

Ankle Sway Exercises

These are exercises you can do if you want to improve your balance, help you walk more steadily or reduce your risk of falling. They are also good exercises to do if you have any problems reading when you are moving or keeping your vision steady when you are moving.

If you have any problems doing the exercise, give yourself a break and then try redoing the exercise 50% more gently. If it's okay, repeat at the frequency. If not halve the intensity, range or repetitions and try again.

Ankle Sways Linear (forward & back; left & right)

- Start the exercise in the standing position. Sway the body in the direction prescribed as far as you can without letting any part of your foot lift. For instance if swaying forwards move the weight onto the balls of the feet without letting the heels come up off the floor. Hold this position for 5 seconds, and then move back to standing straight upright. Wait 5 seconds, and then repeat. It is important to move only the ankles and not to bend at other joints.
- Progress:
 - Feet closer together
 - Standing with and without support
 - Do the exercise with the eyes focused on a target on the wall.
 - In a dark room.
 - Eyes closed.
 - Other directions specified to you by your doctor.
 - Continue to increase the time that the positions are held.
- Do the exercise 5-10, 3-4 times per day.

Ankle Sways Circular

- Start this exercise standing and then progress to standing on a wobbly surface (e.g. perturbational foam).
- Focus on a target on the wall and sway your body in a circle.
- When standing, have movements which are limited to ankle motions only. There should not be movement at any other joint.
- Perform the exercise in both the clockwise and counter clockwise directions. You may be asked to perform the exercise in one direction only (opposite to the direction you feel yourself to be spinning or in the same way as you feel the environment spins or to stimulate your weaker side).
- Progress by moving more quickly and by increasing the number of times the exercise is repeated.

