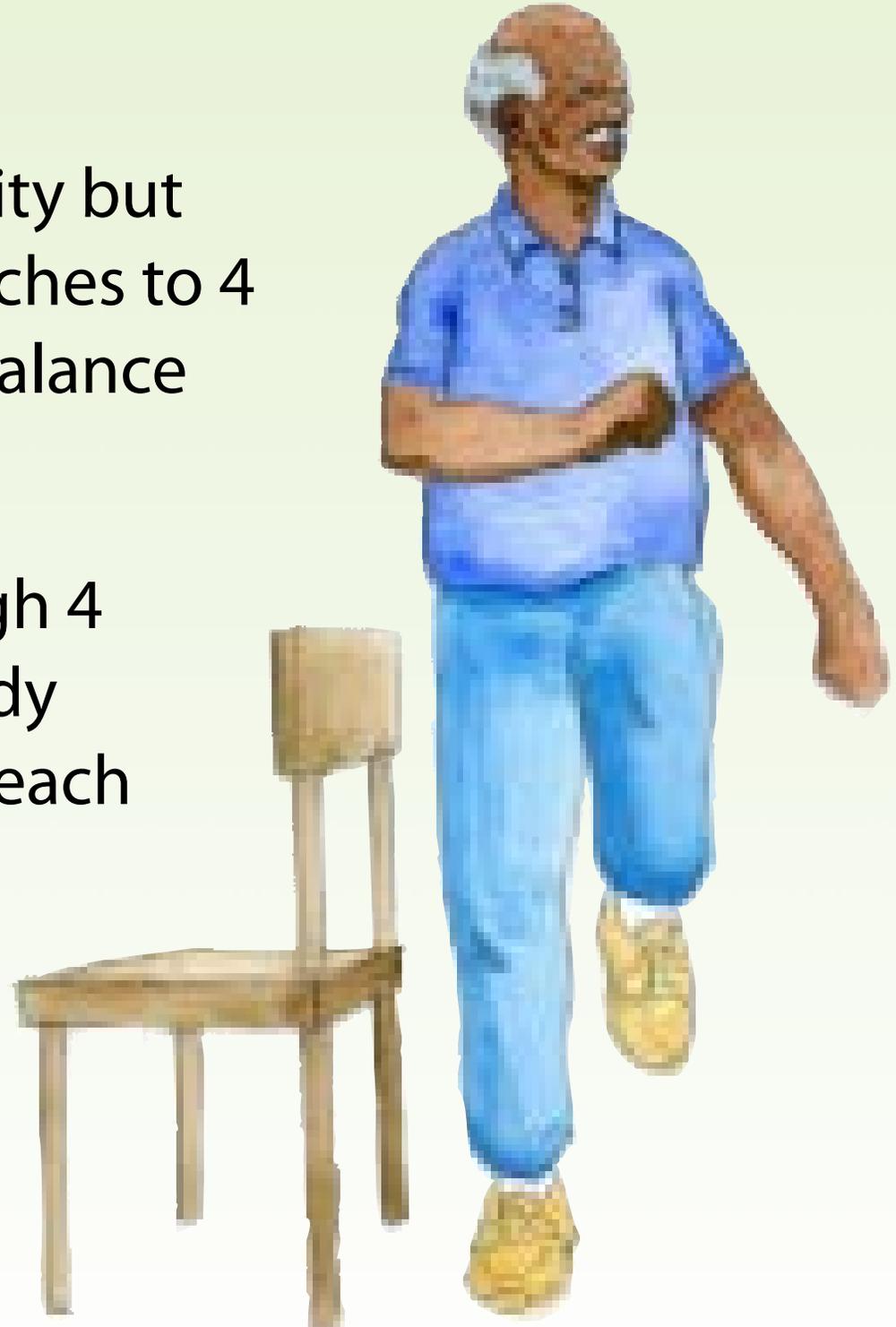
Repeat marching activity but reduce number of marches to 4 and then 2 counts as balance improves.

5

Repeat steps #2 through 4 but turn head AND body one-quarter turn with each turn of head.

6

As balance continues to improve, turn head BEFORE the body on each quarter turn.



b<sup>7</sup>

# walk with head turns

- 1 Stand tall with feet hip-width apart and close to a wall. Focus eyes on target at eye level.
- 2 Begin walking for 8 counts. Turn head one-quarter turn to right while continuing to walk for 8 counts. Turn the head back to a forward position and continue walking for 8 counts.
- 3 Turn head to the left one-quarter turn while walking for 8 counts. Continue walking for 8 counts and return head to forward position.
- 4 Focus eyes on new target at eye level with each

head turn.

5

Repeat walk-with-head-turns activity but reduce number of marches to 4 and then 2 counts as balance improves.

6

Repeat walk-with-head-turns activity but turn head one-quarter turn to right for 8 (4, or 2 counts) and then immediately to the left for 8 (4, or 2 counts) without stopping in forward position.



b<sup>8</sup>

# toe walking

- 1 Stand tall with feet hip-width apart and close to a wall. Focus eyes on target at eye level.
- 2 Rise up onto balls of feet and begin walking forward.

3

Keep body tall and shoulders directly above hips.

4

Chin is parallel to floor and ears are directly above shoulders.



b<sup>9</sup>

# heel walking

1 Stand tall with feet hip-width apart and close to a wall. Focus eyes on target at eye level.

2 Lift balls of feet off floor and begin walking forward on heels.

3

Keep body tall and shoulders directly above hips.

4

Chin is parallel to floor and ears are directly above shoulders.



# directional walking

1

Stand tall with feet hip-width apart and close to a wall. Focus eyes on a target at eye level.

## PRACTICE THE FOLLOWING WALKING PATTERNS:

- \* Zig-zag.
- \* Figure-eight. Try to make both loops of the 8 the same size when walking.
- \* Spiral. Begin with a large spiral pattern, making spiral progressively smaller and smaller with each complete turn.

Reverse direction of spiral, making spiral progressively larger with each complete turn. Repeat while walking in opposite direction.



2

Repeat each directional walking pattern while walking on toes.





# assumption of risk

The distribution of this Balance Basics activity guide by the Fall Prevention Center of Excellence is done as a service to older adults to promote activities that may lower the risk for falls.

Before engaging in any physical activity program, you should consult your primary care physician. **If any of the following apply, you should not perform these activities without permission from your Doctor:**

- 1) Your Doctor has advised you not to perform

physical activity because of your medical condition(s),

2) You are experiencing dizziness or experiencing tightness, pressure, pain, or heaviness in your chest when you perform physical activity,

3) You have been told you have congestive heart failure or have uncontrolled blood pressure (160/100 or above).

---

If you choose to perform any of the Balance Basics activities in this guide, you are assuming the inherent risks, and may not hold the Fall Prevention Center of Excellence or any person who sponsors, promotes, or distributes these exercise guides liable for injury or harm.



## The Andrus Gerontology Center Graphics Department

Copyright © 2007 by the Andrus Gerontology Center Graphics Department - All Rights Reserved

<b>BROCHURE EXERCISES SELECTION &amp; DESCRIPTION</b>	Debra J. Rose, Ph.D., Co-Director Fall Prevention Center of Excellence
<b>EDITING &amp; DIRECTION</b>	Maria Henke, M.A., Program Manager Fall Prevention Center of Excellence
<b>ILLUSTRATIONS</b>	Andy Gouveia
<b>DESIGN &amp; PRODUCTION</b>	Fred Blalock & Sylvia Ly

