



# *Balance, Mobility and Maintaining Independence*

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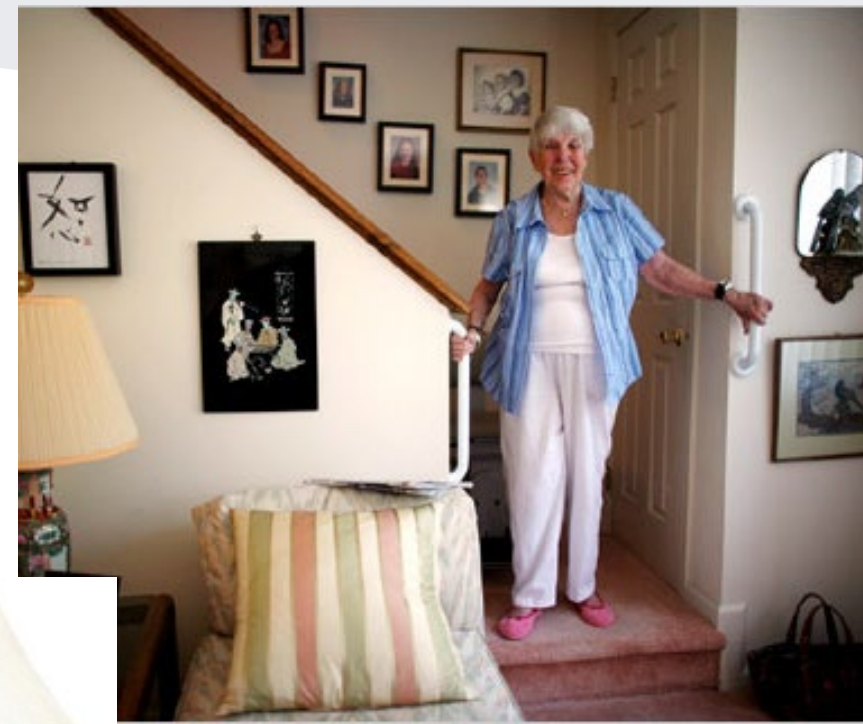
# Maintaining Independence

- Aging in place - the ability to live in one's own home and community safely, independently, and comfortably, regardless of age, income, or ability level.
- Age-friendly streets and public spaces.
- Services to help modify homes - National Association of Home Builders ([www.nahb.org/CAPSdirectory](http://www.nahb.org/CAPSdirectory)).
- Technology to bring goods and services to your door and offers new ways to monitor and protect your health.
- Focus modifications on what suits your needs and lifestyle.



# Practical Aids at Home

- Grab rails around the house
- Ramps or Stairlift
- Adjustable tables
- Tools to turn door knobs
- Lamp switch turners
- Large button TV remote





# Practical Aids for Getting Ready

- Bathroom safety grab bars
- Bath and shower chairs
- Walk in bath or shower
- Adaptive dressing aids
- Raised toilet seat
- Long handle bath sponges and brushes
- Long handle hair brushes and combs



# Practical Aids on the Move

- Key turners
- Tools to loosen gas caps
- Portable access ramps
- Personal alarm
- Folding shopping cart
- Walker, cane, scooter
- Car transfer aids



# Practical Aids in the Kitchen

- Adaptive eating utensils
- Tools to loosen bottle tops
- Reaching aids
- Lower cupboards in the kitchen





# Mobility





# Mobility

- Mobility is broadly defined as the ability to move oneself (e.g., by walking, by using assistive devices, or by using transportation) within community environments that expand from one's home, to the neighborhood, and other locations.
- Important for active aging.
- Linked to health status and quality of life.
- Limitations on mobility affect 30% to 50% of adults ages 65 and older.





# Mobility

Not just about physical movement:

- ✓ Cognitive - mental status, memory, speed of processing, and executive functioning skills
  - ✓ Psychosocial - self-efficacy, coping behaviors, depression, fear, and relationships with others
  - ✓ Environmental - driving at night or in poor weather conditions, walking on a slippery surface with limited lighting, stairs, safety
  - ✓ Financial - affordable modes of transportation, places one can travel to, residence in safe neighborhoods, affordability of healthy foods and places to be physically active.
- Prevent mobility impairments or reduce existing ones

# Improve your Mobility

- Physical Activity is the MOST IMPORTANT thing you can do to maintain your mobility and independence
- 30 minutes of moderate exercise a day, five days a week—or a total of 150 minutes a week
- Twice-weekly strength training sessions and balance exercises for older adults at risk of falling
- Be as physically active as your abilities and conditions allow – find what works for you
- Talk with your health care provider





# Balance

# Better Balance

- The ability to distribute your weight in a way that enables you to hold a steady position or move at will without falling.
- Static balance helps you stay upright when standing still.
- Dynamic balance allows you to anticipate and react to changes as you move.

Maintaining balance involves the:

- ✓ brain,
- ✓ spinal cord,
- ✓ inner ear,
- ✓ eyes,
- ✓ nervous system,
- ✓ muscles, and
- ✓ bones.







# Better Balance

- Medical and age-related issues can affect balance
- Challenge yourself from time to time with balance exercises
- Poor balance can become a more serious problem as we age
- Balance essential to maintaining good health

# Better Balance

Poor balance can lead to falls and injuries:

- Every 11 seconds, an older adult is treated in the emergency department for a fall-related injury.
- One out of five falls leads to fractures (broken bones), concussion, or other serious injuries.
- Women are more likely to fall indoors and men outdoors.
- More than 95% of hip fractures result from falls.
- At least 300,000 older adults are hospitalized each year for hip fractures.



# Better Balance

- Good balance helps prevent potentially disabling falls.
- It builds confidence and fosters independence.
- There are many ways to help improve your balance.
- Talk with your doctor - He or she may propose a physical exam and medication review, plus further testing as needed.





# Better Balance

Activities that can improve balance:

- Walking, bicycling, climbing stairs strengthen muscles in lower body.
- Resistance exercises build muscle strength.
- Core exercises build muscles that can help keep a momentary stagger from turning into a bad fall.
- Stretches loosen tight muscles, which affect posture and balance.





# Better Balance

Activities that can improve balance:

- Yoga strengthens and stretches tight muscles and helps static and dynamic balance.
- Tai chi is slow, graceful movements that flow smoothly from one pose to the next and meshes with meditative breathing.
- Pilates includes static and dynamic balance, enhances posture, and develops muscle strength and flexibility.
- Sports like tennis, soccer, and golf strengthens lower-body muscles.





# Julie Miller

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# Resources

National Institute on Aging Exercise and Physical Activity

<https://www.nia.nih.gov/health/exercise-physical-activity>

6 Best Mobility Exercises for Older Adults from Silver Sneakers

<https://www.silversneakers.com/blog/mobility-exercises-seniors-total-body/>

6 Best Balance Exercises for Better Stability

<https://www.silversneakers.com/blog/balance-stability-exercises-seniors/>

Six strategies to help seniors maintain their independence

<https://occatholic.com/six-strategies-to-help-seniors-maintain-their-independence/>

Practical Aids for Independent Living

<https://www.thewrightstuff.com/?msclkid=63f7bc995d9b127dcec8e3df950edf8c>